

DISC DOGS ROCK!™

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE COOLEST CANINE SPORT IN THE WORLD!

BY WORLD CHAMPIONS PETER BLOEME & JEFF PERRY

ENGLISH
EDITION



Disc Dogs Rock! BY PETER BLOEME & JEFF PERRY



Disc Dogs Rock! is excerpted from *Disc Dogs! The Complete Guide* by Hyperflite co-founders Peter Bloeme and Jeff Perry, and is brought to you by the Mid-Atlantic Disc Dog Club (MAD Dogs). MAD Dogs is a regional canine disc club headquartered in Annapolis, Maryland, that provides training and events for disc dog enthusiasts. The MAD Dog club's focus is on competitive fun, and on creating a welcoming environment for new members — both human and canine.

MAD Dogs supports and encourages all canine lovers and their furry friends, by hosting events and gatherings that are fun, well run, competitive, and varied. With the best interest of our canine companions at heart, all *Mad Doggers* remember that disc dogging is ultimately about the special relationship that enthusiasts have with their canines. Whether you compete for fun or desire to win a world championship title, MAD Dogs will support you in your efforts. By seeking out new members as well as alliances with other clubs and organizations, MAD Dogs looks to ensure the continued vitality of *the coolest canine sport in the world*. <http://www.mad-dogs.org/>

Hyperflite

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This book is intended as a reference source only, it is not intended to substitute for veterinary advice, personal training, breeder recommendations, or the judgement of the reader. *Disc Dogs Rock!* should be used as one of many sources of information to help guide you and your canine as you begin to participate in canine disc play or competition. Always seek the advice of a veterinarian and/or professional trainer if your dog displays symptoms of any medical or behavioral disorder.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT...

GETTING STARTED WITH CANINE DISC PLAY

Getting started in canine disc sports means finding the perfect dog. If you already have a dog, then congratulations are in order. Your family pet is the perfect companion for canine disc play. That may seem like a surprising statement. But, if you are like most dog owners then right at your feet sits a loving and eager partner that wants to please you and likely prefers your company to just about anything with notable exceptions reserved for food, water and an occasional romantic inkling for the opposite sex.

If you don't already have a dog, then consider adopting from an animal shelter or rescue organization. Animal shelter mutts make great disc dogs. Most shelters offer beautiful dogs for little or no money. The venerable mutt can be a great selection as long as he or she has the mental and physical attributes necessary for participation in vigorous athletic activity. To date, at least five former World Canine Disc Champions were rescued from the pound. With so many unwanted dogs available, saving a dog from the pound can be an especially rewarding experience.

If your heart is set on a purebred dog, check with your local rescue organizations first. Many rescue organizations are breed specific and are run by enthusiasts of that specific breed. For example, there are many purebred Border Collies that were purchased by people who became enamored with the breed, only to learn that a hyper-energetic Border Collie was more dog than they could handle. These dogs wind up in shelters even though they possess attributes highly sought after by disc dog enthusiasts.

Each purebred or mixed-breed canine has different physical and mental characteristics as well as certain inherited qualities and weaknesses including size, speed, stamina, leaping ability, and intensity. The same qualities that make a great herding, sporting or retrieving canine, may make for a great disc dog, but not necessarily a wonderful family pet. Australian Shepherds, for instance, with their inexhaustible supply of energy, and intensity can make phenomenal disc dogs. Unfortunately, these dogs may not be a good fit



Jeff Perry

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Jeff Hoot

for families with small children since their strong herding instincts might cause them to herd and nip the kiddies as if they were sheep!

Carefully consider the characteristics generally associated with a particular breed to help you determine which canine might make a good disc catcher. Canines with long snouts and long legs, have a better chance of catching a flying disc than snub-nosed dogs or toy breeds that may not be well suited to disc play because of their physical limitations.

Once you make a selection, part of your responsibility as a dog owner and trainer is to learn to recognize and work with your dog's unique characteristics and special qualities. For example, a hound will be a great tracker, a working dog will be tireless, a pointer will be focused, etc. A good resource for investigating the characteristics of the various breeds is Simon & Schuster's, "Guide To Dogs." The same characteristics applicable to purebred canines will be found in mixed-breed shelter mutts in varying degrees. Experienced shelter staff will often be able to make an educated guess as to the likely breeding of the dogs that are available for adoption. This information coupled with your own personal experience and observations will help you find a dog that will be a good disc dog and a great family pet.

Shelter Dogs — Shelter and rescue animals make great disc dogs. Although most people think that Border Collies, Australian Shepherds, Labradors and Golden Retrievers make the best disc dogs, nothing could be further from the truth. A loved dog, makes a great disc dog and very few canines are loved more than adopted shelter and rescue canines.

—Jeff Perry, 1989 World Champion

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Sven Van Driessche

With an eager canine at the ready, your disc dog adventure can begin. However, we would be remiss if we didn't extend to you this warning: Disc dog play is addictive! Once you introduce a dog to disc play, in all probability, it will become hooked and may show little interest in activities that it formerly found interesting. Your canine's obsession with plastic may cause you to drive or fly hundreds, if not thousands, of miles to attend disc dog extravaganzas and hobnob with other like-minded disc doggers. Your life may well change in ways you could never have imagined. Just ask some of the, doctors, lawyers, software engineers, teachers, secretaries, business owners, and people from all walks of life — even a few perfectly normal folks — who have been bitten by the disc dog bug. Some of these people have even given up their comfortable lifestyles to tour with the circus, start rescue organizations, or become veterinarians. It's impossible to tell how your disc dog experience will affect your life, but it most definitely will.

One of many reasons the "Jawz disc" was created.

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WHY PLAY?

Most dogs, and especially athletic canines like Australian Shepherds, Border Collies, Cattle Dogs, and Labradors, require vigorous exercise. Shortchange an energetic canine in the exercise department and you just might bid farewell to anything from sheetrock to sofas. Being highly intelligent creatures, dogs have a knack for “communicating” to you via your most valuable or cherished possessions. A chewed up pair of shoes says, “Hey, you haven’t walked me in two days.” Damage that escalates to a large piece of furniture or family heirloom might signal even more desperate attempts at communication. Pay attention, because your canine is telling you that even angry attention from you is better than no attention at all. Once more for emphasis — a bored dog is a destructive dog!

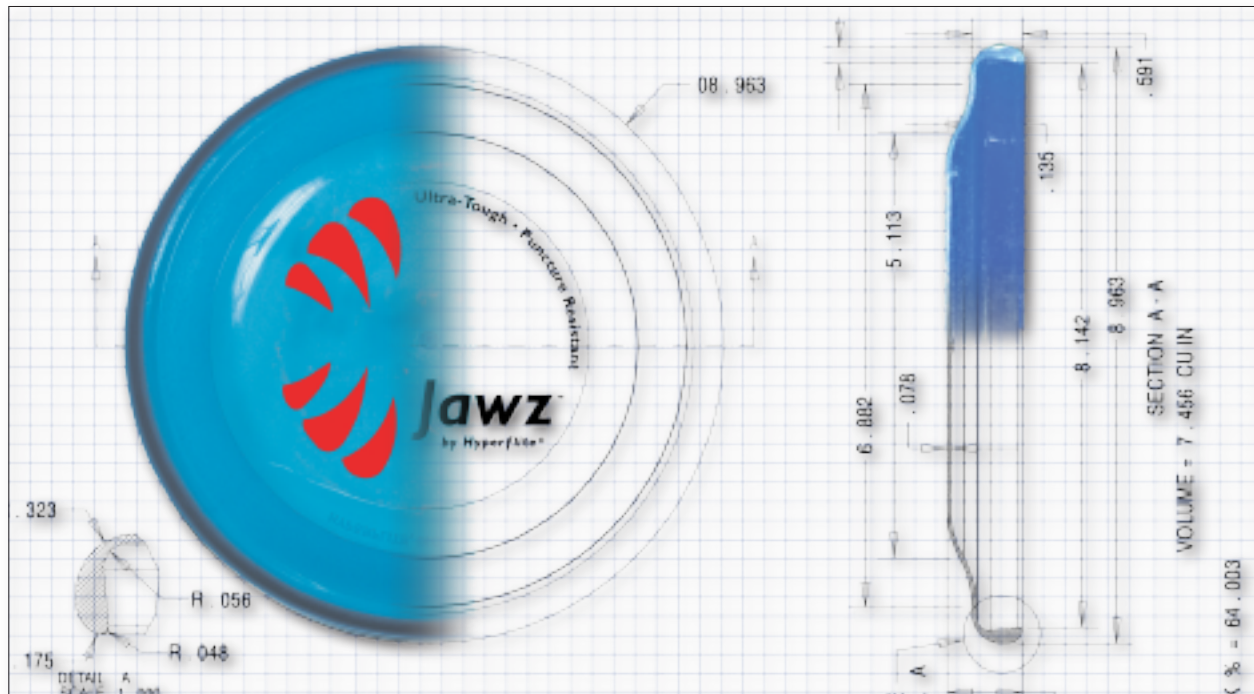
Perhaps you have a busy schedule, or the weather has been less than ideal. Maybe you don’t have time to take “Phydeaux” on a two-mile walk everyday. And throwing that slimy tennis ball just doesn’t jazz you like it used to. There’s an easy solution to your dilemma...and here’s the good part — it only takes a few minutes of your precious time. It may seem unbelievable, but with only 10 minutes of canine disc play, you can obtain the exercise and mental stimulation equivalent of several miles of leash walking.

Canine disc sports are as popular as ever, and, thanks to modern technology and space-age polymer formulations, canine disc play is more affordable than ever. In the dark ages, competitors with hard-biting dogs might go through half a dozen discs in a single practice session. Many en-



Long Photography, Inc.

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thusiasts just couldn't afford to participate in a sport that cost five or ten dollars every time it was played. Things changed about nine years ago, when a new flying disc company, Hyperflite, decided to fly in the face of thirty-plus years of the status quo.

Before Hyperflite arrived on the scene, the flying discs used for canine competition and recreational play had changed little in 35 years. Designed for humans, rather than canines, these discs simply couldn't hold up to tough biting dogs.

Through the application of sophisticated aerodynamic design and materials technologies, Hyperflite created the K-10 canine flying disc. The K-10 design incorporated a number of improvements over existing canine competition discs including reinforced high-stress areas, aerodynamic improvements for ultra-long flights, and low-profile opposed grip surfaces that don't retain grit and dirt, which can damage canine teeth. In recognition of Hyperflite's quantum leap in canine disc technology, U.S. Patent No. 6,887,119 was issued, representing the first patent ever issued for a flying disc designed specifically for use in canine competition.

Although food treats are often used in training they are not essential. A moment of playtime, or a quick toss of a favorite toy, coupled with enthusiastic and animated praise, are far more effective than treats in reinforcing a desired behavior.

— Jeff Stanaway, 2003 Hyperflite Skyhoundz World Champion

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With patent in hand, Hyperflite tackled a problem that has plagued canine owners for more than 30 years — disc longevity. Owners of Bulldog breeds and other tough-biting canines could easily go through hundreds of discs each year just to participate in canine disc sports. Based on comprehensive research, Hyperflite determined that a polymer formulation could be developed that would be resistant to tough-biting canines but not so hard as to pose a risk of injury to canine teeth. The project took more than a year of hard work. Countless material formulations were sampled with results that failed to meet the high standards that were set for the project. Finally, one polymer formulation appeared promising. The material held up well to testing on a mechanical testing device developed by Hyperflite and affectionately nicknamed Hal K-9000 (think “2001 a Space Odyssey”) for its propensity to kill discs without remorse. With the preliminary tests accomplished satisfactorily, Hyperflite subjected prototypes to real world testing in the mouths of some of the most destructive canines on planet earth. The canine tests confirmed that this new material was, in fact, unbelievably puncture-resistant. Thus, the Jawz disc was born. Although the Jawz disc is universally regarded as the world’s toughest canine competition disc, Hyperflite didn’t stop there.

Jawz Discs — The World's Toughest

Jawz discs are the world’s toughest competition-approved canine flying discs. In normal play or practice, **Jawz discs** stand up to gnashing canine teeth better than any other competition disc. **As tough as Jawz discs are, they should never be used as canine chew toys. Jawz discs do not float in water.**



Jawz Disc (8 ¾" diameter | 145 grams) Colors — Black | Blueberry | Lemon-Lime | Pink Guava | Tangerine | Glow-in-the-Dark

Jawz Pup Disc (7" diameter | 90 grams) Colors — Lemon-Lime | Pink Guava | Tangerine | Glow-in-the-Dark



How good is the Hyperflite Jawz disc? It's like a tire company inventing a 200,000 mile tire

— Jeff Stanaway, World Champion

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Hyperflite's culture of innovation has been responsible for a long line of industry firsts, including: the first cold-weather competition disc ("FrostBite"), the first small-dog competition disc ("K-10 Pup"), the first soft and flexible competition disc ("SofFlite"), the first glow-in-the-dark/color-changing puncture-resistant disc ("Jawz Fuzzion"), and the list goes on.

I was living with kidney disease and had been on dialysis for five years. The disease was taking a toll on me mentally and physically. I had become depressed and very afraid of dying. I've read many reports on how pets can comfort you during times of sickness and depression. Never owning a pet before, I thought, why not get a dog! So I did! I brought a four-pound Dachshund home and named him "Sammy Davis." At four months, and weighing only six pounds, "Sammy Davis" contracted parvo, a potentially life threatening disease. By this time I had become very attached to the little guy. I had to leave him with my vet, for treatment, for an entire week. When that long week was finally over I was able to take "Sammy Davis" home again. He had made a full recovery.

As I still was undergoing treatment myself, I would come home and rest. It seemed "Sammy Davis" would have none of me lying in bed all day. "Sammy Davis"'s healing methods were simple and ultimately satisfying to both of us. He would repetitiously put into my hands toys, pieces of paper, or anything he thought would fly in the air, so that he could catch and retrieve. I began to think that this dog was telling me something. "Get up and live, its not over," "Sammy Davis" was letting me know. "You saved me, now its time I repay the favor."

Playing with "Sammy Davis" became a diversion that kept me from focusing on the difficult days I was used to in the past. I started to get up after treatment and feel like my life wasn't so dismal after all. After several months of catch I decided to introduce a flying disc to "Sammy Davis." He loved it! People are amazed to see that a Dachshund can run and jump and participate in disc dog activities. "Sammy Davis" gave me a sense of hope and brought out a spiritual side of me I never knew, and introduced me to a sport I never knew anything about. It's more than just a story. It's a miracle.

— Patrick Major, Disc Doggs of the Golden Gate

GETTING STARTED...

Let's say you've already picked out the perfect disc for you and "Phydeaux." What next? As with any endeavor, the most difficult part is getting started. You can visit www.hyperflite.com for guidance and tips from the pros that will get you started. When you're ready to take it to the next level, Hyperflite has created a one-two punch of canine disc training products including: "Disc Dogs! The Complete Guide," a 358-page training treatise featuring more than 500 color photos and "Disc Dog Training DVD," the most informative and action-packed canine training DVD ever made.

"Disc Dogs! The Complete Guide" and "Disc Dog Training DVD" are the perfect tools for beginners as well as for more accomplished enthusiasts who want to improve their skills. And speaking of improved skills, you and "Phydeaux" may have so much fun at the park with your new-found hobby, that the competitive juices begin to flow. Not to worry, Hyperflite has you covered. Just visit www.skyhoundz.com where you'll learn about the Skyhoundz World Canine Disc Championship Series. Most Skyhoundz competitions are free and represent the perfect opportunity to introduce your canine to the fastest game on four paws!

BUILDING INTEREST

At first, your canine may show absolutely no interest in the disc. Don't be discouraged. Although some canines are immediately interested in flying discs, it is not uncommon for a substantial number of canines to fall on the opposite end of the spectrum. It is important to introduce the disc to your canine in a non-threatening way. For example, try feeding and watering your dog out of the disc instead of his regular food bowl. This will ensure that your dog will become familiar with, rather than intimidated by, the disc when you begin your training. After a few days of feeding and watering your dog with a disc, you can pick up the disc and move it rapidly in the vicinity of your dog. Slide it on the



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ground or roll it across the floor and watch to see if your canine shows any interest. If your canine perks up as if to say, "Hey, what are you doing with my food dish?" then it's time to work on tracking.

TRACKING

Tracking is simply the practical ability of a canine to follow a moving object. With dogs, tracking is instinctive and natural, but it does take time for the instinct to mature and some dogs learn faster than others.

An example of tracking in human development is a child's ability to catch. At first, it may seem as if the child is closing his or her hands randomly and will never catch anything. With practice, a child's tracking ability improves and the child can start to predict the path of a moving object and make successful catches.

A young puppy is very much like a small child in that it may seem completely unable to track the path of a moving object. If you toss something over a puppy's head, then as far as the puppy is concerned, that object may no longer exist. It's as if it disappeared by magic. Ultimately, nearly all puppies and canines are capable of developing excellent tracking skills. With puppies, you can speed the acquisition of tracking behavior by rolling a ball, disc or favorite chew toy back and forth in front of him. You might also make gentle, low-level tosses a small distance from your puppy so that he can follow the toy or treat easily. Praise and reward your puppy for exhibiting tracking behavior and, very quickly, the puppy will be locking onto its targets like a heat-seeking missile.

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CATCHING

The all important catch phase of training is often the most rewarding. It's sort of like a child's first steps. Things will happen quickly for you and your canine after that first catch.

If you've had success in getting your dog to chase and grab rollers and sliders then it's time to master the catch. To optimize your chances for success you must first elevate your canine's excitement level. Become over-animated and ebullient in the way you relate to your pet as you teach the all-important "catch" of the disc. Using the same disc that you used for rollers and sliders, start by teasing your canine with gentle tug-of-war play, keep-away, rollers, and upside-down sliders. Really "fire-him-up" so that he will want the disc. Once you have his attention and you've established an elevated excitement level, kneel down in front of your dog and continue rapidly moving the disc near your canine's face to keep him focused on the prize. Be careful not to whack him with the disc in your excitement! Next, let your canine try and grab the disc from your hand. Let go at the last second. Reward a successful grab by letting him hold the disc in his mouth for a few seconds. If he doesn't actually grab the disc, and it falls to the ground, praise him for the effort but do not let him have the disc. He gets to keep it, only if he catches it. Once your canine is consistently grabbing the disc from your hand, try gently tossing the disc near your canine. Never toss the disc directly at your



Sven Van Driessche (Sequence)

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canine. Instead, toss the disc as a pizza chef might toss a pizza — level and straight up in the air. Put lots of spin on the disc and make it hover tantalizingly close to your canine. You should start your “pizza tosses” from ground level and they should rise no higher than your canine’s eye level. When “Phydeaux” finally catches a toss, be liberal with the praise, let him hold his prize for a few seconds as a reward, and then gently take the disc from him and toss it again.

You may have some difficulty getting your canine to give the disc back now that he has finally caught it. This is the perfect time to work on your release command. Most disc doggers use the universal “drop” command. Try giving the “drop” command repeatedly until your dog lets go of the disc on its own. When he does, praise him and say “good drop” and immediately make another toss to him. He will soon learn that, in order to get another throw, he must release the disc he has in his mouth. You can accelerate his learning of the “drop” command by introducing multiple (up to five) discs into the mix. Often, when a canine sees a second disc in your hand, he will drop the one he is holding so that you will throw the next disc to him. In between tosses, give the “drop” command until he lets go of the disc. If he drops the previous disc as you have commanded, reward him with another toss. Using more than one disc will get your canine comfortable with the concept of “multiples” which you will find useful if you decide to compete. In Skyhoundz Freestyle competitions, up to five discs may be used at a time.

From “pizza tosses” you can advance to longer and longer throws. Initially, try and make your throws into the wind so that your canine will have time to catch up to the disc, throttle down, and make a nice leaping catch. Don’t attempt long throws until you have mastery of short and mid-range tosses.

***Just Say “No” to Stress** — The biggest impediment to success with our disc dogs lurks within all of us. Excessive worrying, overly-analytical thinking, and overworking our canines on the practice field all take the fun out of an otherwise enjoyable pursuit. The best advice I could offer to disc dog enthusiasts would be to simply calm down and just let it go. You will never be better than your best practice. And your best practice will never come if you overwork your canine. I realize that, for many, this is easier said than done. You may be tempted to think that working too hard and worrying won’t hurt anything. But these traits will most definitely harm your relationship with your canine.*

Canine disc play, whether you play for fun or to win competitions, is a wonderful journey. You will grow closer to your pet than you ever dreamed possible provided that you slow down, savor the special moments, and remember to have fun, no matter what your personal goals are.

— Frank Buckland, ‘05-’08 Pairs Freestyle World Champion

How To THROW...



For many, throwing a disc well is the most difficult aspect of canine disc training. However, it is technique, rather than strength, that marks the best throwers. Although developing the proper technique comes quite naturally to some, others have to work diligently to get the hang of it. Like many other things in life, you get out of it, what you put into it. If you don't practice consistently in a variety of conditions you and your canine will be, quite literally, at the mercy of the wind.

In order to throw a disc well you must do the following:

- Maintain a proper grip on the disc
- Use the proper throwing stance
- Make use of your entire body during the throwing motion as opposed to just your arm and wrist
- Impart sufficient spin to the disc during the throwing motion to provide stability to the disc in flight
- Release the disc at the proper angle for the prevailing conditions

BACKHAND THROW

The backhand throw is a versatile and easy-to-learn delivery. Once mastered, it can be used for accuracy, distance and trick throws.

We recommend a combination of popular grips called the "Modified Berkeley Power Grip." Make a fist with your palm up and open your thumb to the hitchhiking position. Loosen your fingers just enough to slip the disc between your palm and finger tips and place your thumb on the top grip surface of the disc. Now, bring your other hand up and hold the other side of the disc temporarily.

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Move the fingers of your gripping hand slightly toward your thumb (while trying to maintain as much contact as possible with the inside rim) until they feel somewhat comfortable. For shorter throws, you can move the tips of your two middle fingers onto the underside grip surface of the disc.

Do not place your index finger along the outside rim of the disc, since doing so will cause you to lose accuracy, power and control. Maintain a firm grip by squeezing the disc between your palm and the last two fingers (pinkie and ring finger) of your hand. This will allow you to snap the throw. It may seem like a subtle change but it can really affect your throwing.

If you are right handed, stand sideways to your target with your right foot forward. Bring the disc back across your body to just above your left side until your arm is as far back as your left shoulder. Your arm should be bent slightly, with your wrist bent inward and the disc held flat.

The throwing motion should be left to right, smooth and even, with a good snap upon release. Do not rotate your wrist from side to side, only forward and backward as if you were doing wrist curls with a dumbbell. As you make the throw, follow through with your right hand extended toward the target as you might if you were reaching out to shake someone's hand. Keep your eyes on your intended target as you make your throws. If your throws go to the left of the target you're releasing the disc too soon. If your throws veer to the right, then you are releasing the disc too late. Most right-handed throwers fall into the too-late category and hook their throws to the right. If your throws wobble in flight, then try to concentrate on a nice smooth wrist snap as you release the disc.



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ROLLER THROW

The roller throw is commonly used to train a beginning disc dog or puppy. Roller throws are easy and fun for dogs to track. To make a roller toss, use the back-hand grip. The release angle for a roller is steep, almost vertical. Kneel or squat down and bring your throwing hand to your chest. With the disc laying flat on your chest, snap your wrist forward and down. If you released the disc perpendicular to the ground it should roll along nicely on the outside of the rim until your eager canine grabs it.

Roller throws, although seemingly simple, can be jazzed up and incorporated into advanced disc dog routines. Experiment with interesting roller throw



Sven Van Driessche (sequence)

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deliveries. Perhaps you can make a roller toss using your feet. Or, try putting backspin on the disc to cause it to roll between your legs with your canine in hot pursuit. You can roll a disc along your back and have your canine catch it before it hits the ground. The roller toss always makes us think of the good old days before innovation sent the roller to its competitive grave. It is always nice to see old tricks, like the roller, rejuvenated in an interesting or innovative way.



COMPETITION...

CANINE DISC COMPETITIONS: IT'S ALL ABOUT THE DOG!

Polls have shown that the primary reason people participate in canine disc competitions is because their dogs love it. You are unquestionably your dog's hero when you take the time to play and have fun together. Winning or losing is simply not something that matters to canines.

Competition organizers and officials strive to make disc dog competitions a fun and challenging activity for both human and canine alike. Competitions are also a great way to meet other people who love their canines. Unlike most canine sports, disc dog play requires of its participants — both human and canine — the same measure of dedication, skill and effort. But no matter how competitive you are, it is important to remember that your canine will love you just as much even if every throw you make isn't perfect and even if that big trophy doesn't find its way to your mantle.

The modern disc dog competition circuit is a cornucopia of events held in locations around the globe. The Hyperflite Skyhoundz World Canine Disc Championship Series — the world's largest — features more than 150 canine disc competitions worldwide.

SKYHOUNDZ CANINE DISC COMPETITION SERIES OVERVIEW

The Hyperflite Skyhoundz World Canine Disc Championship Series consists of Local Championships, U.S. Regional Qualifiers, Open Qualifiers, an ever-growing number of International Qualifiers, a European Championship, and the World Championship.

Hyperflite's sponsorship of the Skyhoundz Series ensures that disc dog competitors, worldwide, will have exciting venues in which to compete.

Local Championships Hyperflite Skyhoundz Local Championships are free events, open to all competitors regardless of experience. You are welcome to enter as many Hyperflite Skyhoundz Local Championships as you like.

U.S. Regional Qualifiers At Hyperflite Skyhoundz Regional Qualifiers, top-finishing teams qualify for invitations to the World Championship. Registration fees apply.

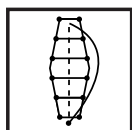
Open Qualifiers At Hyperflite Skyhoundz Open Qualifiers, top-finishing teams qualify for invitations to the World Championship. Registration fees apply.



European and International Qualifiers European and other International Qualifiers for the Hyperflite Skyhoundz World Championship are held in a number of countries. Registration fees apply.

World Championship The Hyperflite Skyhoundz World Canine Disc Championship is the premier event in canine sports. Competitors qualify for the World Championship through Regional, Open, and International Qualifiers. Each year, the World Championship is held in a host city in the U.S. Participation in the World Championship is always free to those who qualify.

SKYHOUNDZ EVENT RULES

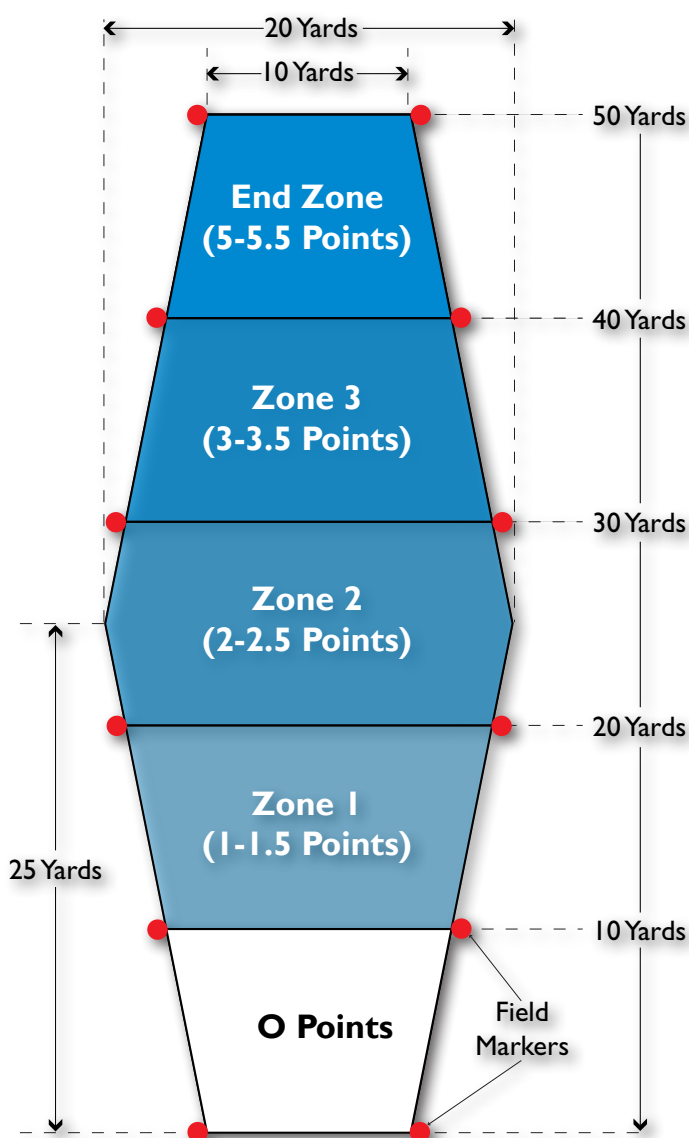


Distance/Accuracy Distance/Accuracy is a fast-paced event in which teams attempt to score points by completing as many catches as possible within various scoring zones in the time allotted. The diamond-shaped Distance/Accuracy field has scoring zones located at 10, 20, 30, and 40 yards from the throwing line.

Distance/Accuracy competitors are allowed 60 seconds and one disc to score as many points as possible. If, during the round a competitor believes that a disc has become unsafe (e.g.: broken rim, or a large tear in the disc), it may be handed to the line judge for replacement (if the competitor has provided such a replacement). Time will not be suspended during a disc change. Notification of time remaining will be uniform for all competitors: 30 seconds, 10 seconds, and a countdown of the final five seconds before time is called.

The Distance/Accuracy field set-up provides the ability for individual competitors to throw in either direction, however, competitors cannot change throwing direction once time has begun. Field dimensions and the ability to throw from either end are subject to change, at the discretion of contest officials, due to overall field limitations or for safety considerations.

The thrower and canine are required to be behind the throwing line before time starts.



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When the competitor is ready, the line judge will signal the announcer by raising an arm. Soon after, a start cue will be given by the announcer indicating that time has begun. If, in the opinion of the line judge, the dog crosses the throwing line before time begins, time will be reset to zero and a restart will be initiated. Competitors may send their canines down field, or throw, at anytime after the start signal is sounded.

The thrower must always throw from behind the throwing line and between the throwing line cones, but may move freely around the field at other times. A throw will not be scored if the thrower steps on or over the throwing line prior to or during the release of the disc (foot fault). If the disc leaves the thrower's hand before time is called, the throw will be scored if caught by the canine within a scoring zone.

To receive points, catches must be completed by a canine with all paws landing within one of



Sven Van Driessche

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the official scoring zones. If a canine catches a disc and lands with paws in more than one scoring zone, the catch will be scored as if it were made in the lower scoring zone. If a canine tips the disc and subsequently catches the disc inbounds, the catch will be scored where the catch was completed.

Scoring is based on the following point scale. No points are awarded for catches under 10 yards.

Zone 1 (10-20 yards)	1 Point
Zone 2 (20-30 yards)	2 Points
Zone 3 (30-40 yards)	3 Points
End Zone (40-50 yards)	5 Points

An additional half-point bonus will be awarded for each successful catch in which the dog makes a catch with all paws clearly off the ground in an obvious jumping effort and subsequently lands with all paws in a scoring zone.



Freestyle Freestyle is a free-form, choreographed, routine scored by judges with an emphasis on the successful completion of innovative tricks and throws that showcase the athleticism of the competing canine and the teamwork of the thrower and canine.

Teams competing in Freestyle will receive a maximum of 90 seconds per round (120 seconds at the World Championship). Routines must last at least 60 seconds (90 seconds at the World Championship) to be scored. Competitors in Freestyle are permitted to use up to five discs. Timing begins when the disc is placed in flight, or the canine attempts to catch or pick-up a disc placed on the ground, or takes the disc from any part of a thrower's or canine's body. Countdown of time remaining will be uniform for all competitors: 60 seconds, 30 seconds, 10 seconds and time.

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Contestants who bring their own music should present it to contest officials when called to the on-deck area. Music should be on a CD (compact disc) that is marked with the competitor's name and desired track number. This information should also be noted on the outside of the CD case. Even better, a CD burned with only the desired track will prevent mistakes that can cause delays during the competition. Contestants must choose music that is suitable for a family audience.

Judges will disregard tricks that do not begin or conclude with a disc in flight except roller throws. Takes — moves in which a disc is handed off to the dog — will not be scored.

PAWS FREESTYLE SCORING SYSTEM

Competing teams will receive scores ranging from 1-10, in half-point increments, for each of the following four categories:

Presentation The team's presentation of a crowd-pleasing routine with exciting choreography, continuous flow, good disc management and smooth transitions.

Athleticism Intensity and athleticism in completing catches, tricks or maneuvers together with a dog's speed, quickness, leaping ability relative to its size and control over his/her body while competing.

Wow!Factor Ability to successfully complete challenging tricks or moves, including successful catch-



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Sven Van Driessche

es of throws with varied spins or releases. Also, the presentation of completely new moves, or a novel or unique presentation of a previously performed move, will result in higher scores in this category.

Success The team's ability to successfully execute a routine with specific consideration given for the difficulty of the throws, catches and tricks.

Under the PAWS scoring system, judges will evaluate each team's ability to execute cleanly a challenging, varied and exciting routine within the time allotted. Although there are specific categories that focus on execution (Success) and difficulty (Wow!Factor), a failure to score well in either of these categories may impact a competitor's scores in all of the PAWS categories. This is because the judges must account for differences between the routines of the competitors that are competing on a given day.

For example, even if two competitors have perfect rounds they will not necessarily each receive a score of 10 in the Success category. Instead, the more difficult routine will typically receive a higher score in Success than the simpler routine. Similarly, if two competitors have equally difficult rounds, it is likely that the competitor with fewer misses will receive the higher score in the Wow!Factor category.

Vaults, utilizing the trainer's body as a launch pad, should be minimized or excluded from routines altogether. If attempted, vaults



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should be performed in a controlled and safe manner. Excessive height, or frequent repetition of vaults, will not increase the likelihood of a higher score. Vaults are not required for success in Hyperflite Skyhoundz competitions. A vault is to be valued no differently than any other trick of similar difficulty. Many World Championship titles have been won with vault-free routines or with vaults minimized.

Pairs Freestyle As the name implies, Pairs Freestyle is essentially choreographed Freestyle employing two throwers and one canine.

With the safety of the canine always in mind, Pairs Freestyle teams demonstrate interesting variations on multiples, simultaneous throws, cross-feeding (i.e., alternating) throws to a canine, etc. Always exciting to watch, Pairs Freestyle offers endless possibilities for innovation and teamwork and doubles the fun for competing canines.

In Pairs Freestyle, all the same rules for Freestyle apply with two exceptions. Competitors are allowed up to 10 discs and a Teamwork category (1-10 points) is added to the PAWS Freestyle scoring categories.

K-10 Competition Discs

(Not Puncture-Resistant — For Dogs With "Softer Bites")

The **Competition Standard™** is the official competition flying disc for the largest canine disc competition series in the world. Competition Standard discs are sold unpackaged.

Competition Standard (8 ¾" diameter | 110 grams,
Color — Black | Neon Orange | Neon Pink | Neon Yellow | White)

Competition Standard Pup (7" diameter | 70 grams, Color — Neon Orange |
Neon Pink | Neon Yellow | White)

The **FrostBite™** flying disc remains soft and flexible in below-freezing temperatures and is colored brightly to stand out in the snow.

FrostBite (8 ¾" diameter | 110 grams, Color — Fluorescent Orange)

FrostBite Pup (7" diameter | 70 grams, Color — Fluorescent Orange)

The **Midnight Sun™** flying disc is the brightest and longest-lasting glow-in-the-dark disc ever made. (8 ¾" diameter | 110 grams, Color — Base White)

The **SofFlite™** flying disc is ultra-soft for canines with sensitive mouths. Use the SofFlite disc to train your puppy or to introduce your adult canine to the pleasures of canine disc play.

SofFlite (8 ¾" diameter | 110 grams, Color — Yellow)

SofFlite Pup (7" diameter | 70 grams, Color — Yellow)

The **UV™** photo-chromatic (color-changing) disc appears opaque white in color until exposed to sunlight, or a black light.

(8 ¾" diameter | 110 grams, Colors — Blue | Purple)



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Teamwork Teamwork takes into consideration the relationship, choreography, field use, and fluidity of movement of the team during the routine.

COMPETITOR ELIGIBILITY

Local Championships You are welcome to enter as many Hyperflite Skyhoundz Local Championships as you like and there are no geographic restrictions.

U.S. Regional Qualifiers Eligibility for Hyperflite Skyhoundz U.S. Regional Qualifiers is based on residence in a geographic region as follows:

North Central Region Competitors from the following states are eligible to compete in the North Central Regional: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

Northeast Region Competitors from the following states are eligible to compete in the Northeast Regional: Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia.

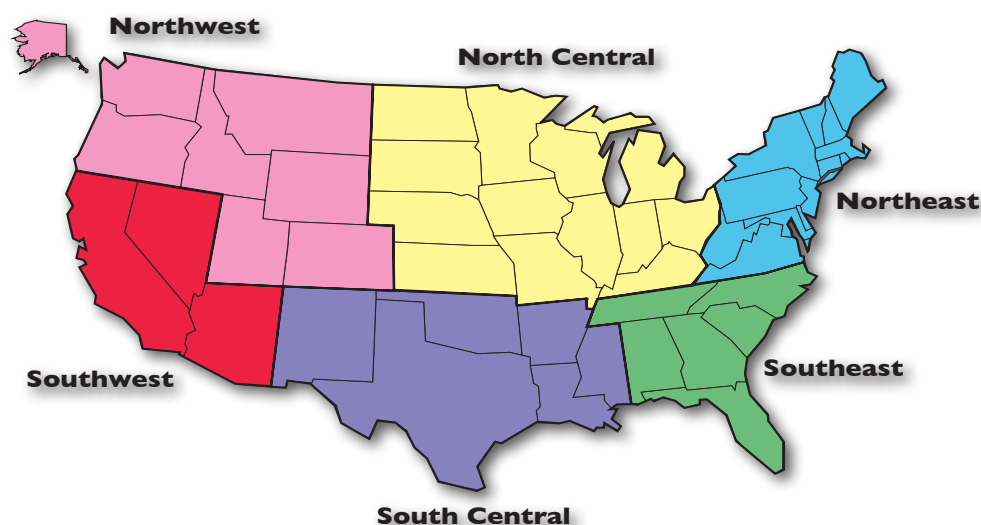
Northwest Region Competitors from the following states are eligible to compete in the Northwest Regional: Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

South Central Region Competitors from the following states are eligible to compete in the South Central Regional: Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

Southeast Region Competitors from the following states are eligible to compete in the Southeast Regional: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

Southwest Region Competitors from the following states are eligible to compete in the Southwest Regional: Arizona, California, and Nevada.

Open Qualifiers Each year, Hyperflite/Skyhoundz stages several Open Qualifiers (an Eastern, Western, and "Last Chance" Open Qualifier the day before the World Championship). Anyone may compete in the Open Qualifiers and there are no geographic limitations for competitor entry.





Jeff Perry

International Qualifiers International Qualifiers for the Hyperflite Skyhoundz World Championship are held in a number of countries. Competitors from Canada are eligible to compete in any Hyperflite Skyhoundz Qualifier held in Canada. Competitors from any European Country may compete in any Hyperflite Skyhoundz Qualifier held in Europe. Competitors from Asian countries may compete in any International Qualifier held in any country in Asia. U.S. Residents are not eligible to earn invitations to the World Championship at an International Qualifier, but may compete for awards.

World Championship Invitations to the Hyperflite Skyhoundz World Championship are awarded at Hyperflite Skyhoundz Regional, Open, and International Qualifiers.

COMPETITION FORMATS

Local Championships All Hyperflite Skyhoundz Local Championships consist of either:

A) Two 60-second rounds of Distance/Accuracy with winners determined by combining the scores from both rounds of Distance/Accuracy; or

B) Freestyle and Distance/Accuracy Combined: One 90-second round of Freestyle and one 60-second round of Distance/Accuracy with winners determined by doubling the Freestyle score and adding it to the Distance/Accuracy score.

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Contact the local host to verify the competition format. If more than 25 teams compete, the local host may limit participation in the second round to the top 6-10 scoring teams from the first round. **Regional, Open, and International Qualifiers** Hyperflite Skyhoundz Regional, Open, and International Qualifiers consist of the same five Championship Divisions: Open Division, Sport Division, MicroDog Division, Youth Division, and Pairs Freestyle Division.

Within those Championship Divisions, competitors may choose to compete in different Classes and thereby have their scores evaluated relative to several peer groups. Awards are given to the top three finishers in all Classes. Available Classes vary from Division to Division.

Important Note: Only Expert Class entries are eligible to receive invitations to the World Championship. Therefore, you must specify on your registration form that you wish to enter in the Expert Class, of the applicable Division(s), in order to compete for an invitation to the World Championship.

If a team chooses to compete in multiple Classes within a particular Division, then the competitor will only need to compete once in that Division, during the final rounds, to have the score counted for purposes of determining the team's finish in each Class within such Division.

Open Division (Freestyle and Distance/Accuracy Combined) The Open Division provides opportunities to compete in Expert, Masters, and Novice Classes. Only the top three Expert Class teams receive invitations to the World Championship.

Round 1 — Freestyle elimination round to the top six teams in each class followed by Round 2 — Distance/Accuracy, and Round 3 — Freestyle. First round scores are used for elimination and then dropped. A team's final score is determined by taking the third round Freestyle score and doubling it and then adding it to the Distance/Accuracy score.



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Open Division Tie-Breaker: If there is a tie for first, second, or third place, the tie will be broken by the following criteria, as necessary: 1) The team with the highest combined scores in the Athleticism and Wow!Factor categories from the Freestyle Rounds, 2) The team with the highest score in Distance/Accuracy. 3) A Face-off round will take place with each team receiving one Distance/Accuracy throw. The dog making the higher scoring catch will be declared the victor. If the teams are still tied after each has made one throw, Face-off continues until one dog makes a higher scoring catch than the other. Officials will permit the competitors to rest their dogs as necessary.

Sport Division (Distance/Accuracy) The Sport Division provides opportunities to compete in Expert, Masters, Novice, and Team Classes. — Only the top three Expert Class teams receive invitations to the World Championship.

Round 1 — Distance/Accuracy elimination round to the top six teams in each class. Round 2 — Distance/Accuracy. Final scores are cumulative.

Sport Division Tie-Breaker: If there is a tie for first, second, or third place, the tie will be broken by the following criteria, as necessary: 1) The team with the fewest throws in both rounds, 2) A Face-off round with each team receiving one Distance/Accuracy throw. The dog making the higher scoring catch will be declared the victor. If the teams are still tied after each has made one throw, Face-off continues until one dog makes a higher scoring catch

Disc Dogs! The Complete Guide™

For more than two decades World Champions Peter Bloeme and Jeff Perry have taught disc-dog aficionados all over the world how to get started in the fastest growing and most exciting sport on four paws.

Disc Dogs! The Complete Guide, gives disc dog enthusiasts a proper foundation in the fundamentals and then demonstrates how to excel in competition or at the local park.

Readers will learn to throw longer, straighter, and more consistently than previously thought possible. In addition, with a style that is entertaining and informative, Bloeme and Perry trace the history and development of the sport and highlight the many competitive opportunities available for modern canine athletes.

Disc Dogs! is available as a standalone book or packaged with a black Hyperflite Competition Standard Disc.



- Expert Instruction
- 358 (6" x 9") Pages
- 500+ Color Photos
- Canine Basic Training
- Advanced Tricks
- Competition Overview
- Throwing Pointers
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than the other. Officials will permit the competitors to rest their dogs as necessary.

MicroDog Division (Freestyle and Distance/Accuracy Combined) The MicroDog Division provides opportunities to compete in Expert Class only. — Only the top two Expert Class teams receive invitations to the World Championship.

MicroDogs must weigh less than 25 pounds or be 16, or fewer, inches tall as measured from the ground to a point midway between the shoulders and hips as determined by Skyhoundz officials.

MicroDog competitors must use the K-10 Pup, (Competition Standard Pup, FrostBite Pup, Jawz Pup, or SoffLite Pup disc) or a similar or smaller-sized solid plastic disc made by another manufacturer.

Round 1 — Freestyle elimination to the top six teams followed by Round 2 — Distance/Accuracy and Round 3 — Freestyle. First round scores are used for elimination and then dropped. A team's final score is determined by taking the third round Freestyle score and doubling it and then adding it to the Distance/Accuracy score.

Because some MicroDog Division teams also desire to compete in the Open Division, and because the two Divisions have identical formats, competing teams only need to compete once, at Regional, Open, and International Qualifiers, to be scored in both Divisions. However, in order for scores to count in the MicroDog Division, MicroDog teams must use the smaller discs described previously in all rounds. There are no disc size limits in the Open Division.

MicroDog Division Tie-Breaker: If there is a tie for first or second place, the tie will be broken by the following criteria, as necessary: 1) The team with the highest combined scores in the Athleti-



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How much practice is too much? — One question that I am frequently asked is: “How much do you practice with your dogs?” Many people new to disc dog sports think that you should practice with your dogs every day. That’s simply not true. Three or four quality training or play sessions a week is more than adequate to keep most dogs in tip-top shape. On the other days, let your dogs swim or run a bit for exercise and variety. Of course, that doesn’t mean that you shouldn’t practice your throwing more frequently. Many top trainers regularly practice throwing, and even simulate their competitive routines, without their canines. Ideally you want your canine to get a good workout catching good throws — not chasing after bad ones! In the end, it’s better to go to a show or a competition with a fresh dog than one that is worn out from being overworked.

— Jeff Stanaway, 2003 Hyperflite Skyhoundz
Open Division World Champion

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cism and Wow!Factor categories from the Freestyle Rounds, 2) The team with the highest score in Distance/Accuracy, 3) A Face-off round will take place with each team receiving one Distance/Accuracy throw. The dog making the higher scoring catch will be declared the victor. If the teams are still tied after each has made one throw, Face-off continues until one dog makes a higher scoring catch than the other. Officials will permit the competitors to rest their dogs as necessary.

Pairs Freestyle Division (Freestyle Only) The Pairs Freestyle Division provides opportunities to compete in Expert Class only. Teams compete in one Freestyle round (two Freestyle rounds at the World Championship) — The top two teams receive invitations to the World Championship.

Pairs Freestyle Division Tie-Breaker: If there is a tie for first, or second place, the tie will be broken by the following criteria, as necessary: 1) The team with the highest combined scores in the Athleticism and Wow!Factor categories from the Freestyle Round(s), 2) A Snapshot round will take place with each team alternating turns and receiving ten seconds in which to demonstrate their strongest trick or cluster of tricks. Order of competition will be determined by a coin toss. The timekeeper will announce the start of Snapshot when each competitor signals his or her readiness to begin. The judges will then declare a winner based on their impressions of the overall quality of the Snapshot performances. Officials will permit the competitors to rest their dogs as necessary.

Youth Division (Freestyle and Distance/Accuracy combined) The Youth Division, simply put, is a canine disc competition for youngsters who are 15 years of age or younger as of December 31st of the year in which they are competing. The Youth Division provides opportunities to compete in Expert Class only. Two invitations to the World Championship are extended at each Hyperflite



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Skyhoundz Qualifier in the Youth Division.

Youth Division Tie-Breaker: If there is a tie for first, second, or third place, the tie will be broken by the following criteria, as necessary: 1) The team with the highest combined scores in the Athleticism and Wow!Factor categories from the Freestyle Round(s), 2) A Snapshot round will take place with each team alternating turns and receiving ten seconds in which to demonstrate their strongest trick or cluster of tricks. Order of competition will be determined by a coin toss. The timekeeper will announce the start of Snapshot when each competitor signals his or her readiness to begin. The judges will then declare a winner based on their impressions of the overall quality of the Snapshot performances.

Recreational Division (TimeTrial) The Recreational Division provides opportunities to compete in Expert, Novice, Youth, and Team Classes but is an optional event at Regional, Open, and International Qualifiers. Teams compete in a round of TimeTrial and compete for awards only. **No invitations to the World Championship are extended in this Division.**

Recreational Division Tie-Breaker: If there is a tie for first, second, or third place, the tie will be broken by the following criteria, as necessary: 1) The team with the highest combined scores in the Athleticism and Wow!Factor categories from the Freestyle Round(s), 2) A Snapshot round will take place with each team alternating turns and receiving ten seconds in which to demonstrate their strongest trick or cluster of tricks. Order of competition will be determined by a coin toss. The timekeeper will announce the start of Snapshot when each competitor signals his or her readiness to begin. The judges will then declare a winner based on their impressions of the overall quality of the Snapshot performances.

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ken by additional TimeTrial rounds between the tied teams until one team achieves a faster time. Officials will permit the competitors to rest their dogs as necessary.

SKYHOUNDZ COMPETITION

CLASS DESCRIPTIONS

Competitive Classes, vary from Division to Division, and apply only to Hyperflite Skyhoundz Regional, Open, and International Qualifiers.

Expert Anyone can enter.

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Masters Dogs 9 years and older (as of the date of the competition entered). A canine registered in the Masters Class may not simultaneously be entered in the Expert Class.

Novice A team composed of a canine and thrower that, either together or separately, have never finished higher than fourth place in the Expert Class at any Hyperflite Skyhoundz Regional, Open Qualifier or International Qualifier in any of the following Divisions: Open Division, Sport Division, MicroDog Division, or Pairs Freestyle Division.

Team Teams must be male/female unless one of the team members is under 16 years of age in which case the team members can be of the same sex. In team class, throwers alternate throws.

COMPETITION SCHEDULES

Competition is great, but don't lose sight of why you started throwing discs to your best friend in the first place. A couple of years ago, I caught myself being too competitive, and my dog "Bowditch" and I just weren't having as much fun as we used to have. It affected our performance and morale. I learned that sometimes you have to leave the measuring tape, cones and stopwatch at home. Grab a disc, walk over to your favorite field, and just play. When I remember to stop thinking about competition and start having fun, throwing to "Bowditch" is a total blast. He never fails to bring a smile to my face every time he snags that disc out of the air.

— Larry Beatty and "Bowditch," 2004 Hyperflite Skyhoundz Sport Division World Champions



Sven Van Driessche (Sequence)

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For a schedule of Skyhoundz Local Championship Events please visit: <http://skyhoundz.com/localschedule.html>

For a schedule of U.S. Regional Qualifiers and Open Qualifiers, please visit: <http://skyhoundz.com/usregionalchampionships.html>

For a schedule of International Qualifiers, please visit: <http://skyhoundz.com/internationalchampionships.html>

For information on the World Championship, please visit: <http://skyhoundz.com/worldchampionship.html>

FORMATS AND JUDGING



Disc Dog Training DVD™

Disc Dog Training DVD is an action-packed one-hour DVD featuring tips and techniques developed by internationally renowned canine disc World Champions Peter Bloeme and Jeff Perry. Whether your canine is a puppy or an older dog, a novice or a proficient disc grabber, you will learn the training techniques used by the experts. Available in regular or Pup sizes.

Disc Dog Training DVD includes free Hyperflite Jawz Disc (8 ¾" diameter | 145 grams) or Hyperflite Jawz Pup Disc (7" diameter | 90 grams)



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Whether you compete in a Hyperflite-sponsored disc dog event, or an event sponsored or staged by another organizer, a thorough understanding of the contest rules will give you the best chance of success on the playing field. Many competitors choose to do it their own way and compete in the manner in which they are accustomed to competing. This approach is fine, but if you don't adapt your style to the rules and regulations of the other series, then don't expect to enjoy the same level of success that you have experienced in the past. It can be quite a shock to practice a freestyle routine for months using seven discs, only to arrive at an event and learn that only five discs are permitted in competition. There are numerous subtle differences between the various series. Rather than lamenting the headache caused by having to shift competitive gears, revel in the differences and distinctions between the events. Use your knowledge of the rules to gain advantage over your fellow competitors. Most contest series have competitor briefings immediately before the competition begins. Attend these briefings and pay attention. If you have a question, even one you think is silly, ask it anyway. Judges love to hear themselves talk!

In the end, you can do everything right and still not receive the scores that you expect. There is frequently a big difference between the experience level of the judges at local contests, that are judged by park and recreation staff, and a regional level event judged by experienced disc dog judges. We were once told by a World Champion, that, in the year he won the Worlds, he also finished 11th at a local competition. Keep things in perspective, and remember to have fun! If you are an experienced competitor, think of Local Championships as spring training for the regular season Qualifier events judged by more experienced officials.

CANINE DISC PLAY IS LOVE AT FIRST BITE!

Nearly 20 years ago, with the publication of "Frisbee Dogs: How to Raise Train and Compete," the seminal book on canine disc sports, we attempted to answer the question, Why



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teach your canine to play with a flying disc? Today, just as then, there are as many answers to that query as there are participants in canine disc sports. One chord rings true in nearly every enthusiast's experience with disc dog sports. Simply put — people engage in canine disc play because their dogs absolutely love it.

Canine disc play is not only fun for dogs, it can also help to provide challenges, both mental and physical, that will help a canine feel that it is living a full and productive life. The shared activity of canine disc play will create a special bond of friendship and mutual respect that will help both canine and human relate better to one another.

Over the years, canine disc aficionados have shared with us countless stories of depressed and destructive canines whose lives were turned around solely because of their involvement in disc sports. These bored and direction-less canines suddenly had a regular activity in their lives that stimulated them mentally and exhausted them physically. At the end of the day, dogs that used to bounce off the walls would sleep contentedly at their masters' feet.

People with hectic schedules have discovered that ten minutes of disc play, in the backyard or at a nearby park, is more fun and better exercise for a canine than an hour-long walk.

Also benefiting from the popularity of canine disc sports are animal shelters and rescue organizations. It's no secret that shelter canines, in addition to making wonderful family pets, make fabulous disc dogs. Many active disc doggers seek out shelter animals that most folks would regard

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as unadoptable by virtue of their destructive tendencies and nervous energy. In fact, many of the canines that have won World Championship titles in competition have been mixed-breed canines that were adopted from shelters and rescue organizations by their proud owners. Unlike some other canine activities, disc dog competitions are open to all dogs regardless of pedigree or skill level.

Almost everyone loves to watch the grace and fluidity of a well-trained canine athlete being put through its paces by an experienced human teammate. Just ask anyone who has ever watched a top canine disc team perform at a National Football League halftime. Disc dogs steal the show every time.

And then, there is the disc dog way of life. Large and vibrant communities of rabid disc dog enthusiasts are springing up in nearly every American state and most countries as well. These social groups, called disc dog clubs, bring together dog lovers who have discovered that disc dogging is not merely great exercise, but a way of life as well. They eat, drink, breathe, and dream disc dogs.

There is, unquestionably, a disc dog family and anyone is welcome to join. Unlike many human sports, the competition between teams is good-natured. People still want to win, of course, but fun is the ultimate goal. A spirit of helpfulness and cooperation will practically knock you over if you are a beginning disc dogger in search of help with your new-found passion. You need only ask, and most competitors will help you as if they have known you for years.

Many folks are intimidated by the idea of competing in front of experienced competitors or large crowds. They needn't be. Competition is great fun for canines and, for most, the cheering crowd really motivates them to excel.



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Although the sport has certainly changed over the years, it has retained its unique charm. It's not about money for most disc doggers because there's little money to be found in the sport. In fact, most disc doggers believe that monetary prizes would actually be a bad thing for the sport. Disc doggers reason that anything that might cause us to lose focus on the special relationship we have with our canines is to be avoided at all costs.

It is impossible to predict how disc dogging will impact your life, but it most definitely will. Canine disc sports will continue to be popular with those who want to live life to the fullest and involve their canine companions in the fun. Your journey is just beginning and you and your best friend will surely have the times of your lives. After all, disc dogging is love at first bite!

Semper Fido!

Peter Bloeme and Jeff Perry
Co-Founders, Hyperflite, Inc.

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In 1994, on one of our early disc dog sojourns to the island nation of Japan, we were privileged to help introduce canine disc sports to the Japanese populace via Fuji Television's heavily promoted "Year of the Dog" celebration. On one of our free days, we rode the ever-efficient Japanese subway system to the Shibuya station in Tokyo, to make a pilgrimage of sorts.

Only a few steps outside of one of the entrances to the Shibuya station, we found ourselves at the base of a large bronze statue of a canine of legendary faithfulness. The inspiring and true story of "Hachiko," is one that touches the heart of anyone who has ever shared a special bond with a canine.

"Chu-ken Hachiko" (translation — the faithful dog "Hachiko") and his human companion, Isaburo Ueno, a professor at a nearby University, came to Tokyo in 1924. Each day, Ueno, accompanied by "Hachiko," walked to the Shibuya train station where Ueno departed for work. "Hachiko" would then wait patiently at the station until Mr. Ueno returned from his job at the University.

In 1925, Ueno became ill and died suddenly while working at the University. Even though "Hachiko" was only 2 years of age at the time of Ueno's passing, the bond of affection between them would last for the rest of "Hachiko's" life. Venturing home only occasionally, "Hachiko" would remain at the station for days at a time waiting for his friend to return from the University. He kept his vigil for the next 11 years, finally passing away at the spot where he last saw his best friend alive. Over the years, many were inspired by "Hachiko's" faithfulness. In 1934 a statute was erected to honor this special dog and the lesson that his loyalty and love taught to those who knew of his devotion.

Mindful of the lesson of "Hachiko," we began contemplating a way to remind disc doggers of the unconditional love and faithfulness expressed by virtually all canines toward their human caretakers. In the end, we decided that a Latin phrase summed up these feelings most succinctly. The phrase, "Fidelis Caninus Amicus," which means "faithful canine friend" was added to all Hyperflite award medals beginning with the 2007 canine disc season.

— Peter Bloeme and Jeff Perry

