

NextGen Trainee: Abby Henderson

Course: Doubles Primer/Fundamentals

Location: Des Moines, Washington

Instructor: Jason Cook

Rec pass - January 2025

Okay, first let me set the scene: 45°F/7° C surface temperature, 49° F/9° C water temp average, 270 minutes of diving with 3 ml gloves over four days. Welcome to fundies in the Pacific Northwest!



This last week I traveled from the Oregon Coast to Des Moines, Washington – I've never been diving up here except for Hood canal so I was excited to see what the coves were like. My course was back-to-back of doubles primer and Fundamentals (the old standards as per the 6-month grace period), which I highly recommend if you are wanting to do fundies but haven't dove with doubles before. Since the doubles primer was the day before fundamentals, we were able to squish it together and it allowed us to have one full day of just getting used to the new set up before focusing on skills. I was not sure how doubles were going to go for me as I am a petite person and its quite a bit of gear, however I took to it pretty quickly. I think if you have a good handle on your trim and buoyancy in a single tank, you will do well with the doubles – just a little more gas to let in and expel!

The course went really well. I felt like I was cheating just a little bit as a lot of the skills were similar to what I do in my career, however the GUE protocols for each skill or drill opened my eyes to all the small details that make a difference on an effective and efficient skill, especially in emergencies.



Most days we started in the shop learning lectures and drills on land, then we spent the rest of the day until the sun started to go down in the water. Majority of the time our cold tolerance did us in before our air was even close to minimum gas. Our days were packed with a lot of information and diving – and our significant progression really showed how much we were learning through practice.

Thank you to Jenn Thomson for putting together the NextGen Legacy Project, and connecting me to Jason Cook, an awesome instructor, who allowed me a space in his class, Eight Diving for supporting our dives and having shop dogs to play with during breaks, and a huge thanks to the GUE Seattle community that made me feel extremely welcome. I had multiple people messaging me, checking in, giving advice, and inviting me to dive with them. Although I didn't get to meet all of you this time – I WILL when I am back in a couple months for my tech upgrade!