

# COONHOUND ADVISOR

Trevor Wade

The early portion of each year brings a lot of southern events, and therefore, lots of windshield time behind the wheel. During those times, I find myself lost in thought regarding all things coonhunting. One thing that often comes up in my thoughts is the dynamic of a lot of the coon clubs today. It seems like every week we get a couple calls from struggling clubs looking for ways to make it. Maybe the membership has gotten older. Maybe the ideas and hunts that used to work aren't working anymore. On that same note, we get the same number of calls a week from people interested in opening a club. People with innovative new ideas and fire in their eyes.

Why is it then, that most of the time, those calls come from folks who are twenty miles apart? I want to preface this by saying I was once that guy. I had all these ideas and wanted so badly to have a club to make those things come to life. I kick myself thinking back, knowing that the existing clubs in my area had use of a young man like me, who could have put in the brunt of the work and made a difference in the local events. It's no secret that a good portion of clubs have older officers that are looking for younger folks to step in and step up. Some of you may be shocked to know this, but running a club is more than sharing a post and showing up ten minutes before deadline.

This does go both ways however. If your club has been running 8pm, \$25 entry fee, two-hour hunts for the past fifteen years and you are seeing numbers dwindle, maybe it's time to try some new things. Double headers seem to be hot right now. Slam events work better in some areas than others, but is it worth a try? Shoot, throw in a Calcutta or a jackpot and spice things up. If nothing else, this can make the event fun and gives you a better shot of bringing folks back.

I guess my main point in writing this was to plead to the hunters out there, work together, not against each other. Young people, get out to your local club, get a membership, be active, put in the leg work and that club will be more open to hearing your ideas and philosophies. After all, those folks that are putting on the events didn't get there by accident, they have been putting in the hours and hosting events for years in most cases. Veterans of the sport, be open to the younger members in your club. Being closed minded is not going to bump your entry numbers up. With multiple events every night within driving distance, you have to make your event stand out from the crowd.

## You're Going to Minus It?

**Q:** Good morning! I had a situation at the Winter Classic that I wanted to ask you about. It was a three-dog cast and all three dogs were treed together. The shine time expired without us seeing a coon. There were no nests, no holes, and no obvious place of refuge. I voted to minus it. The handler of another dog agreed there was no coon and the dogs had missed, however, when I said I was going to minus the tree, the other handler was in disbelief. That handler vot-

ed to circle it even though he agreed that no coon was in the tree. His reasoning was, that in his part of the country, trees were circled if they were touching other trees. Now I do know that in some cases this may be true, but in this situation the trees barely touched by their outer most limbs and the trees surrounding were as slick as the one the dogs were on. Perhaps in the future, this could use some clarification because even though the tree did get minused, there was a serious discussion about circling it.

**A:** Fortunately, you got the call right but man, what a statement. "Where I am from, we circle trees that touch other trees". I'm not sure where they do that at, but I can promise you that we only have one version of the rulebook and it doesn't vary from region to region. And nowhere in that rulebook will you find the section encouraging you to circle a tree that touches surrounding trees. Sometimes you have to laugh at the disconnect between the thought processes in the nite hunts and a night out hunting during season. A tree that this person would more than likely correct their dog on, is now being circled to avoid taking minus points in a nite hunt.

There are a ton of variables when it comes to this circumstance for sure. I know coons have been known to crossover trees. Most of us that have hunted for any length of time have seen evidence of this firsthand. We also have to be reasonable and know that a coon isn't like a squirrel timbering from tree to tree. Unless you can find a clear path that a coon could easily cross into a big den or huge pine tree where there is an obvious place of refuge or some wooly spots your light can't search, you have to be realistic and eat your minus in this situation.

Sometimes when you are voting in these situations it's best to think about what you would do on a night out hunting by yourself. When you got to this tree, would you be content with the tree your hound is on or would you pull the dog off and send it on knowing it pulled up short? That should tell you all you need to know.

## Striking under the minute vs babbling rule

**Q:** It's a three-dog cast. Dog A struck in before the minute was up, Dog B struck after the minute was up and both were trailing straight from us about 200 yards away. Dog C strikes in 100 yards to our right and shortly after falls treed. Dogs A & B hush and are at Dog C's tree a minute later. Should dogs A & B be minused their strike points for leaving their track?

**A:** While we can all agree that we don't want our hounds pulling to other dogs, switching tracks is not cause to minus strike points per the rulebook. Some folks will point out Rule 4(a) but when reading that rule, you have to take the entire rule into

## Attention!

The following person's Nite Hunt Director and Nite Hunt Judging privileges have been suspended until the date listed.

**Timmy Murrell • Booneville, Kentucky**  
**Indefinite**

Violations to these privileges should be reported to the United Kennel Club.

Rev. 6/4/18

account. Rule 4(a) When a dog quits a track and comes in to cast or to tree. Exception: 5(b). The key part there that has to be remembered is “comes back in to cast or tree”. That means that a dog has quit its track altogether, not that it has switched tracks. Honestly, the “or tree” section is irrelevant as there are other rules in place to score dogs in those instances (like treeing but not declared treed or coming into a tree after the judge has arrived). Regardless, in this situation, as long as the dogs are declared treed within the three minutes, nothing else really matters.

You also mention the dogs striking before and after the minute. Maybe we should touch base a little bit on some of the misinterpretations of the babbling rule. A lot of people put the minute with the babbling rule hand in hand when in fact, the minute is just a grace period where someone doesn't have to strike their hound if it is, in fact, babbling. The definition of babbling per the rulebooks is, when a dog opens three times or has been struck where no track is evident. It is as simple as that. If at any point the judge feels a dog is opening where no track is evident, after the minute has elapsed, the dog may be minused for babbling. As is so often the case with the nite hunt rules, this is a judgement call. If the handler of the minused hound disagrees, the call can be called to question and a cast vote would then determine the ruling.

### Website vs Magazine

In the days and times of Covid restrictions popping up at a whim and arctic blasts across the South-Central United States causing tons of damage, I felt like it would be a good time to revisit the rule pertaining to discrepancies between the Events Calendar on the UKC website and the back of Coonhound Bloodlines. While we hate to change any event after it has been printed in Bloodlines, sometimes there are things that happen that are beyond the club and our control. In the case that the two don't match, the Events Calendar on the UKC website is the final authority and takes precedent.

You will find this outlined in the Rulebook under the sections, **Club Officers Guidelines for Conducting UKC Events**. Rule III. E(2) says, *If club does decide to advertise, the information in the advertisement must be the same as the information in the Upcoming Events listing. If information in an advertisement for an event disagrees with the information found in the Upcoming Events list, then the Upcoming Events list is considered correct and what the club must go by. The “Upcoming Events” listing on the UKC website is final authority.*

Let's hope that the world goes back to normal soon and we don't have to worry about any discrepancies. 🙌