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# Sideline Report

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## Reflecting on the Hunting Beagle World Championship

I remember well, standing in a running pen on a Friday afternoon watching some hounds run while fielding the first phone call with upper management discussing the potential need to cancel events. Something that, until then, was against normal policy. That was now nearly nine months ago when our country got turned upside down. In the days and months that followed, we cancelled event after event, due to Covid-19. Most all of the World Qualifying Events that were scheduled in the preferred time of year, were amongst those.

Still, most clubs were willing to postpone and reschedule later in the summer months even though it meant much tougher conditions, in many cases, to get dogs qualified. Even then, there was still uncertainty whether or not the World Championship could take place, after much of the country remained under strict mandates.

Sitting in the office this morning reflecting, I am in awe of the 2020 Hunting Beagle World Championship. How did we manage to have 250 hounds entered, much less qualified? The result is a testament to many folks and all those clubs that rescheduled and held Qualifying Events, while accommodating state regulations. Yes, we added some qualifying opportunities in the closing weeks on short notice and outside of normal policies. Yet our supporters, in an age where opinions and

debates run wild on social media, understood that this year was simply not normal and accepted and supported the decisions that were made without making a big deal of it.

To have it all come together in Caldwell, a beautiful area barely minutes off major byways, was simply amazing. The camaraderie was at the highest level, even when we needed to work around not having food at headquarters, and certain sponsors not attending. The Hilltop Beagle Club topped it off with their well-thought-out plan and organizing both private properties and the 50,000+ acres of game land nearby in a manner that kept casts off of each other and fresh spots to run for subsequent rounds.

Our most sincere thanks to Jeff Duvall, Trever McQuain, Curt Driggs and their team for organizing the hunting spots and run so smoothly. The same goes to Roy Swafford for handling the officiating portion, the Field Reps who are always willing and able, to all those who stuck around to judge in the semifinals and the final cast as well. Thanks also to the officers of the NHBA for all they bring to the Hunting Beagle program and to Tiffany Schmersal for judging the show, and most importantly our participants that showed up and showed out.

Congratulations to all the World Championship winners. We're pumped and looking forward to next year!

