

COONHOUND ADVISOR

Allen Gingerich

Not a Majority to Call Time Out

Q: Please give the official interpretation of the Nite Hunt Honor Rules concerning this situation. We have a four-dog cast. All dogs are declared struck. Dogs A and B go one way, and Dogs C and D go another. Two of the dog's trail onto a road. Two of the handlers want to call time out, while two do not and so there is no majority consensus. How should this be handled?

A: **Rule 7** states that a majority must agree in order to call time out in a cast using "hunting" Judges. That is as straight forward as can be. However, there are times that common sense must prevail. If there was undisputed evidence that dogs were in danger of being killed on this roadway, time should be called. Is there a handler so cold of heart that he shows no consideration for a fellow competitor's dog being in dire danger of being killed in order to win a cast? I'm sure there are one or two out there that desperate.

Here are some of the variables that I would need answers to before I would rule on the question. Was this a busy, well-traveled highway or was it a country road with very limited traffic? Sometimes handlers are looking for excuses when the game is not going in their favor. For this reason, we score dogs that are treed when time out is called. Handlers have been known to cry "danger" when they have been beaten on track or tree. The rule says that the majority is required, and that's the law. Taking that hard line, the handlers with dogs on the road can only scratch their dogs and recover them. Is that always fair in the face of real and present danger? I think not. UKC may in fact support a judge or a Master of Hounds overturning the vote and calling time out if considered absolutely unreasonable otherwise.

Legit Cross Out or Lame Excuses

Q: Last weekend, I lost a cast because the Judge scored a coon in the next tree over from where a dog was treeing. The ends of the limbs were barely touching each other. I believe that Judges are being too liberal in this aspect. Judges in this area are also circling obviously slick trees because of handlers who say the coon could have crossed out. This is getting to be a big problem here and I would like to hear UKC's position ruling on this.

A: An article appropriately titled *Cross Outs and Your Conscience* comes to mind. That article has appeared in this column several times throughout the years. I believe that one of the most frequent abuses in the scoring of coonhounds in a Nite Hunt occurs when judges let handlers convince them that a coon could have crossed over to another tree from an obviously "slick" tree. I have either coon hunted too many years for my own good or I am like the guy from Missouri (you gotta show me) because I do not believe that coon climb the trunk of one tree to get into another tree unless the branches are obviously entwined or there are vines creating a natural path for the coon to follow. I have seen coon reach out and take hold of limbs and pull themselves across when I was in the tree with them, attempting to shake them from their perch. Otherwise, coon will stay put, moving only when frightened by shaking

vines, shooting or squalling. I've heard of coon climbing smaller bushes and ride them down fence rows into den trees. Sounds like fun, but I will have to be shown.

I have also heard of the "escape route" for saving dogs from minus points. Handlers maintain that a tree should be circled because there is an obvious escape route in the form of a limb on the backside of the tree that touches the ground, or perhaps a log across a stream or some other conveyance that allowed the coon to fool the dog and escape. These handlers maintain that since the coon climbed the tree and the dog is none the wiser, the points should be circled. Other scenarios reveal dogs that have received plus points when a coon was seen several trees down a fence row from where the dog was treeing. The handler paints a scene of the coon crossing from tree to tree in a style that would turn a Tarzan scriptwriter green with envy and, believe it or not, some judges buy it.

At the top of the backside of the scorecard the running rules are appropriately named as "Honor Rules." The framers of the Nite Hunt rules were coon hunters of much experience. The Rules Committee members, the same. There is a thread running through the rules that assumes the judges and handlers to be experienced coon hunters. Granted, many newcomers to the sport are not, but the Judges should be.

If you can honestly see an obvious path, in terms of limbs or vines from one tree to another, then give the dogs the benefit of doubt. Otherwise, let's take our lumps and strive to breed accurate locators in our hounds rather than relying on lame excuses. Small branches that brush each other do not qualify. No dog is 100 percent accurate, and part of the game is trying to find something better than what we are feeding. Will someone out there please tell me what someone gets out of bragging on a hound that can't tree with reasonable accuracy? After the second or third slick tree in a row on a pleasure hunt, I'm ready to change tools, if you get my drift. Judges and handlers in Nite Hunts should be of the same position as UKC on this topic.

Strike Positions Don't Change When Dog Holding 1st Strike Trees on Previously Scored Tree

Q: All dogs are struck, treed and scored. All dogs were led away from the tree and turned loose. Dog A strikes for 100 points behind the cast in the area they had just come from. Dogs B, C and D strike in front of the cast for 75, 50 and 25 points. Dog A trees. Cast goes to tree only to discover that it is the same tree already scored on. Dog A's points (strike and tree) are marked through as to receive no credit. The question is, should Dogs B, C and D have their strike points moved up to 100, 75 and 50?

A: Basic to the UKC Nite Hunt Honor Rules is the fact that there is one set of strike points. Dogs are awarded strike points for the speed in which they search out and open on a coon track. **Rule 3(d)** provides for separate tree points on split trees, but states firmly that there will be only one set of strike points. We have no way of knowing, in the dark of night, relying only on sound, whether a dog is on a separate track or not. For that reason, we assign strike points in the order the dogs are called. We do not move points up on strike, or on tree for that matter, unless it is a split tree situation. The dog keeps the position for which it is called.



UKC® Disciplinary Action Committee Report

- UKC's Disciplinary Action Committee determined that Laura Gregory of Wakefield, Virginia, was guilty of professional handling in a UKC Conformation Event. DAC Action - Suspended until February 21, 2020.
- UKC's Disciplinary Action Committee determined that Jeremy Eter of Pierce City, Missouri, failed to comply with a UKC investigation. DAC Action - Suspended until February 20, 2021.
- UKC's Disciplinary Action Committee determined that Joe Newlin of Silver Lake, Indiana, was guilty of: behavior unbecoming of a UKC official; falsifying official documents; and failure to comply with a UKC request for restitution. DAC Action - Suspended indefinitely.

Rev. 2/27/19

*The UKC Notice of Suspension list can be found at
www.ukcdogs.com/suspension*

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.

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