

COONHOUND ADVISOR

Trevor Wade

At long last, April is here! I've had this month circled on my calendar ever since we pulled out of the hotel in Greencastle, Indiana last year on our way home from the first UKC Tournament of Champions. An incredible year of qualifying has led us to where we are today. We have 1,336 dogs qualified with 5 cast wins or more in 2021. As of the day I'm writing this, I don't have a final number for dogs entered in the regions, but they are coming in steady, and I fully expect us to surpass the 655 dogs that were entered last year. By the time you read this, the regions will either be about to happen or more than likely just passed. Who will be in line for some major pay days and the chance of being crowned the 2022 UKC Tournament of Champions Winner? Be sure to stay tuned to the ukcdogs.com website and the UKC social media pages to stay up to date on news and results!

All Dogs Treed and Handled

Q: I was on a cast at a major event recently and had a circumstance come up that I wanted some clarification on. We started out with a four-dog cast that dwindled down to three with one dog getting withdrawn. At one point, we had a split tree with Dog A split from Dogs B and C. We went and scored Dog A's tree first. After scoring the tree, the handler elected to keep the dog on the leash to head to the next tree.

While in route to Dog B and C's tree, Dog C left the tree and started trailing toward us. Dog C was minused his tree points. He fell treed around 100 yards from where he originally was and was treed back in. While still in route to Dog B, that dog also left and went and covered Dog C on his new tree. The handler of Dog B wanted to tree in on Dog C's tree, but it was determined that the tree was closed due to all dogs being treed and/or handled when Dog C was treed. The Master of Hounds upheld the call. Was this handled correctly?

A: This is a good question on a situation that isn't very common. The Master of Hounds made the correct ruling, and you cited the correct reason in your question as well. Looking at Rule 11(a) you will see this sentence, *dogs must hold the tree for three (3) minutes, unless all dogs in cast are declared treed, on leash, or hunting time has expired.*

In the situation described above, all dogs were declared treed and/or handled the moment Dog C is declared treed on the last tree, which in turn closes the tree. Therefore, when Dog B comes in and covers Dog C, the handler's only option is to head in and see how the tree is scored. The thing to remember is that when all dogs in the cast are handled/declared treed, tree time becomes irrelevant. You just got to get those dogs handled. And while that is usually a benefit in a cast, this is an example of a time where it comes back to bite the handler. It's one of those

breaks that we talk about so often.

Treeing But Not Declared Treed

I talk to a lot of people during the year about hunts they've been on and certain rule interpretations. One question that I get asked more often than any other is regarding dogs treeing but not declared treed. I put a lot of thought into an article that I wrote back in March 2020 that I am going to revisit below. This is a good one to take a picture of or clip out to refer to later. Remember that this article is an extension of the Rulebook and having a topic like this handy can save a headache down the road.

In the *2020 Official Coonhound Rulebook*, you will find this under Rule 4(h). The rule reads, *dogs treeing but not declared treed, when Judge arrives, will be assigned and minused 25 tree points on off game or slick tree. Dogs shut-out* on strike on slick tree or off game will receive minus tree points only. Refer to Rule 6(f) for Champion Division casts and off game.*

This rule is largely unchanged from the previous running rules. The only slight change from the last edition is where a dog is found to be treeing but not declared treed and the tree is determined to be slick or off game (in a registered cast) is found, will now receive 25 tree points instead of next available tree points to be minused. This change comes from the newly implemented tree countdown, which would indicate that next available is always 25 points in this situation.

So, let's get to the real root of the issue and address how to score a dog treeing but not declared treed, when the Judge arrives with a few different scenarios.

Scenario 1: Dog A and Dog B are declared split treed in that order. After scoring Dog A's tree, he is recast and covers Dog B's tree, which was closed. When the Judge and cast arrive, Dog A is found to be at the tree, treeing but not declared treed. The coon is found, and Dog B is plussed. How do you score Dog A? **A:** In this situation, Dog A is shut out on strike so the strike points are deleted, and it would **not** receive 25 tree points to minus as a coon was seen.

Scenario 2: Two dog cast, Dog A is struck for 100 followed by Dog B for 75. Dog A is declared treed. When the Judge and cast arrive, Dog B is found to be at the tree, treeing but not declared treed. The coon is found, and Dog A is plussed. How do you score Dog B? **A:** In this situation, Dog B is on the hook for 75 strike points which will be minused per Rule 4(d) which reads, *if dog declared treed; after three minutes has elapsed no additional dog can be declared treed at that particular tree. Dog(s) treeing but not declared treed when Judge arrives receives minus strike points if coon is seen.* So, with the coon being seen, Dog B will NOT receive 25 tree points to be minused.

Scenario 3: Dog A and Dog B are declared split treed in that order. After scoring Dog A's tree, he is recast and covers Dog B's tree, which was closed. When the Judge and cast arrive, Dog A is found to be at the tree, treeing

but not declared treed. The tree is determined to be slick (or off game in registered cast), and Dog B is minused. How do you score Dog A? **A:** In this situation, Dog A is shut out on strike, so the strike points are deleted. With the tree being determined to be slick, Dog B would be assigned 25 tree points and they would be minused.


Scenario 4: Two dog cast, Dog A is struck for 100 followed by Dog B for 75. Dog A is declared treed. When the Judge and cast arrive, Dog B is found to be at the tree, treeing but not declared treed. The tree is determined to be slick (or off game in registered cast), and Dog A is minused. How do you score Dog B? **A:** In this situation, Dog B is on the hook for 75 strike points which will be minused and with the tree being declared slick (or off game in registered cast), Dog B will receive 25 tree points to be minused.

To avoid flooding this column with a ton of scenarios, I just want to point out a few more things that you should keep in mind when dealing with dogs treeing but not declared treed when the judge arrives. 1.) In a Champion Division cast, when off game is seen, the dog will be scratched if treeing but not declared when Judge arrives. 2.) If the tree is circled, strike points will be circled, nothing else. 3.) When dealing with dogs that arrive **after** the Judge has arrived, refer to Rule 5(b) which states, *no dog to receive minus points for coming into tree after Judge arrives unless a coon is seen and the dogs treeing are awarded plus points.* That means that in any other situation besides a coon being seen, the dog's strike points will be circled. If a coon is seen, the dog's strike points will be minused. This is for dogs coming into a tree **after** the Judge has arrived which is a completely different

circumstance from a dog treeing but not declared treed when a Judge arrives, which we discussed above.

Judge, Can You Hear Me?

A question I have been getting routinely is about Judges accepting strike and tree calls when they can't hear the dog. I suppose this issue is becoming more common as folks are carrying more of the "deep and lonely" type dogs to hunts. A lot of issues in nite hunts boil down to having quality judges and this is no different. And a bit of common sense often comes in handy as well when making decisions in the field and behind the desk.

If I am out judging a cast and a handler tries to tree their dog 1.6 miles through the country and I flat can't hear the dog, there is no way I can take that call. The reason boils down to the simplest of reasons, I can't judge what I can't hear. Any judge accepting a call and then walking toward a dog he/she can't hear, whether it be a strike or tree call, is opening themselves up for issues. Any judge accepting a call and immediately running the two-minute tree time, or eight-minute strike time is also opening themselves up for issues. When a handler attempts to strike or tree a hound that you can't hear, as a judge, respectfully let them know that you can't hear their dog and therefore can't accept their call. It's as straightforward as that. 

Attention!

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

Darrel Barker • Rockford, IL

Scott Johnson • Monroe, WI

October 19, 2022

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

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