

COONHOUND ADVISOR

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As we outlined back in the January issue, this year is the year for rule proposals to be sent in, and ultimately voted on by the Breed Associations at Autumn Oaks. At this point of the process, the proposals are in, compiled, cleaned up, and ready to be discussed and voted on. Below you are going to see the rule proposals that are up for vote this year for a change in the 2023 Rulebook.

These are just proposals and are not rule changes yet. It will take a majority vote by the breed associations to get a proposal to pass. If you have strong feelings about a proposal, make sure your association knows about it. I know from talking to the officers of each association, they are actively searching for opinions. It is their duty to make their votes based on what is best for the sport and to represent the thoughts and opinions of the folks they are representing within their association.

One last thing I need to point out is that procedural changes are not listed in the proposals. Take the proposal for a Hunt Director being eligible to compete in a cast, for example. That is not a running rule but what we consider to be a procedure in our Rulebook. It will be taken into consideration but ultimately UKC will be making a decision on whether that will be implemented or not.

2022 Rule Change Proposals

1. Allow the use of thermal imaging devices, cell phone cameras, and mirrors as scoring aids.
2. Change and combine rules for Dogs Treeing but Not Declared Treeing to receive the same demerit, regardless of how the tree is scored. The recommendation from the proposal is to minus the strike points and to **not** assign any additional tree points in any circumstance.
3. Change Rule 4(b) to read, *Strike points will be minus if none of the declared struck dogs open within 6 minutes. The 6 minutes is a change from the 8 minutes the rule currently requires.*
4. Alter the tree countdown to read that the 2nd tree position closes after 30 seconds, 3rd tree position closes after 1 minute.
5. Alter Rule 11(d), taking out the stipulation that you must hear a struck or treed dog open before recasting.
6. Add the definition of the “implied scratch rule” to Section 6.
7. Remove the 1st offense Warning from Rule 2(a) for handlers not striking their dog on or before the 3rd bark.
8. Remove the 1st offense Warning from Rule 2(d) for handlers calling the wrong dog.
9. Put a time limit on handlers recasting their dogs after pulling them off a scoring situation. Give them

up to one minute to recast their dog, or if other dog in cast is declared treed, up to one minute to utilize their option to keep their dog on leash until the next opportunity to recast arises.

10. In any category, a dog to accrue 200 minus points (regardless of pending strike/tree points) for running, treeing, or molesting off game. (Off game must still be seen)

Tapping on Trees

Lately I have received a few questions on pulling vines and/or tapping on trees that you are scoring and whether that is permitted or a scratching offense. The question is, do we consider that disturbing a place of refuge?

If you remember, before the latest rule change, under scratching offenses you would find a subsection pertaining to squalling, tapping trees, and pulling vines during the first two minutes of shine time. That rule has since been taken out since you are now eligible to squall, tap trees, and pull vines for the entire duration of the shine time at each tree. The reason you don't see it listed in the Rulebook is because it is permissible to do so. On most casts you will see folks tapping on trees with a stick, pulling vines and blowing the reeds out of their squaller to get that ol' ringtail to peek out of that den tree. And they are perfectly fine in doing so.

Striking the Wrong Dog

Another rule that was updated in the last rule change year, is the first offense warning for striking the wrong dog. The original intent of this rule was to make things a little easier for the Youth out there who don't have ample time or opportunity to hunt with a dog 5 nights a week to learn the dog's bark and cadence leading into an event. If mistakes are made, they get a warning and are in no worse shape for it.

As it is, most adult handlers seem to be the ones benefiting most from this inclusion and the ability to pitch in on a “freebie”. Have a little respect for yourself and your fellow handlers in the woods. These are the Nite Hunt **Honor** Rules we are talking about.

Nonetheless, this is a question I see come up often and we need to be getting it right. You can find this Rule outlined in Rule 2(d) reading, *A handler calling the wrong dog on first offense results in a warning issued and no points assigned. On second offense, the available position is minus. On third offense, dog is scratched.*

Next Day Air, Expedited, and Rushed Paperwork

I travel to a lot of events and hear a lot of stories about Next Day Air, Expedited, and Rushed paperwork that has been mailed in and not delivered within the timeframe outlined in the details. My first question is always, did you write it on the outside of the envelope? Oftentimes the answer is no and that answers the question for us.

When you are filling out paperwork, you will notice under additional services the information regarding Next Day Air, Expedited, and Rushed paperwork. The first

sentence there reads, *When requesting an accelerated service, you must write NEXT DAY AIR, EXPEDITED, or RUSH on the outside front of the envelope.* With the amount of mail received daily, this is the only way to ensure that the mail gets sorted properly and that piece of mail gets sent to the correct representative.

Spring Season

As of writing this, the bulk of my spring travel season is in the books. As always, I have enjoyed traveling around and seeing everyone and the events. One of the perks of my job is developing relationships and friendships with folks that have similar interests as me, all over the country. If I haven't ran into you yet, hopefully an event this summer or fall is on the calendar. Safe travels to all and happy hunting!



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

Justin Crockett • Senatobia, MS

May 1, 2024

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

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