

# COONHOUND ADVISOR

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As of this writing, Autumn Oaks is in the books and the World Championship is looming large in the not-so-distant future. This past weekend at Autumn Oaks I got to talk to a lot of folks, and I always thoroughly enjoy that. With some of those conversations, there were some rules questions obviously and I have some notated to cover both in this column and on the UKC Hunting Ops Podcast over the next several months. For today's column though, I am going to touch on two issues that I saw numerous times over the course of the weekend in Richmond.

### Losing Your Cast

Friday night at Oaks, I happened to be around the hunt headquarters sitting with the Master of Hounds. In the 30 minutes I sat there, four different casts approached the table or contacted the Master of Hounds that had been separated. I'm not sure what resolutions were reached but I do have some recommendations to help avoid this happening in the future.

In the time after casts are drawn and you meet to sort details out, make sure that a phone number for each member of the cast is placed on the scorecard. I would then recommend that all members of the cast take a picture of the scorecard so they can reach out to the members of their cast or the judge if the need arises.

If for some reason that doesn't happen and the cast becomes separated, each member of the cast must make their way back to the hunt headquarters and the event official. Failing to do will result in getting scratched from the hunt per Rule 6(n) which reads, *handler will be scratched, if handler fails to return to MOH/HD after cast becomes separated. Time period allotted is determined by MOH/HD.*

This isn't a big deal at a local level but at an event like Autumn Oaks, driving distance and deadline times can become a problem. It is better to be safe than sorry and to get all the information shared between the cast members before you ever break apart.

### Help Yourself

Everyone has instances every so often where they feel they are getting wronged on a cast. It's inevitable if you are in enough competitions. Luckily, there are procedures and guidelines in place to help you out in those situations. No matter how many times those procedures have been combed over in this column and on the web, it's common place for people to try to bend them, disregard them or just flat out not know them. So, let's take a minute to hash them out.

**Step 1:** If you disagree with a call made by the hunting judge, immediately question the call, and ask for a cast vote. This step **must** be done and **everyone** on the cast must vote. A handler refusing to vote will be scratched per Rule 14(b)3. It takes a majority to overturn a hunting

judge's call.


**Step 2:** If you are not satisfied with the result of the cast vote (or a non-hunting judge's ruling), request a question mark be placed on the card to be presented to the Master of Hounds or Hunt Director. Rule 14(b)4 is key, stating *situations not questioned and notated at the time judge's decision is made, will not be considered.*

**Step 3(Only for MOH format):** Attempt to resolve the question in a calm, respectful manner with the Master of Hounds, handler who requested the question, the judge, and the remainder of the cast. The Master of Hounds will make a decision based on the information provided. Keep in mind that no complaints will be considered by the Master of Hounds after a period of thirty (30) minutes has elapsed from the time that the scorecard has been turned in.

**Step 4:** If the question cannot be resolved by the Master of Hounds, the handler may request a panel be formed. If Hunt Director format is used, you skip Step 3 straight to Step 4. A \$20 Panel Fee must accompany the request. The Master of Hounds or Hunt Director will assemble a three-person panel comprised of responsible, impartial, and knowledgeable individuals. The panel will hear all sides and make their ruling. If the panel rules with the handler, the fee will be refunded. If the panel rules against the handler, the fee will be retained by the Host Club. The panel meeting must be within one hour after the deadline for the return of the scorecards.

**Step 5:** If the handler does not agree with the panel's decision, the next step is to fill out a UKC Appeal Form while the panel is still assembled. The form must be filled out by the handlers on the cast, members of the panel and the MOH/HD. A fee of \$20 must accompany the appeal that is mailed to UKC with the report. Additionally, the panel **MUST** complete the Panel Meeting Results Form when an Appeal to UKC is filed and include it with the report that is submitted to UKC.

**Step 6:** UKC will investigate the matter and make a final ruling. If UKC supports the individual filing the appeal, the fee will be refunded. A written statement reflecting the final ruling will be mailed to those involved. UKC reserves unto itself, in its sole judgement and discretion, the right to make corrections it deems necessary.

All these procedures and guidelines are found in the rulebook. Just as handlers and event officials are bound by the rules, so is UKC. There are no shortcuts in getting resolutions to these issues. Make sure you are familiar with the process before you attend a hunt. 

### ATTENTION!

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

**Justin Crockett • Senatobia, MS • May 1, 2024**

**Andrew Ratliff • Winchester, KY • January 1, 2025**

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



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