

COONHOUND ADVISOR

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Spring is officially in the air (and on the hood of the truck) and competition season is in full swing. While writing this, I am anxiously looking forward to the weekend ahead and the UKC Tournament of Champions Regions. The weather looks amazing and should make for some great hunting conditions for all involved in each Region. By the time you read this article, we will know who the big winners are already. I sure appreciate the continued interest in the TOC, and I hope that as the years go, the event gets bigger and better. Good luck getting your five cast wins to qualify for 2022. Hopefully, you have a few in your back pocket already.

With spring also comes a huge portion of the yearly Regional Qualifying Events where our hunters and show enthusiasts can get their hounds qualified for the 2021 Coonhound World Championship. While I wish each club had the opportunity to host a RQE, that isn't the case and with good reason. An oversaturation of qualifying events diminishes the achievement of qualifying. If you were to look at it right now, there are probably too many as it stands. I field some calls about the lack of RQEs in a given area sometimes and how there are limited opportunities to qualify. In my opinion, that is kind of the point. It is supposed to be difficult to qualify.

One thing that sometimes irks me more than it should is when a club calls that can't find an official for a Regional Qualifying Event. Of course, I understand that at times it can be more difficult to find event officials in the Covid era than normal. But, if you are telling me that there are multiple Master of Hounds who are members of the club who don't want to officiate because they want to enter their dog, then we have an issue. Attaining a RQE is not easy and once you get it, there is more to being the host club than just opening the club house. The club should take pride in that event and want to make it as successful as possible. That sometimes takes making sacrifices. You may have to skip your entry to the RQE this year to be the Master of Hounds or Bench Show Judge, some have to work the kitchen, guide, judge, and numerous other tasks that make an event successful. I guess when you get down to the bones of it, what I am trying to say is that hosting a RQE is a privilege when you think about the percentage of clubs that have one, and you should take pride in hosting one if you have the opportunity. There are a lot

of clubs out there that envy you.

Take your Time

Recently, we have been having more and more issues with incomplete or incorrect event reports. Those event reports are the only thing we have to make sure that the dogs entered not only get their wins, but that they were entered in the correct category and that they get credit for the dogs they competed against in those categories. A lot of our year long series, such as Performance Points, Top Ten Bench Show and Youth Spotlight Series depend on accurate breakdowns of how many dogs were competed against and defeated. To ensure that the dogs and handlers get the credit they deserve, just be sure you take your time and completely fill out the form before you sign it. If you ever have any questions on how to fill out the reports, we are more than willing to help you out the best we can if you reach out to us via phone call or email.

The YEP events specifically can be tricky, but it is extremely important to fill those reports out fully and correctly so we can record the data. Not only do we have to worry about tracking the win for the Youth Spotlight Series, but we have to have the handlers name and age filled out on the event reports and the Youth Spotlight Series Points Report sheet that accompanies it. The handler often is not the same as the dog owner in those situations, so it is important to get handler information at the time of entry. With the Spotlight Series being ran in two different age categories, date of birth is essential as well. All of that information can be found in the paperwork that is sent to the clubs in the event packet for YEP events. A great resource for clubs hosting YEP events is the UKC website. If you go to ukcdogs.com/next-gen-spotlight you can learn a lot about the events that you are hosting and why we need the information we are asking for.

Handling a Dog During Shine Time

Q: I recently competed in a nite hunt event and had an issue that resulted in getting scratched for handling my dog. Here was the situation. It was a three-dog cast, and we were heading to Dog A and B's tree. When we arrived at the tree and started the shine time, I realized my dog, Dog C, was twenty-five yards away in a hole. Since the dog was in a hole, I didn't need to tree my dog and asked the judge if I could handle my dog. He declined my inquiry to handle my dog and when I handled the dog anyway, I was scratched. Rule 5(a) clearly states that I do not need to tree my dog in a hole. I questioned this call and took it to the Master of Hounds, and he ruled against me. What

am I missing?

A: Unfortunately for you, I am siding with the judge and Master of Hounds on this one as well. First off, let's address one thing for all the handlers out there, listen to your judge. Deliberately going against what an appointed judge tells you to do is no way to get ahead in a hunt. Most times, those judges have reasons for their calls and that may have been the case here.

You are right, Rule 5(a) does say that a dog does not have to be declared treed in a hole, however, that isn't the issue here. The rule that you are overlooking is Rule 11(c) which states that, Judge shall give handler permission to handle dog on split tree unless cast is in process of shining a tree. When you say shine time was started, your ability to handle your dog was no longer valid. Upon the completion of shine time, at that point you could have handled your dog in the hole, after asking the judge of course.

You may not agree with the rule and I can respect that, there are rules that I don't necessarily like either, but it is the judge, the Master of Hounds and UKC's job to police the rules in place.

Scoring Trees Out of Order

Q: Is there ever a situation where you can score trees out of order?

A: While it is possible to score trees out of order, it became much more difficult with the change in leash lock rules in the latest rule change. There is only one circumstance where dogs may be scored out of order and it isn't easy to get there. Again, we will refer to Rule 11(c), specifically the last two sentences. It says, If all dogs are declared treed and handled AND cast needs to move to new location after scoring all trees, trees may be scored in most convenient order (refer to 7(e) and 11(d) if applicable.) Otherwise, trees must always be scored in the order dogs were declared treed.

So basically, three things need to happen in order to score trees out of order. 1) All dogs must be declared treed. 2) All dogs must be handled. 3) Cast must have a need to move to new location. Any other variation of those things can result in a sticky situation. For example, if all the dogs aren't handled, and you score one dog out of order, another dog could leave the tree and cause a huge issue for all involved. Just stick to Rule 11(c) and you will be alright.