

COONHOUND ADVISOR

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This month's column features all Nite Hunt Rules proposals submitted to UKC for consideration. The list of proposals is followed by clarifications and statements as noted by the individual submitting the proposal.

UKC NITE HUNT HONOR RULE PROPOSALS

The following proposals were submitted to UKC for consideration by the Rules Committee.

Any of the following proposals that include more than one noted option (1-5) will result in the Rules Committee voting for one of those options first. The option that receives the most votes will be the one the committee will then vote on. It takes a majority vote to pass any proposal. Any passed proposal will go into effect on January 1, 2020. The official vote will take place at the 2019 Autumn Oaks.

1. Babbling

• **Option A:** Allow three minutes grace period on the first turnout of the hunt only, after which dog must be declared struck on or before the third bark.

• **Option B:** If a question arises pertaining to a dog babbling when declared struck, a vote shall determine the scoring of strike points as follows:

- a. If majority of the cast agrees the dog was babbling, strike points shall be minused.
- b. If the vote results in a tie, strike points shall be deleted.
- c. If majority of the cast agrees the dog was not babbling, strike points shall remain assigned as called.

• **Option C:** If a question arises pertaining to a dog babbling when declared struck; a vote shall determine the scoring or assignment of strike points as follows:

- a. If majority of the cast agrees the dog was babbling, all dogs shall receive 50 strike points when declared struck, providing a third strike position is available.
- b. If the vote results in a tie, all dogs shall receive 50 strike points when declared struck, providing a third strike position is available.
- c. If majority of the cast agrees the dog was not babbling, strike points shall remain assigned as called.

2. Tree Countdown.

• **Option A:** One minute after first dog is declared treed, second tree (75) position is closed on that tree, but dog is eligible for next available tree points (50); two minutes after first dog is declared treed, third tree (50) position is closed on that tree. Any dog(s) declared treed on that tree after two minutes has passed will be assigned 25 tree points.

• **Option B:** Any dog that is declared treed two minutes after first dog was declared treed; will be assigned 25 tree points on that tree.

3. Coming in to Tree After Judge Arrives.

• **Option A:** Minus the strike position held.

• **Option B:** Minus the strike points if coon is seen. Delete the strike points otherwise.

4. Recasting

• **Option A:** Set a time period of 30 seconds to lead dog away from a scored tree before recasting.

• **Option B:** Set a time period of one minute to lead dog away from a scored tree before recasting.

5. Leash-Locked.

• **Option A:** After 10 minutes of being leash-locked, handler may choose to recast dog or remain on leash while walking to dogs declared treed.

• **Option B:** Eliminate leash-lock rule altogether, unless all dogs are declared treed and cast decides to move to a new location after all trees have been scored. If cast decides to move, hunt time shall be stopped while walking to trees with dog(s) on leash. Hunt time shall be called back in during shining time only.

6. Tree Closed

• Change rule to close tree at three (3) minutes after first dog is declared treed.

7. Treeing but not Declared Treed When Judge Arrives

• Any dog(s) treeing, but not declared treed, when the judge arrives shall be assigned next available tree points. The dog shall be awarded next available tree points and minused both strike and tree if; coon is seen, tree is slick, or off game is seen. In the case of more than one dog, split available points.

8. Squalling at Tree

• Eliminate Rule 6 (u) and allow squalling during all of shining time.

9. Silent on Track

• Eliminate Rule 6 (e) {if dog is continuously silent on track}.

10. Declaring Dog Treed After Tree is Closed

• Call may be accepted but noted. If dog is on a closed tree when judge arrives; assign next available tree points and minus both strike and tree points regardless of how tree is scored.

11. Running, Treeing, or Molesting Off Game

• Change rules to state dogs must be **SEEN** running, treeing, or molesting off game.

12. Scratched for Fighting

- Change rule to make it mandatory that dogs must be seen fighting or attempting to fight in order to scratch.

13. Scratched for Fighting

- Change rule to scratch dogs for fighting or attempting to fight during hunt time only and shall further include while dogs are off leash and during any time out periods during the hunt.

14. Calling Dogs Off Trail

- Eliminate Rule 4 (e) {For calling dogs of trail}.

15. Issue Warning on First Offense

- a. **1)** For handler declaring dog struck after the third bark. Judge shall ask for call and dog must be declared struck on next bark or receive available strike position minused and reassigned on the scorecard.
- 2)** Minus available strike position on second offense. If not declared struck on next bark after judge asks for call, dog is scratched. **3)** Scratch dog on third offense.
- b. For calling wrong dog. On second offense dog is minused called points available. Dog is scratched on third offense.
- c. For squalling during first two minutes of shine time. Handler’s dog is scratched on second offense.
- d. For dog returning to same tree led away from after scoring. On second offense, dog to receive called strike points minus. On third offense, dog is scratched.

16. Timeline for Questioning a Scoring Situation Related to a Written Rule

- A scored situation may be questioned at any time prior to the scorecard being turned in to the Event Official, provided all handlers remain present when the situation occurred, and the question pertains to a written rule and not a judgement call that was made.

17. Point Values in Strike and Tree Column on Scorecard

- Change Rule 6 (y) to read: {If scorecard lacks point values in the strike or tree column(s) and after seeking additional information the Event Official cannot satisfactorily determine the accurate score, effected dog(s) will be scratched.

18. Hunt Directors.

- Allow the individual serving as the Hunt Director to handle a dog in the hunt.

2019 UKC RULE PROPOSAL CLARIFICATIONS AND NOTES

Be advised, the following notes are the statements and opinions of those who submitted the proposals and may or may not necessarily reflect the opinion of UKC.

PROPOSAL 1: Most judges find current babbling rules difficult to enforce. Mostly due to the debates that generally follow and, therefore, is often ignored. Regardless, it seems to have become more of an issue than ever before and it may be time to seriously consider any change that would make it easier for judges to

enforce, if that is possible, or a change that would not give the automatic strike dog an advantage they don’t deserve the credit for. A great deal of thought, as well as consideration for various opinions, has been put into this item. Even then, it seems there is no magic wand that can create a fix-all. Prop 1 offers a couple options to consider in this effort and we hope the committee will take a good bit of time and think this one through.

Option A is the babbling rule of old. It was much easier to enforce as such a dog would have three barks before it got ten yards up the road. Now that same dog has a whole minute grace period, and by that time the dog may be out a good distance and it’s simply harder to get judges to make the call, even when they have no doubt about it. However, there’s a lot of concern that 1(a) may hurt entries more than we’d like to see as it would basically keep owners from entering those kinds. If that is a concern, Option B may be the better one to consider. At least it would not give a babbler as much of an advantage over the honest strike dogs. Food for thought.

PROPOSAL 2 (B): Both second (75) and third (50) are available provided these positions are taken within the first two minutes of the first dog being declared treed. Otherwise, after two minutes the only position available for any dog declared treed will be last (25).

*This exact rule has been used in UKC Super Slams and was widely accepted by hunters and judges. It is easy to implement and is unique to UKC. Dogs may cover up to two minutes like always. Dogs that are over two minutes after the first arriving at a tree were most likely not running the track and are simply “covering” the dog(s) that put the work in. This change also keeps the first dog treed the most accountable in the case of a slick or off game in a Registered cast.

PROPOSAL 3(B): Rule change would eliminate circling strike points of dog(s) that have come into trees after the judge has arrived, these strike points would now be deleted. It would also add the exception of Rule 6 (g), to scratch dog(s) in Champion cast that run, tree or molest off game. Rule change would also remove the 5(b) exception from 4(a).

*This rule could be utilized with or without the off game exception 6(g). The important thing is to no longer allow for circle points.

*The idea with this change is to eliminate the use of circle points for dogs that have either quit their tracks or have arrived late and change them to delete. Current use of these circle points are being utilized in tie breaking situations. A tie should not be broken by circle points given to a dog that has either quit it’s track, came in late or even worse a dog in a Champion cast that ran, treed or molested off game. I believe the dog in order to be scratched must actually tree on or grab a hold of off game, dogs should not be scratched for simply coming into handler. I personally do not have a problem with these dogs taking minus points but have a hard time believing that a few of the breeds would go for that, if so by all means! If not the important thing is to eliminate the circle points and delete seemed like a simple to follow compromise.

PROPOSAL 5: With some of the new format changes recently implemented, a lot of clubs are choosing the one-hour and

90-minute hunts. The pros of having dogs on the ground competing as much as possible is supported by many hunters. There are also times when you do need to be able to move locations. A couple options to consider in this proposal.

PROPOSAL 6: This proposal was submitted in consideration of the shorter hunt time options clubs now have. It would potentially allow for more scoring during the hunt, with a shorter tree time required. Moreover, most hunters suggest dogs that have commitment problems generally give up their tree in less than three minutes or a dog that trees for three minutes is usually also one that has no issues staying treed for as long as it takes for the handler to arrive.

PROPOSAL 8: Removing Rule 6 (u) would result in handlers being able to squall, pull vines, tap trees etc., during the entire shine time.

*I have heard the argument as to pulling dogs off trail into a tree from interference caused by squalling. This argument holds no water. If interference is the concern then why are we allowed to squall at a tree at all? This is a rule in the Honor Rules that scratches handlers for an honest mistake much of the time not at their own tree.

PROPOSAL 9. When's the last time you saw a judge enforce the silent dog rule? Was that also the first time you've ever seen it enforced? Should it be eliminated, or should more emphasis be put on judges to stand up and enforce it? Does a silent dog pose a threat in terms of having any advantage? Are they at a disadvantage? Would eliminating the rule change breeding practices with any major consequences? What do you think? Lots of questions.

PROPOSAL 10: The current rule automatically assigns the handlers dog to a split tree regardless of anything. And if the dog ends up being on a closed tree, there's a whole lot of minus to be had for the dog. If Proposal 7 passes, the potential for even more minus is even greater. Something to think about.

PROPOSAL 11: Current rules do not require a visual of off game for minus to be awarded. Sentence adds the word seen.

*A coon must be seen to be plus points to be awarded. This change requires the off game to be seen for minus points to be awarded. This is change will prevent the unscrupulous cast members or Non-Hunting Judges from awarding minus points without visual verification.

PROPOSAL 12: This change would require Judges and cast members by vote to witness visually before scratching a dog(s).

*UKC has put into play procedures to use if you suspect that a dog fight has broken out to catch the culprit(s). Unfortunately there are unscrupulous hunters and a few non-hunting judges in our mist who would be more than happy to scratch their competition. Rules that are up to interpretation allowing dogs to be scratched need the loopholes closed. One should be sure before a dog is scratched from a cast. If it is seen fighting or attempting to fight that caused an interference scratch 'em.

PROPOSAL 13: This rule keeps dogs from getting scratched while in the dog box or while on leash. Sometimes dogs do not get along as well with others when sharing small spaces in a box with a strange dog when they otherwise don't have temperament issues when on the hunt.

PROPOSAL 14: Under current rules 7. TIME OUTS and all Time Out situations referred to Rule 5. (g) Delete Points, Rule 4 (e) unable to be utilized as a strike minus and is therefore obsolete. This rule is just taking up space on a scorecard and confusing to those that may still try to use to move to a new hunting spot when a dog or dogs are still at large. Under current rules concerning Time Outs 7. (a-f), 5. (g) Delete Points, there is no longer a way for 4 (e) Strike Minus to be used.

PROPOSAL 15: This proposal is geared towards being more lenient with scratching handlers, when possible. Especially when it comes to younger or newer inadvertent or unintentional acts by the handler. There are several sperate items under this proposal that would first issue a warning ion first offense without their dog gaining any advantage by it before resorting to stricter measures for second- and third-time offenders.

PROPOSAL 16: My reason for this...I have personally experienced and seen Hunting judges mis-apply points. Everyone hops in trucks and realizes driving down road, or at the next turnout that it was scored wrong. Well, the way the rules are, there is nothing you can do about it even though you know it was wrong, and you can't make them put a question on the card. This will give a little bit of time to think, especially in fast-moving situations. Not everyone asks to see the scorecard before moving and trusts the judge to put it on the card correctly. Doesn't always happen that way.

PROPOSAL 17: This change would not automatically scratch a dog when the returned scorecard lacks values (plus, minus, delete or circle) in the strike and/or tree columns, as per current rules. It would allow for the event official the authority to check with those involved to resolve the missing information. Only if the official can still not determine the accurate score will the affected dog(s) be scratched.

*I have yet to figure out why an official can correct mathematical errors but yet cannot question cast members to correct a missing symbol. This rule seems to affect those that are at a disadvantage the most. Young hunters and those that are newer to the sport neither of which are qualified to be a judge and hold the responsibility of carrying a scorecard but yet are scratched for their lack of knowledge. The old and those with vision problems can also be at a disadvantage. I remember a situation at Autumn Oaks a couple of years ago where a youth hunter was the only one left in his cast and came back for a non-hunting judge. The man the judge sent him out with also happened to be a MOH. Upon completion of the cast and a big score the card returned had something missing and the youth was scratched per the rules in place. Situations like this should not have to happen. With a simple change that affects no other rules this could be avoided in the future. If an event official cannot satisfactorily come to determine the accurate score, by all

means scratch, but attempting to get to the bottom of the situation is not only rational but the right thing to do.

PROPOSAL 18: UKC made it easier for clubs to come up with an event official when they implemented the Hunt Director option. Yes, it gets boring to some to have to sit at the clubhouse with little to no action while everyone else is gone for several hours. Allowing the HD to handle a dog would, in some cases, add another entry for the club. Possibly another guide. Possibly another judge. Those are good pros.

The cons? What about the guy who is waiting at the clubhouse with a legitimate question related to a scratching offense? Is anyone going to be able to get their hunt time in and the opportunity for a cast win when that happens? The simple answer is, it hardly ever happens. But maybe there's a reasonable way to combat these cons? Decisions are made by weighing the pros and cons. This is one of those.



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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