

COONHOUND ADVISOR

Trevor Wade

I hope this column finds you and your family healthy and in good spirits. With so much going on in the world, we are lucky to have our hounds to keep our spirits up. I know that I personally would've been admitted to a local mental ward during this lengthy quarantine, if I didn't have the ability to take my hounds out and run them. I am hoping by the time this magazine reaches you, a lot of the executive orders and regulations set by local, state and federal officials have been lifted and we are back to business as usual.

In this month's column, I am going to take the time to discuss a few UKC related items that have been affected the past couple months by the virus, followed by covering some nite hunt topics, including a topic that Allen covered in the March 2016 issue regarding judges on a cast.

UKC Office Closed Down

With the release of an executive order by the Governor of Michigan on March 23rd, to slow the spread of COVID-19, the UKC office building is closed until April 30th. We do, however, have the capabilities to work from home and complete most tasks that are required of us. If you are wondering about wins, reports, packets, or other paperwork that was sent in around the time of our shut down, please expect delays in processing. We're working through the mail as we're able to receive it. Please remain patient in these unprecedented times, while we try our best to appease your requests and needs. Hopefully, the stay at home order doesn't get extended again, but as of this writing the virus seems to be picking up steam rather than dying down. Keep an eye on our website and social media pages for additional updates between now and the next Advisor column.

Bench Show, Field Trial and Water Race Reports

As most of you are aware, the requirements for titling hounds in the bench show, water race and field trial events changed this year. With that change came an overhaul to our programming system for inputting wins. We are happy to now have the programming updated and the wins that you accrued in the beginning of this year have now been applied. Not only that, but your title multipliers are now showing up. Obviously with the office shut down, it may take a few more weeks to get out your certificates but with an online points check, you should be able to see where your dogs stand. Congratulations to all who have earned these new titles. It's very cool to see the HOF degrees showing up on dogs' titles already. Earning 50+ wins in any category is something to be proud of and it not only highlights the dedication and hard work put forth by you and your hound, but it shows the support you show for the clubs, whether at the local club level or on the major event stage.

Rescheduling Events

I know one of the biggest questions everyone has right now is, what is going to happen to the cancelled events? Right now, our biggest priority is rescheduling major events and RQEs. We are doing our absolute best to avoid conflict and not step on too many toes but that is going to be unavoidable with us try-

ing to fit a year's worth of events into 10 months or perhaps even less. Once everyone gets a better idea of how this thing is going to play out, we will be able to work on rescheduling local level events. I know this time is frustrating for us all, but just hang in there. Hopefully more answers will be available by the time this is published.

Thermal Imaging

Q: Is thermal imaging now permitted in nite hunt events?

A: There has been no rule change that would permit the use of thermal imaging in UKC licensed nite hunt events. When discussions about the use of thermal imaging, mirrors, cell phones or any other type of equipment that may aid in the scoring of a tree, you can always refer to Rule 6(r). It states that the dog will be scratched, *For use of scoring aids other than light or mechanical squallers. Laser pointer light is permitted.*

We Are Not All Judges.

This topic is near and dear to my heart. It's one of my pet peeves actually. How many times have you seen a cast gather and someone, usually the person in possession of the scorecard, exclaims, "We are all really Judges for this cast." It can happen even in cases where a club or association has made an effort to appoint a quality Judge on the cast. In an effort to not come off looking like a jerk someone accepts the scorecard agreeing to record points while making it very clear that ALL decisions will be voted on by ALL cast members. Man, I hate that. That is not how the scoring system is designed to work. It may sound nice and friendly, but it can quickly lead to choosing up sides and stalemate votes and inconsistent judging.

Every cast must have a Judge assigned to it. It is the club's responsibility according to Rule 9 to assign Judges who are honest and capable of keeping score. If the Host Club follows the suggested procedures to draw judges and casts, then it should never be an issue of not being able to come up with good hunting judges. Those procedures can be found under MOH/HD Guidelines in your rulebook under Drawing Casts and Selecting Judges.

So often I hear from people who are hung up on the fact that you shouldn't be able to hunt a two-dog cast because there is not a majority. The first thing I ask them is, "How is a two-dog cast different from a four-dog cast?" You still don't have an odd number of handlers. The truth is you don't need an odd number of handlers to judge a cast of dogs. All you need is one honest and capable Hunting Judge. That being said, the obvious issue at hand comes into play when the Judge's decision is questioned.

Did you ever stop to think that in a three- or four-dog cast, if even one person agrees with the way the Judge scored a situation, he/she cannot be overturned by the cast? That is really significant in my mind. That tells us that the only time a Judge's decision can be overturned in the woods is when the remainder of the cast members unanimously agree that the Judge has made a bad decision.

If we, as clubs and event hosting organizations, would put just a little more effort and concern into the selection and appointment of quality Hunting Judges, problems and controversies would be almost non-existent. And if those Hunting Judges appointed by the club would take control of the cast instead of claiming "we are all Judges," the system we have in place will

work very well. It's the mentality that "we are all Judges" that prompts a lackadaisical attitude about drawing casts, assigning and accepting authority. This policy has been addressed a lot in the past 10 years, but we are still finding clubs and officials who choose to ignore it. It needs to be a mandatory process.

The process starts with selecting individuals as hunting judges from your general pool of entries for each division (Registered and Champion). By doing so you are able to use your most qualified judges you have available. Next; put your judge entries on the cards first. Follow that up by drawing a guide entry from the guide pool (unless the judge is already guiding). Lastly, draw your remaining entries to the cards. It's also a good idea to add blank entry forms in your general pool in the event you have any three-dog casts. The number of blank entries obviously depends on how many three-dog casts you will have. This way you are totally eliminating any potential negative perceptions as to how it was determined who gets the three-dog cast(s). Heck, stick those blank entries to the card they were drawn to. It tells the story for you. This process takes no longer than any other and benefits everyone involved. Everyone.



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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