

COONHOUND ADVISOR

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We are in the midst of the busy time of competition season, and it seems like things are going well, from just about everything I hear. While I'm out on the circuit, I hear a lot about rule interpretations and which ones are being misunderstood. Recently, I have heard of a lot of discussions about interference. You won't find a section that references interference in the Rulebook. There's Rule 7, which talks about timeouts and instances that could prompt a timeout being called. A lot of the scenarios you hear aren't listed here, and can sometimes be quite subjective for a judge or official to rule on. I tend to use the phrase "bad break" a lot—but, I've had them. And if you've been hunting much time at all, you've had them too. Let's take a look at a few past columns where I found reference to the buzz word of the month, interference.

Dog Placed in Box with Note

Question: I was on a four-dog cast, but this question only involves one dog—The dog in question is struck in about a half mile from the cast. The dog trails another mile and a half and gets treed. The handler trees the dog, and the cast members start walking towards the dog treed. The cast is within half a mile of the dog, and she quits treeing. The two minutes is applied, and the dog is minused her tree points. The six minutes is applied, and the time gets her on strike as well. The rest of the dogs in the cast aren't struck in, so the cast decides to go back towards the trucks. When the cast gets to the truck, the dog in question is in the dog box, the door is shut, and we find a note in the front seat. Somebody who knew this dog was hunting in the same area, led her out of the woods, drove down the road and put her in the truck. Should this dog have been minused, or can you call interference?

Answer: Opinions on this subject vary from, "if this isn't interference, I don't know what is" to "it's a bad break and the dog should be minused!" First of all, interference does *not* appear in the rulebook as an option to use in your situation. Rule 7b says you may call time out if dogs get with another group of dogs; there is no mention of other hunters or other dogs getting too close to the cast, so obviously time was not called. The two minutes and then the six got the dog, so it was minused. It's not until you've gotten back to the truck that you've realized something may have happened there. You even found a

note on the seat!

Let's assume the note said there was a coon in the tree. Does this mean we should plus the tree? What if the note said it was slick? Would you be willing to take minus because that's what the note said? I'd dare to bet not! What if the dog actually did leave the tree, never made another bark and was picked up on the road somewhere? The note is nothing more than hearsay—The Judge was not at the tree to see what really happened. The dog was judged according to what she did. In this case she hushed, the two minutes got her, and then the eight. We can't go back and change how we scored the dog after finding her in the truck and reading the note. There are too many things that may or may not have actually happened. Is it a bad break? Yes, possibly—but I think most of us agree things don't always go the way we would like them to! It's like the game of golf: very frustrating at times. For me, that's pretty much all the time!

That article was reshared in 2012, but I did some minor updates with rule numbers and current times. Coincidentally, Allen wrote another article in 2021 that mentioned the word interference. Let's take a look at it:

Electric Fences

Question: Shouldn't dogs' strike points be deleted for interference after hitting an electric fence and coming into the cast?

Answer: I have two problems with this... well, maybe more than two. First of all, interference is not a reason to call time out, and does *not* appear on the scorecard. It has become a generic term for "we ought to be able to call time out for this." I have a hard time thinking that any electric fence of the type used to contain livestock could *possibly* be considered dangerous to a dog. But, I'm not an expert on voltage and amperage or anything technical, for that matter. I do know this: If you write an exception for the one case in a million where a dog gets fried by the highest-tech hog burner on the market while he's standing in a creek, that we will open the door for *any* dog that quits a track after bumping into a 20-year-old rusty fence that has weeds choking it out.

My final comment would be this: Can you imagine the excuses for not taking minus strike points if we were to embrace the fact that it's acceptable to circle points if a dog gets popped by a hot wire fence?

Naturally, I end up running into a lot of topics that are still widely discussed to this day when I deep-dive into the archives. Let's stay in 2012, shall we?

Strike Position Held Until Recast

Question: Dogs A, B and C are all declared struck and treed in that order. Dog D is shut out. The tree is scored,

and in the process of leading the dogs away from the tree to be recast, dog D is declared struck and treed. Since the tree had already been scored, does this open all strike positions?

Answer: It is UKC's position that strike points are *never* considered open again under these circumstances until those dogs coming out of a scoring situation have been recast.

Let's use an example to show how it would be considered unfair if strike points were considered open

prior to releasing the dogs such as the question posted above: Let's say A, B and C are declared struck in that order. C is declared treed first, followed by B, then A. A coon is seen. Dog A's score would be 150, Dog B 150, and Dog C 175. Now, dog D is declared struck and treed just like in the question/scenario described above. If first (or all) strike positions would be open and dog D has a coon, then his score would be 225+. Most would probably agree it wouldn't seem right that dog D ends up with the better score, considering it took longer to strike and tree a coon.



ATTENTION!

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

Cliff Monroe • Mooresboro, NC • Indefinitely
Chris Simmons • Cramerton, NC • Indefinitely

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



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