

COONHOUND ADVISOR

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All signs point to spring, including the hectic major event calendar that is quickly approaching or already here in a lot of cases. So far, this year has been very successful on the competition forefront. There was a great Grand American in January, a great Winter Classic in February, and some great state championships over the past several months as we head into Breed Championships and other major events this April/May/June. With that will come more frequent rule interpretation questions which have been kind of slow over the past several months. This month I'm going to revisit a couple questions that I've gotten over the past couple of weeks multiple times and a fun question I found in an old advisor column that pertains to a lot of casts that go on today. I hope you enjoy this one.

Non-Hunting Dogs

Q: I have two questions pertaining to dogs hanging around the cast members and not going hunting. First, is there a time frame that the dog needs to be gone before the fifteen-minute rule is lifted, and second, may time out be called at any time while the fifteen-minute clock is working on a dog for not going hunting?

A: No, there is not a time frame in which a dog must be gone before the fifteen-minute rule {6(c)} is lifted for not hunting. So long as the dog leaves the cast it should be considered as hunting again. In the same token just because you may no longer see the dog standing right next to the cast does not always mean the dog is back out hunting again. If there are any concerns a judge may first need to shine their light around the area to make sure the dog did in fact take off and is not still just hanging around close by not showing signs that are considered as hunting before lifting the time. However, if the dog takes off and is no longer seen hanging around the area doing nothing then time is lifted immediately.

In regard to the second question; yes, time out may be called even while Rule 6(c) is applied on a dog. Rule 6(c) states a dog will be scratched for *failing to make any attempt to hunt within any 15 consecutive scorecard minutes*. For instance; let's say 6(c) is applied to Dog A. Ten minutes goes by when time out is called. All dogs are handled, including dog A, and the cast moves to recast all dogs. Dog A now has 5 minutes left on his fifteen to go hunting or else falls victim to Rule 6(c). This is one of the most missed questions on the Master of Hounds test where many are of the misconception that dog A would have a new fifteen minutes after time was called. Not true. The kicker is "consecutive scorecard" minutes.

Majority of Cast, or Majority Of Those Present?

Q: This situation came up on a recent cast, and we would like UKC's ruling on it. All four dogs were declared

struck. Dogs A, B and C were declared treed, in that order, to the north. Dog D was then declared treed to the south. The handlers of A, B and C went to their dogs, and the handler of Dog D went to his. Handlers A, B and C shined their tree without handler D being present. Of those three, two see the coon and one does not. How is the tree scored? From there they all went to handler D's tree and scored it.

A: First of all, you don't say whether the cast agreed to shine the tree without the presence of the other handler, or if that handler refused to come over and score their tree. It makes a difference. If handler D refuses to go to the split tree of the dogs declared treed first, then that handler should be scratched for refusing to score the tree. I'm assuming that's not the case.

I'm guessing this situation happens fairly frequently in the essence of saving time. Three handlers agree to go score their tree, then go score the other tree. It's not right, I know, but it is happening. The thing is, in situations without a unanimous decision when only three handlers are present, you have a problem. The tree in the situation above cannot be plussed just because two out of the three handlers present voted that it should be plus. Because in the grand scheme of things, that's only two of the handlers on a four-dog cast. A tree cannot be plussed or minused without a majority of cast vote to do so. The key words are "majority of cast." Notice it's not written "majority of those present."

If handler D refuses to come back and score the first tree, then he is scratched for failing to participate, and you would have a majority vote of two handlers against one and the tree would be plussed. So, it does make a difference. The next time you handle a dog in a nite hunt, remember this. You would be crazy to agree to anything other than having the entire cast present for the scoring of every tree. It can and will come back to haunt you.

When to Recast Dog

With the 2023 rule change, the last situation where a dog could be leash locked without the handler agreeing to it was removed from the rulebook. The rule that was removed, was the stipulation in Rule 11(d) that read, *after being scored, dog shall not be released until another dog struck in on track, or on tree, opens*. In the current 2023 version of the Official Coonhound Rulebook, Rule 11(d) now reads, *after being scored, dog(s) may be released immediately or led a reasonable distance (judges' decision) from scored tree before recasting*. No need to run the 2-minute or 6-minute clocks on declared struck or treed dogs before recasting, just cut your hound loose (at the judge's discretion of course).

Handlers will still retain the option to keep their scored hound on the leash if any other dog in the cast is declared treed. That is clarified in the 2nd and 3rd sentences of Rule 11(d) by saying, *however, if another dog in cast is declared treed, handler(s) has the option to recast or keep scored*

dog on leash. Handlers opting to keep dog on leash may not recast dog until next opportunity arises (next tree is scored or dog leaves tree).

Same as it has always been, upon releasing the scored hound, it will be important to head to the last spot you heard other hounds in the cast that were declared struck or treed to run appropriate times. In the case of the recently released dog opening up and being struck, the judge needs to make it a priority to split the difference the best way possible to accurately judge all dogs in the cast that are declared struck.



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
- 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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