

COONHOUND ADVISOR

Trevor Wade

Whew, it's hot out. But with prep work being completed for the upcoming fall major events like Autumn Oaks and the World Championship, I know cooler days are coming. The old timers weren't kidding when they used to tell me that the older you get, the faster time seems to pass. I feel like I just finished some of the tasks I have on my to do calendar, but they were for last year's events.

Anyways, let's switch gears. I thoroughly enjoyed this year's breed day events. Honestly, they breathe a bit of life into writing this monthly column with some of the scenarios and questions that pop up. Besides questions regarding Rule 4(f) and 5(b) which have been covered ad nauseam in this column, I got a lot of newer questions that make you think. I have a list of them that we will be covering in this column and on the UKC Hunting Ops Podcast in the coming months. Enough with the small talk, let's get into some topics.

Protect the Integrity

Q: It seems I keep seeing more casts filmed and scorecards posted before hunt deadlines. Can you all talk about that?

A: There are multiple things in play here, so let's break it down. We will start out talking about live streaming casts on a social media account or streaming service. That is a no brainer. Let's take a look at Rule 8(f) in the rulebook that reads, *relying any type of electronic messaging with reference to scores, that is deemed detrimental to the hunt, may result in suspension.* To me, letting everyone know in real time what each of the cast member's score is detrimental to the hunt for not only the one recording, but to all others in the cast as well. Do not do this unless you have preapproval from UKC in an elimination style hunt where score is not the determining factor. Even in cases where it gets approved, it would need to be someone outside of the handlers I would think but we can cross that bridge when and if we get there.

Let's now talk about taping a cast or parts of a cast and posting it after the fact. Is there a rule against doing so? No, not really. Should you respect people's rights to privacy? Absolutely. I don't know the laws and regulations in most states regarding this but sometimes the least you have to worry about is getting scratched from a hunt. I always exercise caution when watching any video posted by a person due to how easy it is to maneuver and manipulate what folks see and don't see. You can easily sway the viewers to support your narrative by doing this. Before I form an opinion, I would like to know what happened leading up to the video and what happened after the video ended to resolve the situation. Hopefully I'm not in the minority here.

The most common thing that I'm seeing is people posting pictures of their scorecard and/or scores before the deadline of a hunt. Again, can we refer back to Rule 8(f)? Is posting a picture of my winning scorecard detrimental to the hunt? I know for sure it's detrimental for me because now I've disclosed my score to all, and they have an idea of what to shoot for. They may now tree their dog and be aggressive in a situation where they would have usually played defense and been content with a cast win.

At major events like Winter Classic and Autumn Oaks, we make it a point to mention keeping scores confidential. To UKC, revealing your score before all the results are in is detrimental to those hunts. Ultimately, if the organization or official putting on the event deems your posting has been detrimental to the hunt, you would be written up for misconduct for violation of Rule 8(f). It's a lot simpler to hold off on posting anything until after all scorecards are in, or the deadline passes. The folks on social media will be fine waiting to see what happened until then. And you know the old adage, better safe than sorry.

Blowing Through

Q: What can we do about dogs getting out of pocket? It is getting ridiculous in these hunts how far dogs are going in such a short amount of time. I don't have the woods to hold them.

A: I understand the frustration. Trust me, we get it. We hear it all the time. I personally feel the rules that have been put into place over the past couple of rule changes will ultimately help popularize a style of dog that can hunt the woods you're in and tree more coons around you without blowing out. It will just take a while for the breeding to get there.

In the meantime, I don't have a perfect answer. Even with shorter hunt periods, some of the dogs today are near impossible to hold. What it is going to take is casts using Rule 7 more often. Rule 7 talks about calling timeouts on casts and I'm going to point out two instances in particular that can be used in situations we are talking about. 1) Rule 7(a) which reads, *when dogs are getting on a highway, trail onto posted land or trail into a place where there is danger to dogs or hunters.* 2) Rule 7(d) which reads, *when dog(s) are trailing out of hearing in different directions.*

I know it can be frustrating as a guide or a host club putting on an event, especially a larger event where you have to put multiple casts in big, safe woods. Just remember, it's bound to come full circle eventually because some of the dogs you see today just aren't sustainable in the long term with more houses, roads, and landowner issues.

Two-Dog Casts

Q: Are you required to have a non-hunting judge on a two-dog cast?

A: We've been getting a lot of these calls lately and I'm not sure where the confusion is coming from all the

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sudden. The only time a cast is **required** to have a non-hunting judge, is in a one-dog cast. Two, three, and four-dog casts, can all utilize hunting judges. There are multiple instances where the rulebook tells you that a one-dog cast would need a non-hunting judge. There is no mention of a two-dog cast anywhere in the rulebook. I guess that can be an answer but let's look to the rulebook for some rule clarification.

Where does it mention needing a non-hunting judge on one-dog casts? 1) Rule 1(c) reads, *deadline may only be extended if lone handler is required to go to MOH/HD for a non-hunting judge to finish cast.* 2) Rule 8(e) reads, *if only one handler remains, handler must return to MOH/HD for a non-hunting judge.*

Does this mean that you won't see any non-hunting judges on two, three, or even a four-dog cast? Not necessarily. Clubs and event officials have the authority to assign non-hunting judges to any cast they deem fit.

We can see that in Rule 9(b) which reads, *club will have the option of hunting or non-hunting Judges on all casts for each division. A non-hunting Judge may be assigned to any cast at the discretion of MOH/HD and/or club officials.* Just use your best judgement when assigning judges and if you feel you need a non-hunting judge on a cast, assign one. If you are comfortable with the hunting judge you've assigned to a cast, roll with it.



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

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



Rev. 10/4/2022