

COONHOUND ADVISOR

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Happy New Year! I hope the holiday season was wonderful for everyone. It's crazy that as the years pass, they seem to get faster and faster. In my case, this is especially true since my daughter was born. I feel like I was just in the waiting room at the hospital trying not to pass out, and now she will be turning four years old this month. It doesn't seem possible. The same can be said for our hounds. We work our tail off to get a hound how we like, really start enjoying hunting them, and the next thing you know, they have grey on their face. One thing is for certain, time will continue ticking whether we are ready for it or not. Make it a priority this year to enjoy every second of it. Take those trips, spend some of that money if you need to, but above all, enjoy yourself.

Rules Proposal Reminder

A membership with any one of the seven UKC Chartered Breed Associations comes with the privilege of having a voice when it comes to the UKC Nite Hunt Honor Rules. All members are reminded that 2022 is in fact the year for any rule change proposals. Members should submit their rule change proposals directly to their breed association. The deadline to submit proposals to the Breed Association is March 4. The deadline for the Breed Associations to submit their proposals to UKC is March 18. All proposals will then be compiled and sent back out to the Breed Associations. This timetable allows the associations to have all proposals in time for the Annual Breed Day Event for discussion purposes with their members if they so choose.

The official vote will take place on Friday at Autumn Oaks. First, however, there will be a meeting scheduled, at Autumn Oaks, where two members of each association are invited to attend. The purpose of this meeting is to allow discussion and address any concerns anyone may have before the official vote takes place. After that, each association may choose to further discuss any concerns with their officers or members that were addressed at the meeting before casting their votes on each proposal. It takes a majority vote to pass any one of the proposals on the ballot. Any rule that gets a majority vote to pass will then go in effect on January 1, 2023.

Before submitting a proposal, it's important to understand and consider the impact certain rule changes can have on the sport of competition, on breeding practices, the integrity of degrees, and other aspects of the sport as well. Often times when talking about rule proposals, we completely forget how rules may affect folks in different parts of the country that hunt in differing climates and/or terrain features. In other words, it's something that must be well thought out and taken seriously. A proposal based on what caters to the hunting style of my dog alone is not always a good idea. The point is rules also often play a

big role beyond the playing field of a nite hunt. If we're not careful we could set ourselves up for the type of dog that we probably wouldn't use if he/she was the tool we used to put food on the table. Another thing that is worth considering before submitting a proposal is what the future looks like when it comes to available hunting grounds diminishing for many of us. Nevertheless, if you have a good one; be involved and submit it! And lastly, include some notes as to why you think your proposal would be instrumental and worthy of consideration.

Entering RQEs

In the last issue we talked a little about the landscape of Regional Qualifying Events changing in 2022. Already, we are seeing a handful of clubs opt to do away with their bench show at their qualifier. On the other side, I have been adding select events as RQE bench show only events. With these changes, I thought it would be good to have a refresher course on the rules pertaining to entering RQEs.

For bench shows, there is no limit to how many RQE bench shows a dog enters, regardless of if it wins or loses. A dog that is already qualified may enter any other RQE bench show without issue.

The nite hunt portion of the RQEs is different. On page 80 of the UKC Official Coonhound Rulebook, you will find a continuation of points, regarding the UKC Coonhound Nite Hunt World Championship. Number 10 reads, *A dog may qualify at one R.Q.E. per year. Once qualified a dog may not be entered in another R.Q.E. with exception to a Breed Specific Event that may be a R.Q.E. There is no limit as to how many different Regional Qualifying Events a dog may enter in order to qualify.*

To summarize, that means that once a hound has qualified for the World Nite Hunt Championship, it may not enter another RQE unless it is breed specific. Meaning the Black and Tan only, Bluetick only, Leopard only, English only, Plott only, Redbone only, and Treeing Walker only RQEs you may see at their breed day events.

UKC Hunting Program Junior Handler Enrollment Form

In order to streamline the process of inputting and awarding cast and category wins for our YEP and Youth Championship Series events, there is a new UKC Hunting Program Junior Handler Enrollment Form available for our youth participants. This new form does a couple different things for our programs. 1) It creates a more efficient process of inputting youth points, taking away a lot of the possibilities of human error. 2) It gives us more information on our Junior Handlers and allows us to showcase those that are excelling in their sport. 3) With the information we receive via the enrollment form, we will be able to assign each handler a number that should take much of the stress off the host clubs on getting information that is needed.

The way it works is quite simple for the Junior Handlers. We will have these Junior Enrollment forms, almost anywhere. There are printable versions available on our website right now. You can fill out that form and email it

into us at huntingops@ukdogs.com. If that doesn't work for you, these forms will be mailed out to every Youth Event scheduled with their hunt packet. You can fill it out at the event and have them mail it in with their report. You of course, also have the option to scan or take a clear picture and email it in as well with the email listed above. Lastly, I will be on the road to quite a few major events this year. I will have a stack with me anywhere I go. If you come see me at the UKC table, we can get you squared away right there. Once we have this form in, you will not have to fill out anything else in the future. It is a one-time thing.

Once our department has your enrollment form on hand, we will input your information into our database, and it will automatically assign you a Junior Handler number and print out a card. We will mail this card to the address provided and you will be able to use it when entering youth events.

Legislating Tree Style

If you go to enough events through the year, you tend to hear some of the same questions or issues repetitively. A month or so ago I made it a point to sit down and read one of the old advisor books from cover to cover. While a lot of the rules have changed since that was published over a decade ago, it was funny to see a lot of the questions covered in the book that still get asked today. One that I tend to hear everywhere is about dogs meeting handlers off trees. How far can they come? What if the dogs nose hits the ground? What about the umbrella of the tree? Etc. I think Todd Kellam spelled it out well in this answer from the October 1999 Advisor Column. Of course, some edits were made to the article to match the current running rules.

Todd: I guess according to the UKC rules, the bare minimum requirement a dog must meet to be considered treed is to bark at least once every two minutes and not leave the tree.

Everyone applies the rules differently regarding dogs leaving the tree. Many do refer to the dog's nose being on the ground (implying that the dog is trailing). Some refer to being outside the "umbrella" of the tree. The rules are not that specific. Rule 4(g) says that dog's tree points will be minused when they have been declared treed and dog leaves tree. This is a judgement call but a dog that puts his nose to the ground at the base of the tree and then goes back to treeing will not be minused if I am judging the cast. Whether a dog's nose is high on the bark, or on the ground has nothing to do with whether or not he has left the tree.

The more clearly you define an exact distance a dog can be from the tree, the more you open the judging of a cast to carrying tape measures and arguing over inches. You must use common sense. Yes, you are going to run into people who never had it (common sense), but I would be interested in knowing how many other people have been minused when their dog came 10 feet off a tree to meet them, then went straight back and started treeing. It seems reasonable by very basic definitions that a dog can either be considered to be at the tree treeing, at the tree and not treeing, or to have left the tree altogether.

You can't put a time and a distance on every aspect of judging a cast. You could make this so impossible to judge that it couldn't be done. For example, how close (in feet) does a dog have to come to the cast and how many seconds must he stop before he can be minused for quitting a track? How many rods must dogs be away from the cast or how many decibels must their voices be down to before you can call time out for trailing out of hearing in different directions? Just two examples of the many issues that cannot be clarified with measurements. I'm afraid that with some individuals, the desire to own a 130 bark per minute tree dog has caused them to place too much of an emphasis on tree style when judging a cast. The nite hunt rules do not legislate tree style.

