

COONHOUND ADVISOR

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It's surprising where inspiration can be drawn from. I'm not talking just about writing this article, but for life in general. Whether it be igniting that fire to get in the woods again. Or maybe work has been tough lately, and you just needed a pick-me-up to keep you going. Inspiration can be all around you; you just have to be observant and aware.

After an impromptu trip to Tennessee last month following the passing of my grandmother, I was in need of inspiration. Fortunately for me, my family can typically help me in that aspect. And on the long haul back north, my mind was churning. One thing I couldn't shake was wanting to talk about mentors this month. The importance of them. The role of them. And how it looks whenever you transition from just being mentored to mentoring someone else. In our lifestyle, this progression is a must.

Mentorship can come in a variety of ways. Some of my mentors were obvious. My dad had me in the woods doing some activity or another ever since I can remember. Teaching me all he could about the woods and the critters in them. I've had other, more indirect mentors as well, though. Some I watched from afar. Maybe a ball player I watched on TV. Maybe a coon hunter I saw online or in the magazines. Maybe people I just talked to from time to time who always had a wealth of knowledge to spread. For me, knowledge was power. I latched my attention onto people who I felt were as well versed in their area of expertise as anyone else. One guy is someone I consider to be very knowledgeable about breeding and caring for dogs. One guy is an expert at putting on quality events and working with the clubs in the area to make sure everyone is successful. One person was good with starting pups. Another was good at making that transition from started pup to coon treer with their hounds. Another yet was focused solely on fine-tuning those coon treers and putting their effort into that. Some others that are popping into my mind were just good sportsmen who did things the right way. The thing with being mentored is that you have to be willing to listen and learn.

Then, more recently, I have felt the pressure of being on the other side. Obviously, with my oldest daughter. She tends to act just like me; whether that be a good or bad thing is yet to be determined. But inside our sport, I have had lots of conversations with people, especially young folks, who have put that pressure on me by talking about reading every article and listening to every podcast. Being the mentor is hard. But that is to be expected. Believe it or not, you are a mentor to someone. Someone

is watching what you do. And yes, that should put pressure on you to do your best at everything you do. We have to set the example. We have to be willing to help. To answer questions. To let someone tag along on a hunt or on a cast. We should be conscious of what we do, and say, and post on social media. Remember that next time you hunt. Or make a post. As mentors, we are responsible for the next generation of hunters. Take that as a badge of honor, take it seriously, and we can look forward to a successful future in our sport. If we fail as mentors, we are ultimately failing our sport.

What Category Am I In?

One thing that is never easy to do is to tell a person they are missing wins toward their championship titles. That becomes exponentially tougher when that person has achieved several champion wins without first getting the required registered wins to make Champion. Those can be uncomfortable calls, chats, or conversations. And it can be easy to sympathize with someone who makes an honest mistake. But I say this knowing that, as with anything else in life, there must be some personal accountability.

As fast as life can be sometimes, things in our life have made it much more efficient in note keeping and keeping track of things. There are apps for just about everything on our phones. As I'm typing this, I'm going through my Houdsman Advantage app that Matt Lingo and his team have created for just about every aspect of our hound life. From the competition hunt scorecard to keeping track of your pleasure hunts to many other features you'll just have to check out personally to find out about. Give it a look. I'm saying all this to say there are a bunch of ways to keep track of wins. Maybe you are old school and want to keep track of wins with the win receipts that have been issued to the clubs. (if clubs need more, reach out to the Hunting Ops Department). Maybe you have a notebook where you write down the clubs and dates of your wins. Or if you are like me, you have everything in your life in notes on your cell phone. Everything from my kid's birth weights to the dates/mileage for maintenance on my automobile to what I might get my children for Christmas, I have it all in notes on my phone. It works great.

Ultimately, the burden of keeping track of a dog's win record falls on the owner/handler of the dog. The rulebook tells us that. And wins with dogs entered in the wrong category will be considered void; the rulebook tells us that as well. Again, with things as efficient as they are today, it's easy to check. You can always do an online points check at ukcdogs.com. On there, you can check your nite hunt and bench show points. Water race and field trial points are not on there just yet. For that, or any questions you may have

about your points in any event, you can get ahold of the Hunting Ops Department by phone call, email, or online chat between 9 am and 4:30 pm ET Monday – Friday with questions as well.

Which Class Am I In?

I guess I'm just going to make this a full procedural issue article because of the sheer number of issues we are seeing. Please take note of this. If you are a member of a club, maybe you clip this out and put it in the clubhouse for those who won't see it otherwise. Entering dogs in not only the wrong category but also the wrong class in the Bench Show is becoming a major issue. An issue that is leading to a bunch of wins being voided.

For the Champion and Grand Champion issues, the topic above goes for all. Make sure you are in the correct category. This section is going to be for the dogs still competing in the Registered portion of the Bench Show, which is separated further into different classes: the Puppy, Junior, and Senior classes. I'm going to pull the following descriptors straight from page 8 of the rulebook:

- **Puppy Class:** Shall be for dogs six (6) months to one (1) year of age. The winner of this class will be awarded five (5) points.
- **Junior Class:** Shall be for dogs one year of age and under two years of age. The winner of this class will be awarded five (5) points.
- **Senior Class:** Shall be for dogs two years of age and over. The winner of this class will be awarded five (5) points.

This is non-negotiable. There is no month, week, or even day grace period. The day your dog turns 1-year-old, it needs to be entered to compete in the Junior Class. The day your dog turns 2 years old, it needs to be entered to compete in the Senior Class. Entering is half the battle, I know. As a participant, you need to be aware of where the show is at, and to make sure your dog is being called in at the correct time. We know it can happen that an entry gets sorted incorrectly. An entry taker or judge accidentally putting your dog in the wrong class can be corrected simply if you are listening to the classes going in and listening for your dog to be called. Let the judge know right away if you aren't called in for your class before they start their inspecting. And lastly, I will always tell anyone, whether they are hunting, showing, or doing one of the day events, giving the completed event report a once over after it is completed isn't the worst thing in the world. Make sure they have you down correctly and your win notated correctly. Maybe you even snap a quick picture for your records. Mistakes can happen and mistakes can be easily corrected as well. Getting ahead of issues is always the most efficient way, in my opinion.



ATTENTION!

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

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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