

NITE HUNTS

Official Nite Hunt Honor Rules

Effective January 1, 2023

* Indicates a definition found at the end of the Nite Hunt Honor Rules

In addition to the rules on the scorecard, the Official UKC Coonhound Rulebook and the most recent Coonhound Advisor columns in COONHOUND BLOODLINES and on the UKC website, contain additional rules, statements of policies and interpretations of UKC rules pertaining to the conducting of UKC events. All event activities, rules, policy applications and interpretations are subject to the final decision by UKC in its sole judgment and discretion.

All casts must be drawn publicly. Owners having multiple entries will have dogs drawn to separate casts if possible. Absolutely no alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs will be allowed on the grounds or while participating in a UKC licensed event, or in the buildings the day of a UKC licensed event. Participants 13 years of age and under entering a nite hunt must be accompanied by an adult other than the cast members they draw.

1. DEADLINES

All deadlines must be strictly enforced; no exceptions.

- No entries will be accepted after the UKC listed entry deadline.
- No scorecards will be accepted after the posted deadline to return scorecards.
- Deadline may only be extended if lone handler is required to go to MOH/HD for a non-hunting judge to finish cast.
- An Appeal must be requested and filed immediately following the panel's ruling, while panel is still assembled.

2. POINT SYSTEM

- Strike Points:** 100 points for dog that is declared struck first; 75 points second; 50 points third; 25 points fourth.
- Babbling:** Dog(s) declared struck and determined to be babbling* shall be minused on strike. If there is any question when a hunting judge is used, the cast must vote immediately. It takes a majority of cast vote to minus. A tied vote results in deleted strike points.
- Tree Points:** 125 points for dog declared treed first; 75 points second; 50 points third; 25 points fourth. Note: Any dog(s) declared treed on the same tree two minutes after the first dog was declared treed, shall receive 25 tree points. Dogs not opening on trail must be declared struck before a tree call may be accepted.
- Other:** Dog must open and be heard opening when declared struck or treed. Otherwise, call may not be accepted. Points may be split for position when called positions cannot be determined.

3. POINTS WILL BE PLUS

- When dogs strike and tree and coon is seen, during shining time only, by a non-hunting Judge; or by a majority of the cast when hunting Judge is used.
- When dog is declared struck and treed and coon is seen other than in tree, dog declared treed to receive strike and tree points. Dogs not declared treed, strike points only.
- If dog(s) catches coon, strike points only.
- One set of strike points in case of split tree, and each will be counted as separate trees for tree points.
- Dog(s) that are shut out* must still be declared struck. They are eligible for tree points if they are declared treed within the three minutes. If they are at tree shut out* on when judge arrives, strike points are deleted. For all other situations they are accountable for their strike points.

4. POINTS WILL BE MINUS

Strike Minus:

- After first minute each time dog is released, dog must be declared struck on or before the third bark. For dog not declared struck on third bark on first offense; judge shall minus the available strike points and ask for a call on next bark. Otherwise; dog shall be scratched if not declared struck on next bark. (Refer to 6(i) for second offense)
- A handler calling the wrong dog on first offense results in the available position being minused. (Refer to Rule 6(j) for second offense)
- When a dog quits a track that is being worked and comes in to cast.
- If none of the declared struck dogs open within 6 minutes.
- For calling dogs off trail.
- If dog declared treed; after three minutes has elapsed no additional dog can be declared treed at that particular tree. Dog(s) treeing but not

declared treed when judge arrives receives minus strike points. Dogs shut-out* on strike will receive no minus strike points. Refer to Rule 6 (f) for Champion Division casts and off game.

Tree Minus:

- When dogs tree and (1) a non-hunting Judge or (2) a majority of the cast when hunting Judge is used, can plainly see no coon to be there, strike and tree points are minused.
- After a dog is declared treed, at least one of the dogs declared treed must bark at least once every two minutes until cast arrives at the tree, or all dogs declared treed at that tree will be minused and the tree will be open again.
- When a dog that is declared treed leaves that tree the dogs tree points are minused. If dog returns to tree within the three minutes, he will receive the next available position on tree, unless all dogs have been declared treed. After two minutes of the first dog being declared treed, the only tree position available is 25.
- Any dogs declared treed after three minutes expires and tree is closed; call will be accepted as a split tree. If dog is on closed tree when judge arrives, strike and tree points are scored as dog left separate split tree and is now considered treeing but not declared treed on this particular tree.

Other:

- In Registered Category for running, treeing or molesting off game (off game must be seen). In the event the off game is a squirrel seen in a tree and 2) the tree is an obvious den tree, refer to Rule 5(d). Birds are not considered off game.

5. CIRCLED AND DELETED POINTS

Circle points:

- When dog strikes and trees on a tree or a hole in the ground where there could be a coon, yet Judge does not see coon and no off game is seen. NOTE: In case of running coon in a hole or place of refuge other than a tree, handler may call dog treed. However, if not called treed, cast may proceed to general area, and track can be considered finished if dogs, by actions either tree barking or otherwise, show to the satisfaction of the Judge, coon to be there. One dog must show end of trail. For dogs declared treed in a hole or tile, see Rule 3(b) or 4(g), if applicable.
- No dog to receive minus points for coming into tree after Judge arrives unless a coon is seen and the dogs treeing are awarded plus points.
- If half the cast votes to plus and half the cast votes to circle a tree.
- If a squirrel is seen on a den tree (must have visible hole large enough for a coon to enter into) or tree has a nest, or a place of refuge where a coon could be hidden.

Delete points:

- If half the cast votes to circle and half the cast votes to minus a tree.
- If dogs are trailing when time is out.
- If Judge has to call time out in accordance with Rule 7.
- When dog trees on a tree or coon previously scored. (Cast may go to tree without dogs being declared treed, if majority of cast agree, when hunting Judges are used.)
- When dog that is shut out* comes into tree shut out on. Refer to 3(e).

6. SCRATCHING OFFENSES

Dog Related Offense:

- If a dog has accumulated a total of 400 minus.
- For fighting or attempting to fight*, when off-leash during the hunt, including any time-out periods. When the aggressive dog is known, scratch the aggressor only. If not known, scratch dogs involved. Withdrawing to avoid dog being reported for fighting is not permitted.
- Failing to make an attempt to hunt within any 15 consecutive scorecard minutes.
- Bitches smelling strong enough to attract dogs, or a dog that is just bad to bother* other dogs
- For delaying completion of cast for one hour after time out is called during the hunt in accordance with Rule 7.
- In Champion Division casts; for running, treeing or molesting off game (off game must be seen) during hunting time including any time out periods prior to the expiration of hunt time (exception 5b). In the event the off game is a squirrel seen in a tree and 2) the tree is an obvious den tree, refer to Rule 5(d). Birds are not considered off game.
- For running or molesting livestock.
- For hunting over or under the advertised hunt time.

Handler Related Offense:

- (i) After first minute each time dog is released, dog must be declared struck on or before the third bark. For dog not declared struck on second offense; the dog is scratched. (Refer to Rule 4(a) for first offense)
- (j) On second offense of a handler calling the wrong dog. (Refer to Rule 4(b) for first offense)
- (k) For use of any device used to control dog prior to cast completing hunt time.
- (l) If handler hollers at or physically abuses the dog.
- (m) If handler fails to declare treed a dog obviously treeing (Judge's decision) for a period of five minutes. Dog may be declared treed while five is running but not after the five has expired. Judge must verify dog to be at a tree before it can be scratched. If the cast is in the process of shining a separate tree time shall be canceled or not be applied to another dog.
- (n) If handler fails to return to MOH/HD after cast becomes separated. Time period allotted is determined by MOH/HD.
- (o) For climbing or cutting trees or disturbing a place of refuge.
- (p) For intentionally killing coon or other game.
- (q) For searching tree before the start of shining time.
- (r) For failure to stay with the cast unless given permission to leave.
- (s) For encouraging, discouraging or physically abusing a dog. Praising a handled dog is not considered encouraging.
- (t) For use of scoring aids other than light, mechanical squaller, or thermal imaging device. Laser pointer light is permitted.
- (u) Handler's dog will be scratched for rule violations by their spectators.
- (v) If handler displays Unsportsmanlike Conduct* towards any individual on club grounds or during the hunt.
- (w) If scorecard lacks handler's signature or if event official cannot satisfactorily determine accurate score, dog(s) affected will be scratched. Refer to Rule 12 (c), if applicable.

Other Offense:

- (x) Implied scratch (For violating a stated rule when no specific penalty is noted.)

7. TIME OUTS

Judge or majority of cast if hunting Judge is used, may call time out in accordance with the following:

Note: Dogs declared treed prior to timeout being called shall be scored.

- (a) When dogs are getting on highway, trail onto posted land or trail into a place where there is danger to dogs or hunters.
- (b) If dogs get with another group of dogs.
- (c) In case of accident or sickness.
- (d) When dog(s) are trailing out of hearing in different directions.
- (e) After scoring dog(s) on tree and all remaining dogs are either on leash or declared treed, and cast decides to move to new location after all trees are scored, time out may be called walking to remaining trees with scored dogs on leash. Hunt time shall be back in during shining time of each tree. If dog leaves tree, time shall be called back in and dogs on leash recast.

8. HANDLERS

- (a) It is the handler's responsibility to tell Judge when dog opens and when dog trees.
- (b) It is the handler's responsibility to check their score and make sure all points are accurate before signing scorecard.
- (c) Any handler unable to complete hunt must pick up his dog, or Judge to give permission for another handler to complete hunt. Although dog is scratched or withdrawn, the handler is encouraged to stay with the cast and retains all voting privileges, unless handler is scratched for unsportsmanlike conduct.
- (d) If handler leaves cast, they should note hunt time used, note other dogs' scores, and include their initials in the right margin of the scorecard.
- (e) If only one handler remains, handler must return to MOH/HD for a non-hunting judge.
- (f) Relaying any type of electronic messaging with reference to scores, that is deemed detrimental to the hunt, may result in suspension.

9. JUDGES

- (a) Judges are picked by the host clubs because they believe them to be honest and capable of keeping score just as it is given to them by handlers. They will show no favors to any dog or hunter and will

inform handlers of score and time recorded, if requested. Authority of the Judge begins when he is officially designated and receives the scorecard. The judge shall be in control of the cast.

- (b) 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.
- (c) Judge must maintain a pace attainable by all members of cast.
- (d) Judge will be first to arrive at tree.
- (e) Even though their dog is withdrawn or scratched, they shall continue to judge the cast. If the judge is unable to complete their duties for the duration of the hunt due to other unforeseen circumstances, only then may they assign another qualified handler in the cast to finish judging the cast.

10. SPECTATORS

- (a) Two spectators per handler will be allowed on all casts.
- (b) Spectators may not shine tree unless all handlers in cast agree. This decision shall be made at start of hunt and applies for duration of hunt time.
- (c) Spectators may not be included in the majority required to score trees or enter discussions pertaining to the scoring of dogs.
- (d) Spectators are otherwise held to the same rules and conduct as handlers.

11. SCORING DOGS

- (a) **Prior To Arriving at Tree.** Scorecards to be carried by Judge (or non-hunting scorekeeper if all cast members agree) and must be scored in plain view of all. Dog must hold the tree for three (3) minutes, unless all dogs in cast are declared treed, on leash, or hunting time has expired. If one dog in cast, or one dog remaining in cast, dog must hold tree for three (3) minutes. Dogs declared treed within hunting time are eligible for scoring. If at all possible be at the tree within three (3) minutes. If handlers are so far from tree that it will take more than three (3) minutes to get to tree, they are to start walking toward tree, but stopping periodically to let other handlers see if their dog is treeing. Judge is not to let any handler keep holding him away from tree just to let dog get to tree after three (3) minutes are up.
- (b) **After Arriving at Tree.** After three (3) minutes, first dog's tree may be scored. Dog should not be minused tree points if he comes back a short distance to meet handler if dog goes back in and trees satisfactorily. Dogs at tree must be leashed. Eight minutes of hunting time may be used to shine trees. Individual holding first tree shall be granted first two minutes to shine alone, if requested.
- (c) **Split Trees.** Where dogs split up, Judge will go with handler to the dog that trees first. If a split tree is obvious (Judge's decision), split tree will be assigned. Separate time must be kept on each tree unless all dogs are declared treed. Judge shall give handler permission to handle dog on split tree unless cast is in process of shining a tree. After the split dog is handled, handler shall return to cast. If all dogs are declared treed and handled AND cast needs to move to new location after scoring all trees, trees may be scored in most convenient order (refer to 7(e) and 11(d) if applicable). Otherwise, trees must always be scored in the order dogs were declared treed.
- (d) **Recasting.** After being scored, dog(s) may be released immediately or led a reasonable distance (judges' decision) from scored tree before recasting. 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). If all remaining dogs in cast are declared treed and cast decides they need to move to a new location after all dogs are scored, all scored dogs shall remain on leash and time out shall be called while walking to split trees. Hunt time shall be called back in during shining time only. Otherwise, scored dog may be recast even if all remaining dogs are declared treed. Once a position has been scored it becomes available again. A dog declared struck after the recast, receives the next available strike position. A dog cannot be struck in over a position that is being held except when a dog holds his strike position for one hour. In that case, all strike positions will be open to other dogs. The strike position previously held by dog(s) on leash is not available until dog is recast. Multiple dogs may occupy fourth strike position.

12. SCORECARDS

- (a) Scorecards must be completed in the woods, and no changes can be made later except where a question arises and is noted in the woods.
- (b) Handler's signature verifies hunting time and scores are correct. Any protest relative to time or scores shall be noted with a question mark.
- (c) Any handler failing to sign the scorecard in the woods may have the opportunity to sign upon returning the scorecard to, and in view of, the MOH/HD.



13. TIES

All ties to be broken for placement by comparing scores in the following order:

- (a) Dog that has the least number of minus points.
- (b) If still a tie, dog that has the most plus points.
- (c) If still a tie, dog that has the most plus strike points.
- (d) If still a tie, dog that has the most circled tree points.
- (e) If still a tie, dog that has the most circled strike points.
- (f) If still a tie, dogs involved will hunt in one-hour intervals until tie is broken or flip a coin if all parties agree.

14. QUESTIONING A JUDGE

- (a) Non-Hunting Judge Cast: The decision of a non-hunting Judge may only be questioned in the field at the time the decision is made. The non-hunting Judge's decision cannot be overturned in the field. It may be scored with a question mark (?) and reviewed by the MOH/panel. A decision made by a non-hunting Judge may only be overturned by the MOH/panel.
- (b) Hunting Judge Cast: The following procedure must be followed when using Hunting judges on a cast, regardless of category.
 - 1. The Hunting Judge has complete authority and will be responsible for scoring all situations.
 - 2. Should a situation arise where a handler questions a call that was made, or a call that should have been made but wasn't, that handler may ask to have his question voted on by all cast members that remain with the cast at that time.
 - 3. Each handler must vote, or their dog will be scratched. It takes a majority vote to overturn judge's decision. Any handler that is not satisfied with the outcome retains the right to place a question mark (?) on the card and present his question to the MOH/panel.
 - 4. Situations not questioned and notated at the time judge's decision is made, will not be considered.

15. ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Locating Devices:

The handheld of locating only devices may be carried by the handler. Device may be used during the hunt as outlined in current Locating Device Rules. Locating Device Rules are provided in the host clubs Event Packet and are also available on UKC's website. Lighted collars are allowed.

Controlling Devices:

Any handheld device capable of controlling a dog (stimulating or toning) must be left in vehicle and may not be used by handler or spectators until dog wearing device is scratched and all other dogs are recovered for re-casting.

*16. DEFINITIONS

Attempting to Fight: 1) Showing aggressive behavior and 2) interfering with another dog(s) during the authority of the Judge.

Babbling: When a dog opens three times or has been struck where no track is evident.

Bother: Displaying breeding-type behavior.

Shut-out: When a dog has not been declared struck before the first dog has been declared treed. Dog is shut out only if it trees on tree it was shut out on. Otherwise, strike points remain live.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct: Including but not limited to; trying to stir trouble, drinking, continuously argumentative, threatening or intimidating, or any actions that reflect negatively on the UKC or host club.

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Note: Spayed and neutered dogs may compete in all UKC Licensed Coonhound Events, including bench shows, nite hunts, water races and field trials.

PARTICIPANTS 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UNDER ENTERING A NITE HUNT MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT OTHER THAN CAST MEMBERS THEY DRAW.

ABSOLUTELY NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES OR ILLEGAL DRUGS WILL BE ALLOWED ON THE GROUNDS OR WHILE PARTICIPATING IN THE HUNT OR IN THE BUILDINGS THE DAY OF A UKC LICENSED EVENT.