

# COONHOUND ADVISOR

Trevor Wade

I can't believe I'm in the process of writing my December article already. For those loyal readers out there, I hope you each had great years. I hope you have made steps to attain any goals or aspirations you had/have. I think in our country, we have some positive points to look at after this past year, and I, for one, have set my goals sky-high for 2025.

As the Coonhound Program Manager, I'm feeling as good about the program as I have since I've been here. Obviously, I can't make a blanket statement here as each club and area is different, but on the whole, the entry numbers are trending favorably heading into next year. Most of the major events that we track and attend were up in numbers, and the conversations I had with officers of associations were, for the most part, positive. I believe this year, we saw more associations and clubs trying different things to attract entrants and increase participation. Some worked and some didn't. That is part of it. But I applaud anyone who was willing to go on a limb and try new things.

As for UKC's events, we saw a very strong Autumn Oaks and Winter Classic. According to numbers, the Winter Classic was the strongest entry we've seen since 2018, but that number doesn't account for the warmup slams that have grown to numbers that I don't think anyone expected. Autumn Oaks had a very strong Friday night but had a weak Saturday night entry. I think a lot of people headed home after dealing with the unseasonably high temperatures all week. I know I was ready to leave. I hope next year we have a little better weather. Youth Nationals was an absolute blast up in Iowa for the first time in the event's history. The World Championship had the highest zone entry since 2016, and with some changes we are making, I can see it growing larger next year. The Top Ten Program keeps growing in points accrued, so I hope that clubs that are putting effort into their bench shows are reaping the rewards of doing so. And finally, as of the first of November, we are reaching numbers on our Tournament of Champions qualified lists that we haven't been at at this juncture of the year. Right now, we are trending 10% over where we were last year when we had over 1,400 dogs qualify. We are on pace to shatter that number. Like I said, we know we have areas to improve, and we have been working diligently on some of those areas, but as a department, we are happy and excited about where our Hunting Ops Program is at.

### *What's New*

If you missed it, you really should go back and listen to Episode 128 of the UKC Hunting Ops Podcast that was released on November 6th. Allen and I gave out a lot of information in that podcast, and I don't want you to miss a thing. I am going to briefly talk about some of those things now.

First off, the World Championship Finals and Zones will, for the first time since its inception back in 1988, not be on consecutive weekends in 2025. The Zones won't be moving; they will continue to be on September 12th and 13th. The Finals, however, will not start on the 18th but will instead be a week later, on September 25th – 27th. There are a few good things that will come from this. First and foremost, since PKC's Super Stakes moved into September several years back, hunters have had to choose between the Super Stakes and the World Finals. With this move, that will no longer be the case. On that same note, with it getting harder and harder to secure non-hunting judges, this move will hopefully help us ensure that we can continue to use non-hunting judges in Round 1 of the World Finals rather than moving to a hunting judge round, which we feared originally. Among other things, you won't find me complaining about the extra week of preparation the Hunting Ops team will have to highlight the hounds advancing to the Finals. Also, on this same podcast episode, it was announced that the 2025 World Finals would be in Portland, Indiana, for the first time since 2005. Make plans on getting those hounds qualified because you will not want to miss it.

There hasn't been any real public announcement but as of around Autumn Oaks time, the process for applying for a Bench Show Judge and/or Master of Hounds license has changed. Instead of the old process that required up to five different mailings and could span several months, things have become much more efficient. The applications are now live online, and you can apply with a couple of easy clicks of the mouse. The test is much more informative and interactive than it was in the past. Allen put a lot of thought into each question and whether you get the answer wrong or right, you get a detailed response about the correct answer. If you pass the test, you will then be sent your license without apprenticing. Instead, you will be on probationary status until you meet the requirements on the number of events officiated before being able to do so on the major event level or at specialized events. Like I said, Allen talks a lot more in-depth about this on that episode of the podcast, but if you want to apply, check it out online at: <https://www.ukcdogs.com/licensed-official-application>.

Lastly, after years of trying to get this for our department, it sounds like it may finally be coming that clubs will be able to confirm their events and ALSO do their event reports online in the very near future. Programmers are building this as we speak, and in the little bit I've seen, this is going to be so simple and efficient for the clubs that take advantage of it. By the time you stuff a paper in an envelope you could have already submitted your results. Having said that, as we've said for the past several years, it is very beneficial and almost imperative that each club has

at least one person who can do basic things on a computer.

That doesn't even cover everything that has been in the works, but we will save that for another day. We will have all the information you will need here in the magazine and on the online United Kennel Club pages. I hope you all had a Happy Thanksgiving and have a Merry Christmas. Next time you read an article from me, it will be 2025! See you down the road.

**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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