

COONHOUND ADVISOR

Trevor Wade

At the blink of an eye, hunting season has come to a close, and competition season is here. I hope that with it, warmer weather is coming. As I sit here writing, snow is falling on what looks to be six inches already lying on the ground. The forecast shows that the temperature won't rise above freezing for the next 11 days. But better times are coming, and I'm ready! With spring competition season on deck, I wanted to touch on a few things I'm hearing early this year and address some questions.

Write 'em Up

Too often, as grown adults, we let our emotions get the best of us. Even with procedures in place to attempt to get every call correct and every issue resolved in a respectful manner, sometimes human nature wins out. This past weekend in Batesville, MS, at the 2025 Winter Classic, you couldn't ask for a much better nite hunt than we had. But even then, there are those couple of examples that get brought up that make you scratch your head. And if you are like me, you may linger on those a little more than you should rather than focus on all the good things.

What can we do to eliminate them altogether? To be blunt, maybe you never can. But that doesn't mean the effort to do so should stop. The main thing a hunter can do to help eliminate this behavior is to follow up on it. The misconduct report forms that are available in hunt offices to fill out and send in aren't utilized enough. And sometimes when they are, they are used more as a complaint sheet about a rule application than to address actual misconduct issues.

I challenge everyone actively competing in these events to hold each other accountable for their actions. Passing the buck on and thinking someone else will do it or thinking that someone will get it at the next event doesn't always work. And then I end up having a conversation with someone about a certain handler's history and tendencies and it turns out we have no file on the person. Not a single shred of reported misconduct was reported.

I always tell people on our calls and conversations that not every misconduct will result in a suspension. However, each misconduct is filed in a person's file to refer to if necessary. And as similar complaints roll in, measures will be taken. Help us, help you. Let's ensure that issues are addressed and that we keep these hunts enjoyable for all. It is a hobby for 99% of us, after all.

Regional Qualifying Events

Each year, there seems to be some conversation on how competing with previously qualified hounds in RQE hunts or shows works. With qualifiers ramping up, it seems like it'd be a good time to talk about it.

First, let's talk about the shows; it's simpler. A dog can be shown at as many qualifiers and accrue wins at as many qualifiers as the handler chooses. There is no limit or cap set in place that prevents a previously qualified hound from continuing to compete in qualifying shows. Honestly, if you look through the win history of some of the dogs regularly in the Top Ten Bench Show standings, it's not uncommon for a few of them to have a handful of RQE Bench Show wins. I get it. In some areas where major events are few and far between, these shows typically draw the best crowds and give the handler the best shot of accruing points. Makes sense.

Now, let's shift gears to the hunt, where it becomes a little more complicated. To do so, we will take a look at page 80 in the 2023 Official Coonhound Rulebook, where the discussion pertains to the UKC Coonhound World Championship. Number 10 reads, "A dog may qualify at one RQE per year. Once qualified, a dog may not be entered in another RQE with the exception of a Breed Specific Event that may be an RQE. There is no limit as to how many different Regional Qualifying Events a dog may enter in order to qualify."

That paragraph ends by telling us that there is no limit on how many RQEs a hound can be entered in in order to qualify. I don't think there are any questions about that. The rest of the paragraph is the important part. It tells us that once a dog has been qualified at an RQE, it may no longer earn wins at other qualifiers. The one exception listed is breed-specific RQEs that happen at chartered breed day events throughout the year. Talking with Allen, the thought behind that is that at some of the breed days, a dog has to compete in that hunt to have a shot at winning the hunt or being considered for King/Queen of Hunt.

Since this wording originated, other questions have come up. One specific question has to do with the South Carolina Hall of Fame Hunt in January. It's a two-day event with the Saturday hunt being a RQE. Ultimately, it culminates in a four-dog hunt off on Saturday night to determine the overall winner. This gives a dog that may already be qualified before that hunt a major disadvantage. For that reason, we have approved that qualified dogs may compete in that Saturday qualifier and still earn a cast win. There may be other examples of this. If there are, it will need to be addressed with UKC and

approved beforehand. Remember, if you have questions, reach out to us before the event and not after. It's better than wasting entry fee money.



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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Need a reminder of where you placed in a UKC major event this year? Look no further! You can review all event results so far, from the UKC website.

Visit:

ukcdogs.com/coonhound-standings-results

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