

# COONHOUND ADVISOR

Trevor Wade

Windshield time in the front seat of my truck is one of my best motivators when it comes to writing. Often, I feel like I have the best ideas when I'm on three hours of sleep and in the middle of a seven-hour drive to my family after a weekend on the road, working. I just must make sure to jot them down before I make it home, fall asleep in the recliner, and wake up 14 hours later in a state of confusion.

A lot of times I think of rules that I had discussed over the weekend with folks. Typically, I'll hear the same rules discussed repeatedly, and at least once a weekend I'll usually hear about something that happened in a cast months ago that leaves me scratching my head thinking, I never thought I'd hear that. It's those conversations in the middle that can really encourage conversation and discussion. Yesterday on my drive I had a different thought, we were kind of right.

Way back, over 100 episodes at this point, the wheels were rolling in Kalamazoo on a podcast that covered news and topics pertaining to UKC Hunting Ops events. We wanted to break vital news to the consumers, cover our major events by talking to winners/judges/supporters, we wanted to talk to affiliated associations and organizations to spread the word on the benefits of becoming more active, and many other things. Too many to list here. One thing that Allen and I talked about a lot was using the platform to discuss rules, give interpretations, break misconceptions, ultimately making for more informed judges and event officials, and I think it's working.

I've been to six events so far this year and the conversations I'm having with people on the road are really encouraging. I feel like the information out there has created an atmosphere at a lot of the hunts, the major events anyways, where the hunters and judges are surer of rule interpretations and more confident making calls. I think discussions on the podcast have a lot to do with that. I am like this, and I think many are, it's a lot easier to hear a rule and even listen to it being used in the field than to just read a rule and interpret it. That leaves a lot of room for errors. The more folks we can get listening to the podcast and especially the rule episodes, the better. It's for that reason I'm straying from talking rules today and focusing on some other topics that are weighing heavily on me. Stay with me.

### RESPECT

No need to beat around the bush here. You know what really irritates me? When I hear of a hunter that goes back into a spot they have been guided to, after the fact, without permission. I'll say hunter for the sake of the column. I would never call that person a houndsman because a true houndsman would never be

that disrespectful to another houndsman. And I would like to call that type of person some other words, but this is a family magazine.

Look, I know that 99.9% of the people reading this column right now have not and would not do such a thing. Essentially, I'm just airing my grievances because I have received complaints and phone calls on this before. If you as a guide ever run into a situation like this and can collect some substantial evidence, I will help you out anyway I can.

As hunters, we have to do a better job respecting our guides, period. Loss of hunting land is a real issue. Loss of land that can hold four go-yonder dogs for two hours is an even more extreme issue. Burning bridges with guides by backdooring them to hunt in their spot, leaving trash at a spot, driving and leaving property damage where we shouldn't, bright lighting houses, etc., etc., those are all avoidable things. Twenty years from now, if we want to continue having coonhound events, we just have to do better. Heck, if you want to continue hunting at all, we have to do better. Respect your guide, respect the landowner, and respect the lifestyle. And again, I know most reading this do all those things.

### PERSPECTIVE

So far this year I've made it to Grand American, Winter Classic, Tournament of Champions, Walker Days, and Black and Tan Days. At each event the numbers have been up over the past several years. This is a testament to the hard work by the committees and associations to make their event something that the hunters want to come to. Lord knows that in these days and times there are enough things to compete with for peoples' time, and I'm not only talking other coonhunting events. Besides events at other places there are always things going on. School activities and being active are a must for college resumes, sports have become a yearlong deal if there are any hopes of advancing to the next level, less workers employed means more hours at work, gas prices keep people closer to home, and the list could go on and on. With that being said, sometimes we just need to be happy with what we have.

It doesn't take any more effort to be supportive and appreciative of the efforts of the event hosts than it does to belittle anyone on your social media account. Yes, things look different now than they did 30 years ago. Name something that hasn't changed in the past 30 years. But different isn't always bad. Sometimes things are different out of necessity. Imagine any club in the country putting 300 dogs in the woods on a Thursday night. Not going to happen unless you plan on driving three hours one way. Imagine supplying non-hunting judges to 25 casts on a given night. I've seen clubs stress for hours to try to find four non-hunting judges for a youth hunt with hundreds of people in attendance. If you haven't been on the other side of the table, put yourself in their shoes and

think about the things those folks do to make your event enjoyable. I know I sure appreciate their efforts. I hope you do too. Put that on social media instead.

### YOUTH

Speaking of youth, I had an eye-opening weekend at Black and Tan Days. Yes, their association is at the forefront of the sport in supporting the youth. I saw trophies, belt buckles, ribbons, hunting supplies, and \$3,000 in scholarships be handed out over two days. Yet in the meeting, the message wasn't patting each other on the back. It was we need to do more. And I agree.

My mind has been churning on what I can do to get to more youth. To spread the knowledge of our sport. I don't care if the kids never enter a UKC licensed event, I just want them to know what coon hunting is. To learn the history and heritage of it. To respect the difficulties of what we do. To be informed.

We all need to do better at mentoring youth. If you aren't reaching out to kids in your church, neighborhood, family, etc. to try to take them hunting, you are doing a disservice. We need more hunters if we have any shot of

retaining the hunting privileges that we have today. The more we become a minority, the more we ground we have to make up. We need troops. We need youngsters that would rather be out trouncing through the woods in the dark than to be on their newest gaming console. That's the challenge for everyone. Find someone to take hunting. Bring them to Autumn Oaks. Let them spectate on casts. Take them pleasure hunting. Let me know what I do to help your club or area reach the kids in your area. I'm game.

### 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.



Rev. 12/7/2023

# CHECK OUT OUR ONLINE STORE



RENEW YOUR SUBSCRIPTION  
AND GET EXCLUSIVE  
MERCHANDISE ALL  
ON ONE SITE!

VISIT: [SHOP.UKCDOGS.COM](http://SHOP.UKCDOGS.COM)

06.24 | CB 13