



OFFICIAL COON HUNT RULES OF THE AMERICAN COON HUNTERS Association (revised 8/24 GSM)

1. Judges:

- A. All judges are selected by the ACHA, the sponsor Club, or Master of Hounds. It is the Judge's responsibility to keep the handlers informed as to scoring of all dogs in the cast.
- B. The ACHA WORLD HUNT will have non-hunting judges for the Top 15 and Final Cast.
- C. When dogs are turned loose, the judge is to walk slowly in the direction they wish to hunt. After the first dog opens, the judge shall not walk other dog(s) in so they will strike, nor will they stay so far from the dog that excessive hunt time is lost.
- D. The judge is to go to the tree first and see that all dogs that have been declared tree are treeing, then instruct handlers to handle their dog. In the case of hunting judges, the cast should go to the tree at the same time.
- E. When scoring a tree, the judge is to allow lights and squalls to search the tree.
- F. Record strike points as dogs are called after first dog is called treed, in case dog(s) are on separate trees. Judge will draw a line under strike points for dogs that are struck in after a dog is called treed in case it is treed on a separate tree. If dogs strike after a dog has been treed, and tree on the same tree before three minutes expire, delete underlined strike points. Refer to Rule 8-C.

2. HANDLERS:

- A. Any owner of handler that enters a dog(s) in any ACHA event should know and abide by these rules.
- B. No handler shall go to a tree ahead of the judge without the judge's permission.
- C. A handler may inspect the scorecard at any time, provided that the judge is not in the process of scoring a dog.
- D. The owner or handler must accompany their entry on the cast and call their dog only.
- E. The owner of a dog entered in a hunt is responsible for the conduct of their handler.
- F. All lights must be used for walking only, except when instructed otherwise by the judge.
- G. Judge will instruct the handlers to cast or catch dogs at all times.
- H. It is the handler's responsibility to have their dog under control while leashed.
Failure to control your dog is a scratchable offense.
- I. Handlers must be on the grounds at time casts are drawn. If not, it is a scratchable offense.

3. GENERAL RULES:

- A. ACHA approves any draw system that is fair and impartial. The draw should be done in public, except for hunting judges and guides. Anyone entering more than one dog and shows proof of ownership may have the dogs split into separate casts, if possible. If the two dogs are drawn in the same cast, the second dog drawn will be placed in the next cast.
- B. No more than three dogs per cast, unless you are in the Final Four, ACHA World or Little World Hunt. If necessary, two and one dog casts are allowed. If it is a one dog cast, a non-hunting judge is required. The host club or ACHA can assign a non-hunting judge to any cast.
- C. No dog or cast will be eligible for points in any hunt governed by ACHA unless they hunt the entire designated time.
- D. To qualify for tree points, the dog must show the judge which tree it has been declared treed on. A handler cannot bring their dog into a tree.

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- E. Dogs declared treed must be scored accordingly regardless of whether barking in ground or otherwise, it has shown you where the game is. Other dogs shall be scored on strike only.
- F. If dogs strike and tree different coons, the judge must count them all as one set of strike points. If dogs tree on different trees, they each deserve their own tree points.
- G. If a dog trees and a handler will not call it treed, the judge is to ask the handler if the dog is treed. If the handler refuses to tree the dog, the judge will put five minutes on the stationary dog before they go to the tree. If the dog is found to be treed, the dog will be scratched. See Rule 10-D.
- H. No non-prescribed drugs, alcohol, or firearms allowed at any ACHA event.
- I. ACHA has the right to refuse any entry or membership.
- J. ACHA is not responsible for any accidents, thefts, or loss.
- K. ACHA reserves the right to make all final decisions.
- L. In cases where dogs return to a tree that has been scored, first offense is to draw a line through points. The second offense the dog is to be scratched. See Rule 10-L.
- M. Recasting into working dogs:
 - 1. When dogs are pulled from a scored tree, they MUST be walked for a maximum of one minute.
 - 2. Judge will tell handlers when to cut dogs.
 - 3. If there are working dogs not barking, the 6 minute rule will be applied.
 - 4. If a cast has walked out of range to hear the working dogs to score a tree, they must walk back to the last place they heard the working dogs before the 6 minute ban can be applied.
 - 5. If dogs have been declared treed but are not barking, 2 minutes must be applied. If dogs have left the tree, all leashed dogs must be recast.
 - 6. Any handler cutting their dog before judge says so will be scratched.
 - 7. If more than one tree is made, after leaving the first tree, the handler has the option of walking a maximum of one minute before casting their dog or walking to the next tree to be scored. Handlers decision. Judge will tell handler when to cast their dog.
- N. Voting on a tree:
 - 1. Four dog cast - Takes 3 votes to plus, minus, or circle a tree. A 2 to 2 vote will delete a plus/circle tree and circle a circle/minus tree.
 - 2. Three dog cast - Takes 2 votes to plus, minus, or circle a tree.
 - 3. All votes may be questioned and taken back to a panel. See Rule 14.O. In local hunts, a Hunt Director is allowed to hunt. If a hunting question arises, it will be brought back to the clubhouse at or before the deadline. A panel of three members should be selected to hear and decide on the question. No members on the cast will be allowed to be on the panel.
- P. Dogs and Handlers must be on the grounds at the time casts are drawn. If not on the ground, dogs will be scratched. See rule 10-P.
- Q. Squalling and shaking vines is permitted when shine time starts.

4. TIME RULES:

- A. One Minute Rule: When dogs are cast, one minute will be allowed before the dogs must be declared struck. After one minute, dogs must be declared struck on or before the third bark.
- B. Two Minute Rule: One of the dogs declared treed must bark at least once every two minutes. Judge's decision.
- C. Three Minute Rule: When dogs are declared tree, judge is not to arrive at the tree or allow handlers to go to a tree until three minutes has expired, unless all dogs are declared treed or the hunt ends. Cast will proceed toward the tree after the first dog is called treed. If it will take more than three minutes to get there, stop in intervals so other handlers can see if their dog is treeing.
- D. Six Minute Rule: A strike shall be considered finished and all strike points minused if no dog in cast barks for an interval of six minutes.
- E. Eight minutes is the maximum time a judge is allowed to search a tree. Timeout cannot be called to search a tree or lead dogs away for recasting. No point changes are allowed after leaving a tree, except for in case of Rule 14.
- F. A dog hunting alone must hold the tree for three minutes.
- G. Judge may advise the handlers of any time remaining on a track, tree, or end of the hunt.

5. TIMEOUT RULES:

- A. A timeout can only be called by a non-hunting judge or majority of the cast when hunting judges are used.
- B. When dogs are getting near a highway, trail on posted land, two unhandled casts get together, near livestock or there is danger to cast member or dogs.
- C. If cast gets lost or in case of sickness or accident.
- D. Dogs are to be scored in the order they are treed. If dogs have been declared treed in different places, the judge, after three minutes on each tree, is to give handlers permission to handle their dogs. Judge is to go with handler that declared treed first. At any time if dogs are trailing then judge is to have handlers release their dogs and start hunt time. Dogs turned loose to go back to a track gets next available strike points as they are called. Judge must instruct handlers to cast their dog if dog holding strike is opening. If no dog in cast is opening after six minutes has expired, strike is open.
- E. Cast cannot separate to follow trailing dogs, unless judge calls timeout. Cast must walk at the pace of the slowest handler, cast must stay together. This is a scratch-able offense.
- F. No timeout to recast dogs is allowed, unless dogs are loaded and vehicle moved or if they have to walk more than 10 minutes.
- G. No more than one hour may be used to find lost dogs and have them ready to recast. Time starts when timeout is called.
- H. In case of death on a cast, the score of the cast shall stand at the time of death and will be considered a completed cast.

6. POINT SYSTEM:

- A. 100 points for the first to strike, 75 second, 50 third and 25 fourth. 125 for the first treed, 75 second, 50 third and 25 fourth. All dogs treed after two minutes will receive 25 points only if treed on same tree.
- B. Should two or more dogs be declared struck or treed at the same time, then the combined points should be divided between the dogs. Should dogs get out of hearing range and when cost gets in hearing range of any dogs treeing the judge should give all hunters a chance to see if their dog is treeing, and all that are declared treed will have their tree points divided. Any other dogs that are not declared treed at this time may be called treed any time before the three minutes are up. They will be scored in the order they are called.
- C. No dog advances on tree unless found on a separate tree.
- D. Non-working dog: If dogs are not working as part of a cast and is holding first strike, second, etc. all strike points will be open to other dogs after the second coon is seen on the second set of strike points or one hour of hunt time has expired.

7. POINTS WILL BE PLUS:

- A. When majority of cast or a non-hunting judge sees a live coon.
- B. When dogs strike and tree and a live coon is seen, both strike and tree points will be plus. Only one coon per tree can be counted.
- C. When coon is caught on the ground and seen, strike points only will be plus. Draw a line through any tree points. These tree points are not to be used to break a tie. When in the opinion of the judge the coon is caught on the ground the cast may go to the dogs.
- D. When hunters and judge are at the tree and a coon jumps out and is seen by the judge or a majority of the cast, points will be plus. If dogs go after this coon, timeout should be called. You cannot score this coon again.

8. POINTS WILL BE MINUS:

- A. When dogs tree and the judge can plainly see no coon is there, both strike and tree points will be minused.
- B. When a dog has been declared struck and comes to a tree three minutes after the first dog, and a coon is seen, points will be minused. If a dog is treeing when judge arrives, and the tree is minused, the strike points will be minused and the dog will be awarded 25 tree points then minused. If the tree is circled, then the strike points will be deleted.
- C. When a dog comes out of a track that is being worked. It is not to be leashed, but allowed to go back if it wants to, and is eligible for next available position. Each time it comes out, it is to be minused. Dogs do not have to quit any length of time. Judge's decision.
- D. For the first offense of accidentally or treeing another handler's dog. Refer to 10-C.
- E. Any dogs seen running or treeing any game other than a coon by the judge will be minused.
- F. Six Minute Rule: A strike shall be considered finished and all strike points minused if no dog in the cast barks for an interval of six minutes.
- G. Dogs struck and determined to be babbling will be minused their strike points. Dogs struck inside the first minute have six minutes to strike again.

9. POINTS WILL BE CIRCLED:

- A. When dogs strike and tree on a tree, a hole in the ground, or any place of refuge where there could be a coon, yet the judge does not see the coon.
- B. If dogs are still trailing when hunt time expires, points will be deleted.
- C. When timeout is called.
- D. In case of running a coon in a hole or place of refuge, track may be considered finished if dogs by action of barking or otherwise, show the judge a coon could be there.

10. DOGS WILL BE SCRATCHED:

- A. If a dog has a total of 400 minus in one cast.
- B. Fighting or attempting to fight. Interfering with other dogs by fussing and following them. Judge is to see which dog is causing trouble. If unsure, the judge is to get close enough to investigate. If handler refuses to help, their dog is to be scratched. In the case of a hunting judge, the cast should go to the tree at the same time to investigate.
- C. If a handler insists on calling another handler's dog. Judge's decision.
- D. Any handler that refuses to claim their dog, including One Minute and Stationary Rules.
- E. For running stock or poultry. Only one offense.
- F. Any female smelling strong enough to attract males; or any male bad about bothering females or other dogs.
- G. If a handler scolds or whips their dog at any time.
- H. No fighting dog will be accepted for entry. Any dog that has been scratched for fighting twice in a twelve month period in ACHA events will be barred for twelve months. After a year suspension, if the dog is scratched for fighting ever again in an ACHA event, the dog will be barred for life and the owner could be called into a hearing before the Board of Directors.
- I. For any unreasonable misconduct by any owner, handler, or spectator. Any owner, handler, or spectator threatening harm to anyone involved in the ACHA event may be barred for life.
- J. If anyone climbs a tree or attempts to take a coon.
- K. Any handler who handles their dog without the judge's permission.
- L. Any dog that goes back to the same tree two times that has already been scored will be scratched on second offense.
- M. Any dog that fails to hunt for 15 continuous minutes.
- N. Any handler who fails to control their dog while leashed.
- O. Dogs not on grounds at the time casts are drawn out will be scratched.

11. ELECTRONIC DEVICES:

- A. ACHA allows hounds to wear tracking collars. Collars that have toning or shocking capabilities are not allowed.
- B. Handhelds of locating only devices may be used by the handler.
- C. Handhelds with shocking or toning capabilities must be turned off during hunting time. If carried, judge may check trackers at any time during time in. If found to be on, it is a scratchable offense.
- D. Cell phones must be turned on during time in, except in the case of an emergency.
- E. In no circumstances will thermal infrared devices of any kind be allowed. If found to be used, handler will be barred.

12. SCORECARDS:

- A. Scorecards must be completed in the woods and no changes can be made later, except when a question arises and is noted in the woods. If a question arises in the woods, the MOH/HD may change the card.
- B. Handler's signature verifies hunting time and scores are correct. Any handler that does not sign the scored results in the dog being scratched.
- C. Scorecards are to be kept confidential until hunt deadline passes or all scorecards are in the possession of the MOH.
- D. The MOH/HD is permitted to correct any errors found on the scorecard, if possible.

13. CASE OF TIE:

Tie Breakers - Most plus tree points, most plus strike points, least minus points, most circle tree points, most circle strike points. Go to lottery if time does not permit going back to woods.

14. COMPLAINTS:

Handler must first lodge complaint with the judge in the woods when the complaint comes up. Place question on card and continue hunting, unless it is a scratchable offense. Scratchable offenses must be returned to MOH or hunt director as soon as timeout can be legally called. Any questions must be addressed within 30 minutes of returning scorecard.

Any member not satisfied with the rule judgment can pay \$20 and bring it in front of a panel. The hunt director will choose three people to sit on the panel to hear the question. If the question is lost, the club will keep the \$20. If the question is won, the member will receive their money back.

Any member not satisfied with the panel's decision can appeal the decision by paying \$100. ACHA will put together a panel to hear the appeal. If the appeal is lost, ACHA will keep the \$100. If the appeal is won, the member will receive their money back.

15. HUNTING BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Handler must first lodge complaint with the judge in the woods when the complaint comes up. Place question on card and continue hunting, unless it is a scratchable offense. Scratchable offenses must be returned to MOH or hunt director as soon as timeout can be legally called. Any questions must be addressed within 30 minutes of returning scorecard.

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