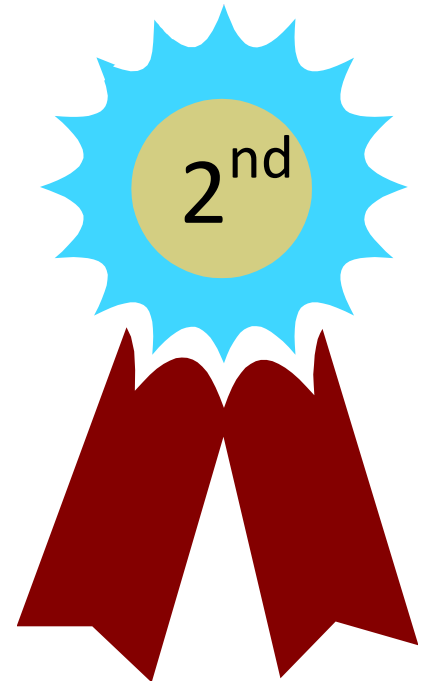


"The night was still. An eerie fog dissolves around the men and hounds in the swamp, exposing the silhouettes of their bodies in the moonlight. Frosty breath emerged from my mouth as I strained to listen for my hound, but all my frozen ears were hearing was silence. Suddenly like a ghostly spectrum in the distance, a hound is heard. The warm rounded tone of his bawl mouth crept through my ears and slowly lurched down my fingers and toes as the cold seemed to melt away. The other hunters and leashed dogs, quite dreadingly at first, shook the frost from their bones and began to trek down to the red hound. Gnarls of grapevines and jagged bushes tested our tired and weary bodies as we treaded through the cold and damp. My heart swelled with pride and began to beat faster as in the darkness, I saw the steam rolling off my hound's every bawl. The passion in his eyes shone in the carbine light as he leaped widely, threw back his head and shook the snow from the aspen branches with a deep rumbling bay. The other hound joined him, howling and leaping at the tree, but he was distinct. His mouth was louder, his chest deeper, and he rattled the tree tops with every bark. His testosterone indulged muscles bulged out of his dirty red coat as he strained at the end of the lead, fighting to get back to the tree. The cast began to shine the old den tree and up, way, way, way at the top of that old aspen, was a bright set of fiery orange orbs!"



Ever since I was young, I have had a deep love for Coonhunting. My grandfather coonhunted for 45 years and raised Walkers and Blueticks. He started me out young and took me along on every hunt he could. I can remember the magic of those nights, underneath the silver moon, where a man could stare and see God in everything around him, and find his heart soaring into the moonlight, faster than the hounds and even the coon itself! Those nights have since gone, along with my grandfather, but the magic has never left the memories of my heart. After his death, something deep inside me, like a seedling beginning to sprout, has jogged my love for the sport into full force. Grandpa taught me to respect the land we hunted and the waters we fished from, to appreciate God's creation and gifts he blessed upon us, and to help conserve and protect its wildlife. I'm 15 now, and I have a handful of hounds of my own. Since his passing, it's been my life's mission to keep the sport alive in the rolling hills and swamplands of Western Pennsylvania. Unfortunately, I am the only one among my entire extended family who coonhunts, which can be really difficult at times. Any coonhunting is either done with older buddies from the club, or on my own. I also have a gift for writing (as you can see from the paragraph above!) and choose to write about the outdoors, coonhunting and especially of memories with grandpa! I am often turning hounds loose and tend to hunt 3-4 times a week. I mostly hunt long running Redbones, but do have a hard treeing Bluetick. I am an avid member of my local club and participate in many bench shows and night hunts throughout the year. I'm in desperate need of a tracking system for my coonhounds.

Many nights, me and my dogs are not in familiar timber, which makes a tracking system essential. Some of the dogs I hunt in the UKC hunts also tend to go off away from the other dogs and hunt deeper and farther away. I would deeply appreciate a receiver and collar, but even just the receiver would be a blessing! One night while on a night hunt, the cast was disrupted by a massive thunderstorm. I was hunting my female Bluetick, Rascal, who tends to hunt deeper when other dogs are around her. After the cast gathered up two of the hounds, we were forced to turn in. We were unable to find Rascal the next morning, and I reluctantly went home. Days went by before I finally received a call from a farmer, almost a mile away from the club house, who said he had my dog. My parents have since not let me enter the hunts without a tracking system, and I'm praying that Tracker will help me out. I love the night hunts and my Bluetick is a few points away from NITECH (Night Champion)! Money is tight right now so I appreciate anything and everything you guys can do to help me! I would never want anything to happen to my hound while hunting, and I hope Tracker can help me keep them safe for another night's hunt!"