

Metal detecting competition events (hunts) are usually sponsored by a metal detecting club or hosted by hobby related manufacturers and retail businesses. These events can be comprised of one or two hunts or in some cases the event may last from three to seven days and have many different types of metal detecting hunts. Metal detecting competition hunts can be either an open or closed hunt event depending on how the sponsor or host defines the event.

Open Hunts. You need **not** be a club member to participate in the hunt. An open hunt is for any one who is willing to pay the entrance fee and follow the hunt rules.

Closed Hunts. You **must** be a club member to participate in the hunt and be able to show a current club membership card at registration. A closed hunt is for club members only and will usually require an admission fee.

The requirement of any interested detectorist to participate in a competition hunt is to complete the pre-register form and submit an admission fee for each of the scheduled hunts. Thus, the participant can select just certain hunts that are of interest to them or all of the scheduled hunts.

Metal detectorist in competition hunts can be very aggressive, therefore, rules and standards of etiquette are very important so that the hunt is held in a fair and balanced manner. Lets remember that all of the detecting participants have paid the same required admission fee for participation and expect an equal chance at the prizes.

Metal Detecting Etiquette and Integrity for a competition hunt is controlled by the event's host or sponsor and is usually accomplished by creating an atmosphere of fairness with written rules and expectations.

The Hunt Master provides the leadership for the event by enforcing the event rules and conducting an impartial event which should result in very high event integrity.

The individual detectorist's responsibility is to follow the event rules and to conduct their actions in a respectful manner towards the other detectorists on the hunt field and toward the Hunt Master and Event Host.

Competition is the action of individuals competing against each other by using their metal detecting skill with a metal detector of their choosing. This action is to seek a prize or prizes from a target rich pre-planted field of coin targets and tokens. In a competition event rules and etiquette of conduct are necessary so that all participants in a paid event have the same equal opportunity to seek the targets and prizes for their admission fee.

High integrity for the event should be a major objective of the host and hunt master. The hunt master should never plant foreign coins, or other tokens that are **not represented** by a prize. To do so takes away from the integrity of the hunt and its officials.

Competition metal detecting hunts are usually held in public parks, at ocean beaches or on privately held lands. These hunts are fee based and will have pre-planted fields with coin and token targets. The exception is relic hunts, which are usually held in open terrain with no pre-planted targets and are usually fee based.

Competition hunt etiquette is the responsibility of all: the event host, the hunt master and the paid participant.

Event Host or Sponsor's Responsibility. The event host plays a major role in how the event is organized and for the development of the event rules and event conduct. The event host or sponsor must develop the event rules so that all paid participants have an equal and fair chance to find the maximum number of targets with their expertise and equipment.

This requires that the host establish rules that will not provide or give an unfair advantage to any one detectorist or group of detectorist in the event. This is very important since all participants paid the same fee and have the expectation to have an equal opportunity for their admission fee on the competition hunt field.

The rules developed by the host should be directed at what detector equipment is acceptable on the hunt field and the conduct expected of the hunt master and participants so everyone on the field has the same opportunity at finding the pre-planted targets.

The rules below are designed to provide each detectorist an equal opportunity to find the pre-planted targets. There should never be an advantage provided by the event host to any detectorist by allowing a coil size greater than 12 inches, the use of Pulse Induction detectors (PIs), or the use of certain target recovery tools that may increase the speed of target recovery.

Metal Detector Rules:

- *Entrants must provide their own metal detector, accessories and target recovery tools.*
- *All hunt participants must wear headphones.*
- *No Search Coil larger than twelve inches are allowed. Note: No oversized Coils of any kind will be allowed on the Hunt Field.*
- *No Pulse Induction (PI) metal detectors allowed on the Hunt Field.*
- *The exception to the (PI) statement above is that small electronic pin-pointers will be allowed.*

Recovery Tools:

- *No Hand Tools allowed in Public Park Hunts when coins are tossed in the grass.*
- *Small Hand Recovery Scratching Tools or Small Recovery Hand Trowels allowed. (Less than 3" in size) when hunt events are held on undeveloped land.*
- *Sand Scoops allowed at beach hunts.*
- *Recovery speed baskets are not allowed.*
- *No target recovery plugging tools are allowed.*
- *All hunt participants must wear a target recovery pouch for their finds and trash removal.*

Hunt Master Responsibility. The hunt master's leadership and directions is what will make a competition hunt fair to all participants. A hunt master must make the participants adhere to the rules established by the host or sponsor of the event and administrator these rules fairly and consistently to all who participate. *The hunt master must make sure that there are no rules or lack of rules that provide for a single individual or group of detectorists to have an advantage since all participants pay the same admission fee and expect an equal chance at the coin targets and tokens.*

The hunt master must make sure that all coin targets and tokens are planted equally throughout the competition hunt field. All people who assist in planting coins should not be detecting in that hunt to do so would put other

detectorist at an disadvantage. If coin planters are allowed to hunt they should not be allowed to hunt the specific portion of the competition field where they have planted with coin targets.

The hunt master should never be an active detectorist in a competition hunt. Hunt masters should always be the person to plant all tokens for any given hunt and make sure that they are evenly planted by token value though out the hunt field.

If the hunt field is large with many participants it is recommended that the hunt field be divided into quadrants. The number of quadrants or sections can vary from two, four, six to even eight for a very large event. Coin target planters can be assigned a quadrant to plant the coins and they should be restricted from metal detecting that quadrant during the competition hunt. All quadrants should have an equal number of coin targets and tokens. Quadrants can be established by using rope to layout the hunt field or small colored flags on wire stand-ups. These flags can be purchase at business like Home Depot, Lowe's or most hardware stores.

Integrity. *An important aspect of being the hunt master is to provide up front guidance to all the people that help in setting up the hunt field. No hunt preparation person should plant coin target in anyway that would give anyone an advantage during the hunt. Nor should anyone helping to prepare the hunt field provide any information before the hunt starts to any of the detecting participants as to how the coin targets were planted.*

Hunt Field Rules:

- *Hunt Master is totally in charge of the hunt.*
- *The hunt field should be divided in quadrants before the hunt. If hunt participants help in planting the hunt field the participant should be assigned a quadrant for target planting and he or she should not be allowed to hunt in their previously assigned hunt field quadrant.*
- *Registered hunters must wear hunt registration badge while on the hunt field.*
- *The Hunt Field Gate Keeper will check all registered participant badges before allowing individuals to enter the hunt field perimeter. Only registered hunters are permitted entrance to the hunt field.*
- *No Walking across the Hunt Field while getting to your hunt field line-up position.*
- *No talking during the hunt or sharing of information.*
- *All Trash recovered during the hunt must be put in a target recovery pouch and be removed from the hunt field.*
- *All holes dug to recover targets must be filled once the target has been removed.*
- *No sharing of coin targets or tokens.*
- *Failure to follow hunt rules will result in the forfeiture of all hunts, prizes and the offender will be requested to leave immediately.*

Hunt Prize Distribution:

- *Coin Targets and Token Prizes will be regulated according to number of hunt entries.*
 - *Coin and Token targets should be no greater than two inches deep in the soil.*
- Or*
- Coin and Token Targets will be planted or tossed in the ground cover.*
- *Free hunts will consist of all clad coins and are only for registered hunters.*
 - *Token Prizes may be Gold Coins, Gold Nuggets, Silver Rounds, Silver Coins, metal detectors or other metal detecting related accessories.*

- *If Prize Tokens are not found during a hunt, the token prizes will be raffled off by using the entrant's registration numbers written on individual raffle tickets. These raffle tickets will be drawn at the end of the event for the left over prizes.*

Hunt Participants Responsibility. All participants in a competition hunt pay the same admission fee to enter the hunt event. This admission fee is used to purchase coins and token prizes for the hunt. The expectation on the part of the participant is that the fee charged will go towards the funding of the hunt's coin targets and prizes and that the hunt will be conducted in an equitable manner. The burden of equitable manner falls on the host or sponsor's event rules and the leadership of the hunt master in executing their hunt duties.

Hunt participants have a social responsibility to other detectorist during the hunt by adhering to all of the hunt rules and norms that have been put forth by the event host and the hunt master.

During the hunt, each detectorist in the hunt should act responsible towards other detectorist by **not** taking another's targets or infringe on another detectorist hunt space or by overlaying their coil upon another's coil. The hunt is competitive but should be practiced in a socially acceptable manner by all participants. Treat everyone during a competition event like you would want to be treated- fairly and with respect. Remember that each participant will have a different skill level: some will be faster and others slower but all of the participants paid the same admission fee to enter the hunt and deserve the same opportunity to find targets and have respect.

Participants should review the *Hunt Field Rules* under the Hunt Master section of this article again before leaving this article.

Summary. In any type of metal detecting competition event there must be well defined rules and social norms. These rules must be adhered to by the participants and enforced by the Hunt Master. It is the responsibility of the event host or sponsor to establish these rules of etiquette and to communicate these rules with all the other event information at the time of registration. This must be done before any admission fees are paid by the participant so that the event can have the highest integrity level possible and that everyone will feel fairly treated at the events end. There should never be any surprises on how the event will be conducted once the admission fees have been paid or later at the start of the event.