

FIRST DEER



The Future Of Our Sport

Donald Clark — Alabama



Enclosed is a picture of my 4 year old son Eli's first deer. Eli is a full blooded outdoorsman. His normal routine is to have his 2 year old sister crawl through the den while he sits in his blind made out of couch pillows and

he shoots her with his rifle that shoots little rubber darts. Oh yeah he stops her from crawling by bleating at her. It's hilarious to watch, she has no idea what he is saying but she stops every time, then he shoots her. He watches the outdoor channel all the time. He has been going hunting with us since he was 2. He has never been one that couldn't be still even at his young age. He knows that you have to be still and quiet and that is just what he does. I don't know if you remember the deer my daughter killed a couple of years ago but Eli was on that hunt as well. Picture enclosed.

The week before the opening youth hunt we would practice shooting his 22 cricket at a target in our back yard (we live outside of the city) each afternoon when I would get home from work. The day before opening day we shot his 223 for the first time just to let him feel the kick. It didn't bother him at all. We were shooting at 50 yards each day, he only missed the bulls eye twice the whole week and that was only by a couple of inches. So I knew that if we could get a deer within 50 yards it would be in serious trouble.

The night before the hunt Eli had all of his hunting gear sitting on go when I got home. This year was going to be his first year to actually be the shooter. He had watched his brothers and sisters long enough. It was show time for Eli and he was pumped. We had planned to get up at 4:30am but unfortunately he got sick with a stomach virus at about 11:00pm so our plans changed. It was so sad to see his face when I told him we couldn't go if he was sick. Fortunately he was better the next day but of all things his brother Tripp had his 9th birthday party that evening so we couldn't go hunting. Given the circumstances we got a pass to miss Sunday school the next day.

Finally our hunt started the second day of our special youth hunt. Not 10 minutes after daylight a deer walked into a green strip that



we had planted. It was a buck! Just what he wanted for his first deer. He was about 100 yards away and feeding. Eli was sitting on his knees in my lap with his rifle resting in the window. We watched him for a while and he got to about 80 yards I told Eli that he could take the shot. But the deer wouldn't turn broadside for him. The whole time this is taking place Eli is watching the deer through the scope and then looking at me saying "he's a nice one Daddy". Man I was about to shake the shooting house down, even his brother Tripp (9yrs) had to stop watching, he said Eli was making him too nervous, he was shaking also. The only one not shaking was Eli. Well the deer stopped eating and started walking straight at us, when he got about 10 feet (not yards) from us he saw or heard the panic in the house and bounced off but ole Eli put the doe bleat on him and he stopped at 32 yards. Boom! Right in the front shoulder. His first deer, 9pt. 160lbs.

Tommy Martinieri — Illinois



It was late November and there was a major cold front moving through Illinois and my brother, Kevin, was bringing my nephew Kyle, up to try to kill his first deer. The conditions were right. Kevin and Kyle got to the camp at 2:00 am on Friday morning because we didn't want to have to take Kyle out of

school for more than one day. Kyle had slept most of the way, so when it came 5:00 he was ready to go, even though Kevin was in no shape to hunt. I helped get Kyle dressed and ready for the big hunt. When we walked outside the snow was swirling by a twenty mile per hour wind. The wind chill put the temperature around 17 degrees, which was miserable, even for me.

When daylight finally broke we had a couple of does in the food plot only yards away from the ground blind where we were set up for the morning hunt. We watched the does while they fed on the clover, often peaking in and out of the blind to try to stay as warm as possible. The does eventually moved off, back to the bedding area and it was getting to be more miserable with the snow now turning into sleet and leaking through the ground blind and freezing on impact with our skin. We decided that we would get warmed up and get some breakfast so that we could go out earlier in the afternoon and hopefully see one of the 125 inch deer that I had been seeing weeks prior to his arrival.

After eating a hearty breakfast of eggs, pancakes,

and bacon we went back to the camp to catch a short nap and dream about what could happen on the afternoon hunt. After we rose, we decided to go back to the same ground blind since I had been seeing numerous bucks in this large patch of icy clover. It was around 1:15 when we finally got set up and settled in for the afternoon. Little to my surprise around 1:25 a buck stepped out at 45 yards and it was one of the bucks that we had been seeing. I was in the process of focusing the camera on the deer while Kevin was helping Kyle get the muzzleloader on the shooting sticks and ready for the shot. Kyle has been shooting guns since he was 5 years old so we were confident that he could make a precise shot. He was very patient, unlike me, and did not shoot the deer until he was at 95 yards and quartered away and it was three minutes and forty-eight seconds later according to the video camera. The footage was unbelievable and for a child to take that much time to make sure he did not wound the animal was a lesson that even some adults should learn from. He finally fired the shot! When the deer buckled up and ran over the crest of the hill, I knew it was hit solidly. We waited about 30 minutes before trailing the deer, but the most memorable time was the minutes after the shot.

All of our emotions were going a mile a minute, but I will never forget the expression on Kyle's face when he looked at me, got up, gave me a hug and thanked me for helping him kill his first deer. The experiences I have had with my family and friends in the outdoors are treasures that will never be forgotten, and make me look forward to many seasons ahead. God has created a great place for us to live, so please take care of it and leave it better than you found it for children and grandchildren's sake.

Michael Hartman — Pennsylvania

Nicholas Zehring, age 12, Harrisburg, PA, bagged this 200 pound 8 pointer at 7:10 on opening morning within a stone's throw of Imperial Whitetail Clover plots managed by his great grandfather, great-great uncle and grandfather in Jefferson County, PA. Prior to the



introduction of Whitetail Institute products (30-06, Cutting Edge and Imperial Whitetail Clover) Y bucks and small sixes were the norm on their camp property surrounded by public hunting ground. Nick's 8 pointer, bagged with one shot during his first ever hunt, was one of the camp's "best ever" bucks harvested during the past several years. 🦌