

Touch Down Elk Hunting

I had been guiding and filming for other hunters for almost a week and finally it was my turn to hunt. There were six other hunters in camp and all six had tagged out. We were hunting in the Northeast corner of Saskatuwan and every bull elk taken thus far was over 340 B.C. points. I was concerned that there might not be any monster bulls left. I was wrong. I found an area that I hadn't been in yet and found a rub you wouldn't believe. The elk were bugling the first day we had gotten there but, everyday got hotter and hotter. They were now bugling their heads off. I was mostly cow calling with an occasional bugle thrown in. Right off the bat I got a hot bull to answer. After an hour of working him I could tell he was with some cows. I could tell from the sounds of his bugle he was making a wide semi circle in front of me as he got closer. Then all of a sudden he would be 2 or 3 times further away. This happened several times throughout the course of the day. I finally got a good look at him through my binoculars from about 200 yards away. He was about a 350 to 360 B.C. class bull.

By night fall, I hadn't gotten close enough to get a low shot. Well before daylight the next day, we were in the same spot we had left him the night before. Fourth minutes before light we heard him bugle and then we got a pleasant surprise. Not 10 seconds after he bugled another bull answered him. But, let me tell you, this was no ordinary bull. You could tell from the bugle and the gurgle this was the dominant bull in the area. From his volume to his tone to his aggressiveness, you could tell he had whipped every bull in the area. The fact that we never heard our bull from yesterday again, only confirmed what I already knew. After working the bull for 15 minutes, he surprised me by coming straight in. He actually caught me with my pants down. That's just a figure of speech. I was walking around the edge of a pasture and a head of woods, when he appeared out of no where, broadside at 70 yards, in the middle of the pasture. I shot him with my range finder and then fumbled for my release. He was there long enough for all this to be caught on camera,

but not quite long enough for me to get my release out of my pocket. He finally realized I wasn't suppose to be there and he left just as fast as he had appeared, I heard him bugle again over 2 miles away only 5 minutes later. This bull was huge. He was the biggest bull I had ever seen in my life dead or alive, in person or in a magazine. This was the monster I was going to take. No matter how far I had to chase him. My camera man, Dayna and I took off after him. We finally got close enough to start working him again. With each unsuccessful encounter, the bull was getting an education. Realizing how old this bull had to be and how much in 1 day of his life I had taught him, he had to have a doctor's degree in "Staying Alive". Dayna and I regrouped and decided we needed to come up with a different strategy. We had already taught him every trick the 2 of us knew and we needed to come up with a new trick fast. The bull was on the back side of a head of the woods that had a huge lake on the North and East side. Unless the bull wanted to swim across the lake, he had to come out on the west or south end. On the west and south end was dense forest that he could easily slip by us in. On the south end was a pasture about 110 yards wide before the next head of woods. We came crashing in from the west side, breaking limbs, thrashing trees and bugling our heads off. Then we ran southeast as fast as we could until we hit the south end pasture. We then ran across the pasture to the other head of wood 110 yards away. You see the bull was not the only one being educated. We had noticed throughout the day that he never came directly to us in a straight line after seeing us for the first time. He either circled left or circled right or went the opposite direction. Most of the time he circled left; since he never came straight we knew he wasn't coming due west. The fact that he circled left most of the time coupled with the lake being due north and east, we knew he would be coming out of the woods to the south. We were finally in position on the edge of the other woods looking north at the woods that hid our quarry, just 170 yards away. There were 2 options. The bull could come south running away from the direction he had last heard us bugle or, he could circle left, which would take him west which would give me a shot only after he stepped out into the pasture. This would circle him back toward where we had come from. We were hoping for the first

option. This would give me a maximum shot of 40 yards between us and the lake. If Murphy's Law was going to get us, the maximum shot would be 110 yards depending on how far out into the pasture he drifted. On my bow I have pins up to 90 yards and have made numerous shots in excess of 90 yards. I don't like taking such long shots but, with a range finder, I **can** make the shot. We could tell from all the cow calls that over the course of the day he had accrued quite a harem.

Suddenly a cow appeared out of the woods and stood on the edge of the pasture. Then another one and another, before we knew it, there were over 10 cows standing in the pasture facing west. This was not a good sign because it meant that the elk and Murphy's Law had prevailed. There was some good news, I range a cow and found the heard to be 93 yards instead of 110. Finally, the heard started trotted west about the time the bull came out of the woods. This puts them traveling from my right to my left. I drew my bow and found my 90 yard pin. I held it just a grunt high and began to lead the bull. Just when I thought I was leading the bull enough, I noticed my pin was on the side of the cow that was trotting just in front of the bull. I squeezed my release and my bow fired. My arrow flew perfect. It looked like a Peyton Manning pass as the receiver, (the bull), was trotting toward the goal line. TOUCH DOWN!!!!!! The arrow hit its mark. It was perfect up and down and at about the 40th rib left to right. This was a little back of where I wanted it but, still a fatal hit. He stumbled just seconds after impact. After 10 more yards, he darted back into the woods. I could still see my arrow in his side with about 8 inches of arrow and fletching sticking out. You talk about being pumped. My adrenaline kicked in about the time I saw him stumble. Most of the cows doubled back in an effort to follow the bull. When we got to the edge of the woods, there was no question where he had gone in. There was a blood trail my 6 year old could follow. When we got about 100 yards into the woods, there was a stampede as all the remaining cows spooked. When we heard this, I knew we weren't far from the bull. Another 100 yards and there he was, all piled up. I had to pinch myself. The best shot I ever made in my life on the best elk I had ever seen in my life. He scored 402 BC points.

What a monster! I thank the Lord and give Him all the glory, He has blessed me so.