

BEATING the ODDS

New Pope and Young Club World's Record

412-1/8 typical American elk

Shawn Patterson

Coconino Co., AZ 2005

By **Ryan Hatfield**

Assistant Director
Big Game Records Program

Shawn Patterson sacrificed many of his fall hunting opportunities for the chance to play football in the NFL for the Green Bay Packers. He and David Pierce were both lucky enough to draw elk tags for Arizona and hired John McClendon & Sons Guide Service. Travis and Levi McClendon would be the guides for this highly anticipated hunt.

They had just made their way to the end of a park when Patterson saw the ivory tips of a big set of antlers over the top of a tree. It was a giant bull, and it gave them just a brief glimpse before disappearing.

They closed the gap to 100 yards and set up to have McClendon do some calling. Soon, those ivory tips came into view and began swaying closer and closer. Nearly in range, the entire setup was blown when a young bull they had spooked earlier got curious, came in, and then spooked again, moving the big bull out in the process.

Patterson's heart sank. "Let's follow him. We might get one last chance," McClendon said.

Silence fell over the mountain as the bugling bulls began to get wary. They picked up its tracks and followed them for another 500 yards, calling occasionally with no response, until the tracks were lost in the rocks.

Losing hope but with no other options, they continued on. Then, 150 yards away, they heard a familiar bugle. Soon, another bull joined in. The animals continued their bugling as the hunters slipped through the trees. Finally, Patterson saw antlers moving through the branches just 30 yards to his left.

He came to full draw and waited for an excruciatingly long time. Finally, the big ivory-tipped rack began swaying into view as the bull entered his shooting lane. Shawn had to adjust quickly as the bull came out angling downhill; then, the arrow was on its way. The bull lunged forward and tore off down the hill, disappearing over a small rise.

Suddenly, all was quiet. No crash, no sound of pounding hooves, no breaking of branches as the elk made its escape, nothing but quiet. Rather than push the situation, they left, hoping to give the animal time to bleed out. Patterson was worried about the hit, but was trying to remain confident.

Later, with Travis McClendon and Pierce as recruited help, Patterson's mind was still racing as he replayed the scene over and over in his mind. They had scarcely begun the search when Patterson's fears were dismissed. There, only 93 yards away, lay his bull. The animal had likely perished in less than a minute.

Taking an elk with bow and arrow is no small feat, but Patterson had done something much more significant that day. He had been fortunate enough to take the largest bull elk ever taken with archery equipment (the new Pope & Young Club World's Record) and the 16th largest ever accepted in B&C's Awards Program. ■



Shawn Patterson's tremendous typical American elk is one of only a handful of bulls to ever have both main beams surpass 60 inches.

The night before the hunt, a coin flip determined who would go after the best bull they had found while scouting. Pierce won, so Patterson and Levi McClendon went after some seven other bulls estimated to be records book caliber two miles to the north.

They had barely started up the slope on the first morning when they heard three bugles. They pursued for nearly a mile and were eventually greeted with the sound of clashing antlers. Multiple satellite bulls soon had them pinned down, however, and they were forced to listen as the big bull moved off. They were finally able to slip out of the herd, rejoining the pursuit.

Washington Sheep Record 196-2/8 bighorn sheep - John L. Amistoso - Garfield Co., WA 2006

The bighorn sheep populations in the northwestern U.S. have always had

issues with pneumonia die-offs. As a result, they also receive some of the most intensive management efforts anywhere the species exists. Southeastern Washington is no different. For a decade, the area where this giant ram came from had been shut down to sheep hunting.

In 2006, the population had rebounded enough that one sheep permit (a raffle tag) was offered for this particular unit. That spring, before the winner was even announced, John Amistoso visited the area with Craig Martin. They wanted to see what was roaming the area before any successful tagholder filled the tag. The area they scouted was actually in Oregon, as the sheep herd is migratory, spending winter and spring in Oregon and the more tolerable months in Washington. The result of that trip was 19 rams, including one bona fide monster.

Later in the year, Amistoso was stunned to learn that he had been selected as the hunt winner. Multiple scouting trips were put in trying to locate the big ram once it had moved back into Washington, but to no avail. The area wasn't easy to cover—extremely rough, vertical ground, with enough timber mixed in to deter effective glassing.

Amistoso, along with Craig Martin and Earl Landrus, packed in with horses and mules, planning on spending a week looking rams over and hopefully encountering the big one Amistoso had seen earlier in the year. They had, on previous scouting trips, recorded ear tags of some of the sheep they had seen, including those running with the big ram. Several of those numbers were spotted, so they had confidence the big ram was close by.

The week came and went without ever laying eyes on their prize. As a last-ditch effort, they stayed one day beyond their plan. Early that afternoon, they spotted three rams about 800 yards away, and one of them was the big one!

Daylight would be in high demand soon, so Amistoso made his move. He knew he was getting close to where the ram had been, and slowly peeked up over the spine of a sharp ridge. He was hoping to see the rams 100 to 200 yards away. Instead, he found himself staring at the big ram only 25 yards away. With little time to do anything but react, he fired. The bullet penetrated the animal's chest, and the ram went down quickly.

It would be past midnight when the three weary men had all of the meat, head, and hide back to camp. Making history rarely comes without extreme effort. This hunt was no exception. Traversing canyon after canyon in search of a legend had paid off. This ram is the largest bighorn ever entered into B&C's records program from Washington. ■



John L. Amistoso's tremendous bighorn features horn lengths of 41-4/8 (right) and 43-6/8 (left).

BC's Biggest Mulie in 63 Years Eli J. Jules - 271-5/8 non-typical mule deer Adams Lake, BC 2006

Eli Jules had heard the rumors—a giant non-typical mule deer had been seen in an area he hunted. Jules already knew the area well, and kept the information tucked away in the back of his mind as he hunted through British Columbia's general season near Kamloops.

It was November 16th and the height of the rut when Jules, his uncle, and a friend made their way up through an old cut block and burned area toward timberline. There was a foot of snow on the ground, and the deer were strongly rutting.

Jules made his way up toward the alpine, soon spotting a massive buck and several does feeding in an opening. He had no time to think about those rumors he'd heard before, or if this could be that legend; instead, he simply shouldered his .270 WSM and dispatched the buck before anything could go wrong.

Jules's 2006 non-typical mule deer is the third largest ever taken in the expansive province of British Columbia, and the largest buck taken in 63 years! ■



Eli J. Jules poses with the biggest mule deer taken in British Columbia in nearly 63 years.