

# Generation Next: Essays

Submitted by: Morgan V. Reed  
Trophy Type: Typical Whitetail

Age: 11  
Location: Warren County, MO

**When I said goodbye to my mom and sister and headed off** with my dad for a weekend of hunting, I never imagined how awesome that hunting trip would be. It was October 30, 2010, and I was 11 years old. I

had been hunting with my dad for three years, but had yet to pull the trigger on a deer. I didn't know it yet, but my luck was about to change.

It all started when I got home from school on Friday afternoon; Dad had our bags packed, the truck loaded up, and we were ready to go. Dad decided we should go to my cousin's farm for a few practice shots before we headed up to my grandma's house at Pinnacle Lake, Missouri. My first shot wasn't very good, but the next two were right on the bull's-eye, so I was feeling pretty confident in myself.



**LEFT:** Morgan V. Reed with her typical whitetail deer scoring 175-2/8 points. **BELOW:** B&C Official Measurer Jason Davis measured Morgan's buck after the 60-day drying period.



When we finally arrived at Grandma Ridgway's house, my dad and his uncle, Kenny, decided I should hunt in the same woods where my late great-grandpa Leroy Ridgway used to hunt. That is where my dad killed his first deer when he was 13. I didn't care where I hunted. I just wanted to shoot my first deer!

When we got up early Saturday morning I was really excited. We had a quick breakfast with Uncle Kenny, and then the three of us set out for our hunt. We drove to the other side of the lake, then Uncle Kenny went off to bow hunt while Dad and I went to the box stand where I would hunt. The squirrels were making a lot of noise, and Dad's phone kept buzzing with text messages from his friends in the duck blind. My dad was missing out on opening weekend of duck season to take me deer hunting.

After a couple hours of watching the squirrels and munching on beef jerky, Dad decided to use the rattle bag and the grunt call. A few seconds later we heard a loud crash in the brush, and we saw a doe pop out with a nice buck following close behind. I couldn't get the buck in the scope as he trotted off. A few moments later the doe returned and stopped really close to our stand. I was anxious to shoot, but Dad told me to wait. His advice really paid off! Dad switched seats with me so I could line up my Rossi .243 in the doe's direction. As I got the deer in my scope, Dad whispered, "Wait, Morgan!" I looked into the brush and saw a humongous deer standing there. He was walking right at us, so Dad told me to be ready. Dad hit his grunt call and the buck stopped in his tracks about 30 yards away from us. I was really nervous, but I tried not to shake. Dad whispered, "Shoot, Morgan!" So I pulled the trigger, and I got him! He ran off, but I knew that I had just shot a monster buck!

I was anxious to get out of the stand and see my deer, but Dad

said that it was best for us to wait a few minutes. We finally climbed down from the stand and looked for a blood trail. We walked over to the tree where the buck had been standing, but there was no blood. Then I looked over and saw the big guy lying against a nearby fence. We eased over to the deer to make sure it was dead. We were shocked! I was so amazed that my first deer was a 13-point buck! Now it was our turn to send a picture to the duck hunters.

We called Uncle Kenny and told him to meet us at the truck right away. He asked if I had any luck, and I decided to play a little trick on him. I told him that I had shot a 6-pointer, and he congratulated me. When he got there we all walked back to see the deer and Uncle Kenny was surprised that it was so big. He said, "I thought you said you killed a 6-pointer!" I replied, "I did! Six on one side and seven on the other!" Then Dad called Mom to tell her the news, but she didn't believe him at first. He finally convinced her when

he said, "You and Kristen better drive up here because Morgan just killed the buck of a lifetime."

News about my deer traveled quickly and people from all around the lake stopped by to see it and take pictures. I didn't even know most of them. When Dad's uncle, Warren, showed up, he looked to see if the buck had a nick in its back. He missed a deer the year before when he was bowhunting from the same stand, and sure enough, my deer had a scar. Uncle Warren was happy that I was able to get the deer he missed out on. I liked all of the attention, but after a while my face hurt from smiling for all those pictures! It was the best day of my life.

A couple months later, we took the rack to get it officially scored. My buck scored 175-2/8 points and with a B&C gross score of 186-6/8 points. My dad told me that in the four generations of hunting in our family, with over 30 deer mounts, my monster buck is now the biggest in the whole family! ■



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