

The 200

By Jim Baker

Wednesday, September 18th was quite warm and humid for an early fall day in Wisconsin. We were less than a week into the 2013 Whitetail Deer archery season. Next to the rut, this is my favorite time of year to bow hunt, as the deer are still going about their daily business, seemingly unaware of the danger in the trees above.

I checked my wireless weather station at 5:00 PM. The 7 degree reading along with the high humidity was discouraging. It was great weather for a day on the lake, but not so good for an evening of bow hunting. The first few days of the season had been nice and cool, keeping the pesky mosquitos, gnats and other biting insects to a minimum.

The stand I had planned to hunt was quite a walk and I knew full well that I'd be soaked in sweat by the time I got there. Being that I mainly hunt in Wisconsin, nearly all my bow-hunting clothes are geared for cool or cold weather. On top of that, the stand faces west, so I'd be sitting directly in the warm rays of the setting sun. This was also the stand nearest one of my trail cams that had captured pictures of a giant nontypical buck the previous September, just before the season opened. At one point, someone remarked "that deer must be 200 inches" and to locals in the know, the deer simply became known as "the 200".

I sat in this stand the entire 2012-early and late-archery seasons, patiently awaiting his return. He never showed. Shortly after the season had closed, the giant buck reappeared several times on a trail cam I had set up next to a thicket on the edge of a cattail marsh. I retreated into the house to mull it over.

Normally, the only thing that keeps me from my stand is lightning, for obvious reasons, and high winds. The ground in this particular area where I was hunting is often covered with standing water. Consequently, the roots of some of the trees are mainly held in place by mud, and in high winds these trees can tip over with the root ball coming right out of the ground. The only thing more nerve wracking than not being strapped into a swaying tree, is being strapped into a tree that may fall at anytime!



By 5:20 PM the temperature was down to 78 degrees, not much of an improvement, but better. I decided to go to a stand that I had put up about three weeks earlier, since it was the shortest walk at only a few hundred yards. I hadn't yet put a bow holder or rope hoist in the tree, or cut shooting lanes, so I thought this would be a good opportunity to get this stand in order.

I would normally have these tasks completed by September 1st, but a slip a couple of weeks earlier left me with stitches between the fingers of my left hand. I then started my pre-hunt routine; shower and shampoo with unscented soap, dried with a towel that goes in a washing machine that only gets used for hunting clothes, applied unscented deodorant, brushed my teeth with baking soda, pop in two pieces of apple flavored gum as additional cover scent and headed outside to get dressed. I always leave my hunting clothes and boots outside after a hunt to make sure they stay scent free.

I then grabbed the items I needed to finish setting up this stand and headed down the path to the old cottonwood tree the stand is in. The platform of my hang on stand is about 18 feet off the ground, a good six feet higher than the remnants of an old wooden platform hung long ago by a hunter unknown to me.

It's now 6:00 PM. I attach my bow holder, hooks and hoist and pull my bow up from the ground below. My hair is wet with sweat and the 9 mph south wind

Wisconsin Buck & Bear Club

Method of Harvest (check)

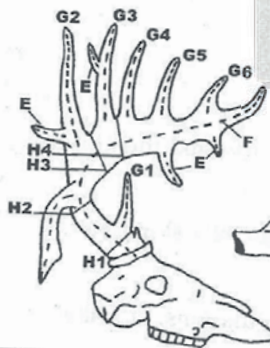
Archery ☒ Firearm
Handicap ☐ Non-hunting

Non-typical Whitetail Deer

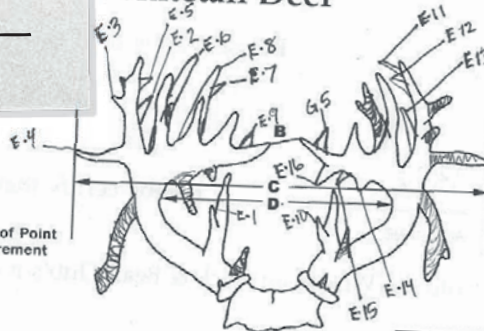
Minimum Entry Scores

Archery & Handicap 155

Firearm & Non-hunting 170



Detail of Point Measurement



E1	4 3/8	5 3/8
E2	1 3/8	4 5/8
E3	2 0/8	4 3/8
E4	2 3/8	6 3/8
E5	2 3/8	3 3/8
E6	9 0/8	1 3/8
E7	1 3/8	1 3/8
E8	9 3/8	
E9	6 0/8	

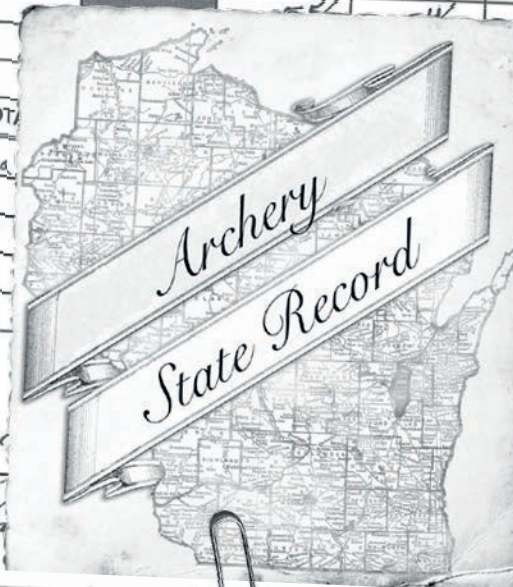
E-10
E-11
E-12
E-13
E-14
E-15
E-16

PLEASE COMPLETE BOTH SIDES OF SHEET

A. No. Points on Right Antler	15	No. Points on Left Antler	13	COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3	COLUMN 4
B. Tip to Tip Spread	12 1/8	C. Greatest Spread	26 7/8	Spread Credit	Right Antler	Left Antler	Difference
D. Inside Spread of Main Beams	19 7/8	Spread Credit-May Not Exceed Longer Antler		19 7/8			
F. Length of Main Beam					25 7/8	24 1/8	7/8
G-1. Length of First Point					8 7/8	8 7/8	0/8
G-2. Length of Second Point					10 0/8	11 1/8	1 1/8
G-3. Length of Third Point					8 6/8	11 3/8	2 7/8
G-4. Length of Fourth Point, if Present					7 4/8	5 9/8	1 1/8
G-5. Length of Fifth Point, if Present					4 3/8	1 3/8	3 0/8
G-6. Length of Sixth Point, if Present							
G-7. Length of Seventh Point, if Present							
H-1. Circumference at Smallest Place Between Burr and First Point					6 4/8	6 3/8	1/8
H-2. Circumference at Smallest Place Between First Point and Second Points							1/8
H-3. Circumference at Smallest Place Between Second and Third Points							3/8
H-4. Circumference at Smallest Place Between Third and Fourth Points							1/8
TOTAL							1 1/8
ADD	Column 1	19 7/8	County: Waukesha				
	Column 2	87 7/8	Date Killed: 9-18-13				
	Column 3	86 3/8	Hunter's Address: 2331				
	Subtotal	193 7/8	Owner:				
SUBTRACT	Column 4	11 1/8	Owner's Address:				
	Subtotal	182 7/8	Remarks:				
ADD Line E Total		66 7/8					
FINAL SCORE		249 5/8					

Date: 11-18-13

Official Measurer:



is doing little to help cool me down. I have a thin Scent-Lok™ beanie and facemask in my pocket, but I'm simply too warm to put either one on. I just sit, relax and breathe, and take in the spectacular views. I also make a mental note of the branches I plan on clearing the next day to open up some shooting lanes.

Just before 7:00 PM, I see movement to the NW of me about 50 yards away. A doe and her two fawns are slowly making their way toward me, browsing on the shrubs and small trees as they go. I reached into my pocket and slowly put on my facemask and beanie. A couple minutes later, all three are straight downwind of me, at 20 yards, but have no idea I'm there. I was waiting for the doe to raise her nose to the wind and look my direction, but she never did. They just kept meandering along at the same pace. When they reached the path I had walked in on, they turned onto it and kept walking until they were out of sight. Just a few minutes later, I heard a branch snap to the west.

I could see the partial body of a deer approximately 40 yards from me, but the thick foliage obstructed the view of its head. From past experience, when I hear a branch snap in the woods, I immediately think, "buck"! I reached for my bow and put my left hand through the wrist strap and around the grip, but still resting the weight of the bow on the holder. I watch the deer through the leaves for the next minute or so, still unsure if it's a buck or doe. As the deer takes a few steps to the south, I can now clearly see the massive antlers! This was the monster buck I'd seen on my trail cams and only a couple times with the naked eye, "the 200".

I'd imagined this scenario a hundred times, telling myself, "don't look at the rack, don't look at the rack, focus on the body" to avoid the inevitable buck fever. As soon as I saw that giant rack, I immediately switched my focus to its body. The bruiser then started walking straight east toward my stand. He was still a few yards to the south of me. I thought to myself, he's going to walk right behind me and I don't have a lane for a clear shot!

He continued east, closer and closer, then for a reason unknown, he turned north and took a few more steps. He was now broadside at only 15 yards. I drew my bow and as soon as the Blazer Vane touched the corner of my mouth, released the arrow in an almost singular motion. He was walking slowly between two dead trees when I released the arrow. I heard a "thwack" and then watched him run just over 30 yards through the tall grass and come to a stop near the low hanging branches of another large cottonwood tree.

He was now nearly 50 yards from my stand, facing directly away from me. For the next 4-7 minutes I stood there watching him. A couple of times I had to remind myself to breathe. Never once did he look

back or turn broadside, he just kept looking in the direction he was headed. By then the self-doubt was really setting in.

Did I miss? Was I looking thru my peep sight correctly? Was that in fact even the buck I thought it was? Did any of that just happen? Time seemed to come to a complete stop. Then I saw his head sway slightly to the left and then to the right, then again and again. It was at that point I realized the shot was fatal. I then watched the giant gently lay down, never to get back up. The feeling was absolutely overwhelming. I pulled out my phone and texted my hunting buddy Paul, "Shot a monster!!!" "I think it is the one I've been looking for!!!!". That was at 7:18PM, a scant one minute before the day's hunt officially ended.

I then lowered my bow to the ground and climbed down the tree as quietly as possible. I made a wide circle around the deer, listening for movement as I snuck by. I heard nothing, but wanted to wait at least 30 minutes, just in case. I then continued back to the house to wait for Paul to help me recover the deer.

When he arrived around 8:00 PM, we each hopped on an ATV and headed into the woods. We stopped on the trail about 35 yards from the spot I had last seen the deer. We started walking slowly through the area and found the giant buck in the exact spot where I had last seen him. Again, I was completely overwhelmed. In the last 20 years, I've only missed a few bow seasons. For only the second time in my life, I arrowed a buck.

I wrote the above on September 19th, while each and every detail was still fresh in my mind. Several times over the last two months I sat down with the intention of expanding on exactly what I meant by "overwhelmed", but have yet to find the words.

