

PATIENCE, PATIENCE, PERSISTENCE

by
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Opening day found Sean Shea and his hunting partner Shawn Slider about a 1/2 mile apart working a canyon over with their binoculars. Sean noticed that all the deer he was able to pick up were feeding and bedding in the big sage. Nothing seemed to be in the mountain mahogany's.

After glassing for a while he was able to spot a forky. He then caught a glimmer of antlers in a slight depression. It was a 3x4 about 25" wide. Soon he saw a third buck a 4-pointer that was around 29" wide and real tall. He decided to glass them for a while. Suddenly from the edge of a large boulder just beyond the 4-pointer, the massive tips of a rack came into view. The hidden buck must have been stretching his neck to make those antlers rock into view. There was no longer any doubt this was a giant buck worth going after!

It was 9:30 a.m., and the wind was perfect. Sean ran across the flat, got about 200 yards from where the buck's were bedded and stopped to discard his pack and boots, put on his predator camo suit, face paint, and head net. Then began a hands and knees stalk. When Sean was about 60

yards out from the big buck the forky "nailed him" and stood up. It was catching because the 3x4 stood up also and got nervous. He just kept eyes down, and after about 15 minutes the two smaller bucks just drifted around the side of the hill.

By the time he worked his way to where he could see into the depression, the bucks had gotten up and moved to take advantage of the shade. Sean had an easy shot at the 4x4 who was now bedded with his back to him. Sean then used his range finder to pin point the distance of the 4x4 and the boulder and some of the bigger sage brush.

Where had the big buck disappeared to? Sean finally saw the buck's antlers come into view. Once again it was behind the large boulder. It had moved around with the shadow. It was now 12:15 and the sun was brutal. This was the first hunt he had ever learned patience on. He always tried to go just a little to fast or take one more step.

This time I decided to sit and wait that buck out! After a while the 4x4 got up, stretched and moved about 15 yards to a more shaded spot and bedded down. The only problem was he was looking directly at Sean now. Sean is a



Sean's buck was lost for 31 hours before recovery and the birds really worked his velvet over. Because the velvet was destroyed the rack had to be stripped. Look at all the character this rack has.

believer that if you look directly into a deer's eye's he will sense you, even if he can't possibly see you. Sean kept his eyes averted from the buck for the next hour and a quarter.

The sun and the 4x4 had both been staring at Sean forever, when all of a sudden the big buck flew up out of his bed and blew! The buck took some deep breaths for what seemed like hours, but was probably just about 4 or 5 minutes. He must have decided everything was O.K. because he started to feed.

Those giant antlers were rocking back and forth with each bite and head movement. Sean say's, "There's nothing like a big muley." He stopped in front of a big sagebrush that I had previously ranged. The bush was 50 yards so I knew the buck was at 46 or 47 yards. I drew and shot, he jumped the string. The buck actually crouched and spun so fast his belly was dragging the ground, and dirt was flying. He bolted away through the sagebrush and I saw the orange fletching buried 3" to 4" to the left of the spine.

The 4x4 exploded out of his bed and raced off with the huge buck over

the first ridge, as Sean watched. Sean remembers thinking. He's hit good he'll want to go down hill.

It was 2:30 p.m. by the time Sean recovered his pack and boots. The only bad thing about the hit on the buck, was it went in top of the back, but didn't penetrate the bottom of the body to create an exit hole and blood trail! Sean tracked the buck till almost 9 o'clock that evening, getting only 300 yards out into a huge rock flat. Sean went back to camp knowing it was a "Fatal Hit."

The buck was to good not to make every effort. I don't think he slept that night. Sean was back out before dawn had broke. The confidence of last night's knowing it was a "Fatal Hit" was beginning to disappear at that point. By noon Sean had only progressed another 50 yards on the blood trail. He decided to go back to camp for some water and get his hunting partner Shawn to help him.

Until now Sean had been passing a point in the trail up the hill on one side of a large boulder, This time he walked on the other side. He noticed a break in the fence, also a large track

going down hill. It ran about 5 yards off and parallel with the trail. The tracking continued the rest of the day. At 9:30 that evening Sean and Shawn "got a whiff of a dead deer." He was just a few yards off the trail he had used for three trips in and out of the area where he was searching. Unfortunately it had been dark when he passed the buck each time. The ravens and magpies had wrecked the velvet on the front fork of the right antler. The arrow was sunk to the fletch.

The buck was huge in every way, probably 250 lbs, the antlers have 9 points on the right and 10 points on the left. The buck has a 35" outside spread on the cheaters and 32" outside spread on the frame. He has a rough score of 195 after deductions. Sean say's that he learned more about patience and persistence on this hunt than all his others. Persistence kept this great buck from becoming lost forever! ⊕