



CONNECTICUT'S

Great Bow Bucks of 2008!

by Jeff Brown

For many years now the Constitution State has produced some of the region's most impressive archery

season monster bucks. If you have never hunted this state, you probably are not aware that it provides for an outstanding bow season that extends from mid-September through late January (depending upon what zones you hunt). Parts of this state are densely populated, and therefore bow hunting is often the only legal and acceptable means of hunting deer. Deer densities tend to be fairly high in these areas as well. Other parts of the state - particularly along the state's western border with NY and north-western border with MA - are remote and rugged, and "hunt" more like the big woods of New York. In both habitats the bucks have surprisingly good nutrition, and grow to maturity with regularity. And that means they grow big racks! Combine these factors with an extended bow season and liberal bag limits, and you have the makings for some great bow hunting!

Despite these factors and the state's reputation as a great source of archery "monster bucks", the last few seasons have been a little less impressive in terms of top-end archery bucks. But not so in 2008! This past season started out with a flourish. By late September I was already receiving phone calls and emails about big bucks arrowed throughout the state. And the trend continued right through the late season, although many of the bigger bucks seemed to be taken early on in the campaign. In this article I will feature several outstanding bucks that have been officially scored and entered to the Northeast Big Buck Club records. And as a bonus, we'll take a look at the new state record typical archery buck!

A New State Record!

Back in 1989, Ron Tavrick arrowed a monster 10-Point in Litchfield County that grossed 175 0/8" and netted 171 6/8". It stood as the state record for nearly 20 years, until Chris Belisle entered the woods in late September of 2008. Ron had been hunting the rugged country in western Connecticut, but Chris was hunting in Hartford County, a primarily suburban hunting habitat

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New State Record Tops Great Archery Season For CT!

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full of big houses and big “backyard bucks.”

The particular “backyard buck” was familiar to Chris. In fact, he and his hunting partner Mark Kulig had two years of Cam Trakker photos of the giant. As Chris tells it, Mark was a little leery about showing the photos to Chris because Chris is self-employed and has a lot more time to hunt than Mark does! But ultimately Mark let his friend see the photos. They got some additional good photos from the summer of 2008, including some night photos just three weeks before Chris would get his opportunity at this giant.

On opening day Chris was in a stand, listening to cars and busses go by, and hoping to see the big buck. But throughout that week and over the weekend, neither Chris nor Mark saw the buck. The next week Chris was seeing bucks on a ridge about a hundred yards away, so he decided to borrow another treestand and place it up on that ridge. He did that the afternoon of September 23rd. The next morning, Chris was in the new stand! On the morning of September 24th Chris got to the new stand early, and immediately saw some does down by his original stand! He was starting to have second thoughts about his stand choice, when at 6:34AM Chris saw *the buck* at forty yards. The buck quickly entered the underbrush and popped out just five yards from Chris, directly from his left, and looked right at him! Chris was at full draw, but because the buck was so close, and was facing him, the only shot would have been between the shoulder blades. Chris didn't like the angle, so he hesitated while he waited for a better shot. The wise old buck snorted, bounded twice to left, and then made his last mistake – he stopped and looked back, at just twenty-four yards! Chris did not panic when the deer first bounded, so he was ready when he stooped. The arrow flew true and Chris heard that “baseball bat sound,” so he knew it was a

good hit. The deer jumped and took off. Chris heard a loud crash and hoped the deer was down from what looked to be a high lung entry and low lung exit.

Chris thanked God for the opportunity and took a full twenty-five minutes to gather his composure before he went over and found his arrow. His arrow was full of blood and air bubbles, which was a great sign. Chris called some friends (Tom and Justin) and waited for his buddies to arrive and help track (and drag hopefully!). He hoped he was doing everything right, as he tried to (anxiously) enjoy the moment. As it turned out the deer went about 150 yards, and although they lost blood for a while, they quickly recovered the buck in some briars in an open field.



Chris knelt down and said a prayer, while his buddies went absolutely nuts! They could not believe the size of the buck!

After the deer was brought out of the woods and the excitement died down, Chris called Dave Berger (Taxidermist) to make appointment to bring him this great buck. Dave told Chris this was the nicest buck he had seen in many years! He suggested that he get it measured – and gave him Carl Lieser’s card. Carl, CT Regional Director for the Northeast Big Buck Club, and official scorer for Boone & Crockett, went to Chris’s house to green score the buck. Recognizing it could be the new state record, Carl arranged for it to be panel scored at the 60-day drying period. Panel scoring is required by the NBBC to certify any new records, and requires that at least three certified NBBC measurers participate. The result of the panel scoring was a gross score (before deductions) of 177 5/8” as an 11-Point typical, and a net score of 172 1/8”. Chris’s buck is the new #1 typical bow buck from the state!

Chris asked that we also thank Hall’s Archery in Manchester CT for selling and servicing his Hoyt equipment, and the Bristol Fish & Game in Wolcott. He also mentioned that we should thank his wife for her support and understanding for all the time he spends hunting. Interestingly enough, Chris’s friend, Mark Kulig, had another buck scored by Carl while Chris was having his buck scored. Mark’s buck turned out to be a new state record typical muzzleloader buck! See the related story in this issue of that magazine.

As is often the case when a new state record hits the ground, other very impressive bucks taken in the same season tend to get overlooked. Well, I’m not about to let that happen. In 2008 there were many great bucks arrowed in this state. The second largest typical of the year fell to Paul Johnson in New Haven County. Paul’s 10-Point grossed 164 2/8” and netted 160 2/8”, and it dressed a whopping 226 lbs! It ranks 7th all-time in the state for archery typicals. See the brief story of his hunt at the end of this article. Other great bucks from the season included Jason Stockburger’s Hartford County 10-Point that scored 158 4/8” and Kyle Jay’s Tolland County 10-Point that scored 151 1/8”. And those are just the big bow bucks we know of at the time that this article was written. I am sure some other great bow bucks will surface as well.

There is no doubt that the 2008 bow season was a very good one in the Northeast, and Connecticut seemed to lead the way with impressive bucks from throughout the state. Let’s finish up this article with a short story written by hunter Paul Johnson, who downed the second largest typical of the 2008 bow season. Enjoy!

Opposite page (right):

Kyle Jay, 151 1/8”,
Typical 10-Point

Right:

Jason Stockburger,
158 4/8”, Typical
10-Point.



A Good Decision

By Paul Johnson

**On Sunday, September 14, 2008
my hunting buddy and I went to
hang a tree stand for bow season.**

While scouting near a bedding thicket, we found an area with a bunch of rubs. Since it was early in the season I hoped it was a mature buck. We immediately hung my stand, put up a trail camera nearby and left the area. Four days later, I went back at mid-day to retrieve the trail camera. The pictures revealed a couple of smaller deer, an 8-point that looked to be roughly 20” wide but with very short tines, and an incredible 10-point with a massive body!

The next afternoon, after making sure the wind would be good; I was in my stand at 3 p.m. At approximately 4 p.m. a small buck moved past my stand when a coyote came by and spooked him. A few minutes later I heard something behind me, and when I looked it was the 20” 8-point. Although he would have been my best bow deer to date, I let him walk, as I was waiting for the giant from the pictures. As the sun set that night, I hoped I had made a good decision.

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The following day was Saturday, September 20th. I was in my stand by 2 p.m. and for three hours I only saw a coyote. I was definitely second guessing my decision not to shoot the wide 8-point from the day before. Around 5:15 p.m. I scanned to my right and I caught sight of a deer at 40 yards coming out of the bedding thicket. I knew right away it was the giant from the trail camera because I could see 10+ inch tines! My heart started to pound like no buck fever I've ever had! Lifting my bow from its hanger, I told myself not to look at his rack. As I tried to gather myself, a small spike came out of the thicket and moved past the giant and walked directly under my stand. The big deer slowly angled toward one of my shooting lanes--he was now only 25 yards away but I didn't have a clear shot. Just then, two smaller deer came from the thicket. I thought; "How am I going to draw with four pairs of eyes all so close?" As I pointed my bow towards my shooting lane the spike below looked directly up at me, and then so did the giant!

I thought my chance at this monster deer was over, but I just stood still and closed my eyes so that I would not make eye contact. After what seemed like hours (really more like five minutes) they were calm again and the giant started moving toward my 20 yard opening. I knew this would be my only chance, so as he entered the opening I drew my bow. The spike threw his head up to look once more but the arrow was already on its way. My shot looked good. I quickly called my buddy, Rob, on my cell phone and whispered, "I got him" as quietly as I could. After about thirty minutes we took up the blood trail, and approximately 100 yards later there he was-- bigger than any deer I ever imagined I would ever shoot!

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I then looked up as I was talking and there in front of me is a four point buck about 50-60 yards in the field. I had seen a deer bolt into the woods after I shot my buck, but he must have come back to investigate. After about a minute he wandered away.

I wanted to jump out of my tree right then and go look for the buck I had just shot. Unfortunately, my husband "encouraged" (told) me to wait about 30-40 minutes. Let me tell you, I counted the minutes! When I couldn't stand it any longer, and my 30 minutes was up, I climbed down and walked to where I had shot at him. There was not a drop of blood or even one piece of hair! I thought to myself that there was no way I could have missed that deer at that kind of yardage!! I then continued on the path through the field to where he entered into the pines. Still no blood or hair! I'm now beginning to get angry with myself. So, I made myself stop, calm down and think about what I heard when he ran. I decided that he must have run

UPCOMING EVENTS

NBBC Scoring Event

June 28, 2009

Tozier's Restaurant, Bethel, VT
For details call Bill Campbell at
802.234.9400 w or 802.234.5538 h

NBBC Scoring Class

March 28, 2009

Cabela's, Scarborough, ME
9AM to 5 PM

April 19, 2009

Gander Mountain Store, Erie, PA
9AM to 5 PM

Contact Ed Klosowski at
NFD36@aol.com
for more information

& IMPORTANT DATES

into the marshy area between the pines. There were too many crunchy leaves in the pines and I had not heard any of that when he took off through that area. I walked on into the pines and started into the marshy area, and still no blood trail. I stopped outside of the marshy area and listened and thought about what I should do next. Frustrated that I hadn't found any evidence of hitting this deer, I sat down on a knoll under a pine tree.

My husband then called on the two way radio to tell me that he was making his way in my direction to help me track this deer. Within a few minutes I saw two doe running through the field toward my tree stand. I quickly walked back out to the field to see if either had stopped so that I might get a shot. They had already made their way through the field and were out of sight.

I then heard from my husband again on the radio. He had made his way through the pines toward the marshy area and he could see that my buck was down! He proceeded to tell me that it was BIG. I quickly responded to him saying that he had better not be messing with me! I quickly went, or in other words, ran back into the pine and marshy area. Only about 20 yards from where I had sat under the pine tree lay the buck, behind some brush. He had only bled out where he had fallen, hence no blood trail.

I was so excited when I was finally able to take a closer look at this buck. Having my husband there with me and also having him help me find the deer made this hunt an even more exciting experience. I will never forget how happy and proud he was of me that day. Maybe a little jealous too! It was definitely an exciting day and a day that I will never forget.

Editors Note: Cindy's Steuben County New York 8-Point scored 118" gross, and had an inside spread of 17 6/8". Way to go Cindy!

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To get your buck scored by the NBBC, contact a Regional Director near you for a list of official local scorers. If your buck has been scored by an official measurer from a local or national club, you can enter your buck to the NBBC directly through the mail.

Send a copy of the official, signed scoresheet with measurer name and number, with a \$25 check and photos to: NBBC, 390 Marshall St., Paxton, MA 01612

Find a measurer near you online at:
www.bigbuckclub.com