

Justice Journals



Dusty Bourasa

Hard Time Buck





The 2009 archery season is only 12 hours away as my good buddy Marcus and I have our camp set up and we are shooting our bows to make sure that all of our equipment is ready and on the mark. As I lie down in my bag for the night, all I can think about is, what is in store for the next morning and how the 2009 season is going to end up. Ah, visions and dreams of bucks and bulls.

The morning has come early and we are off on our ATVs, heading up into some pre-scouted country that we had seen some bucks in. By 9:30am, Marcus has a great buck on the ground and now it is my turn to get my 2009 season rolling.

I hunted a couple of more days with Marcus and my buddy Ryan. Ryan had a really rough summer, so his hunting was cut in half. He couldn't get around much but he still had a heart of gold and gave it his all. On the third morning of our hunt, right at daylight, I spotted a great buck feeding in a small draw about a mile to the west of my position. After watching the buck feeding for a while, I was able to judge him and let the boys know that he was a shooter.

After making a stalk on the buck and getting busted by an undetected doe, I was able to get in one more time and take another shot. I missed. I shot right under this 185 plus 4x4 typical. As I watched the buck take off and change zip codes, I thought to myself, I just missed the biggest mule deer that I have ever had the chance to shoot at with a bow. I sure hope the rest of my season does not go like this. All it can do is get better right?

A week later, I found my self hunting another area that I had scouted previously. I had seen some great mule deer in this area and I tucked away the previous week mishaps and was ready to start

all over. The next morning, the sun came up over the rock and juniper covered ridges of eastern Oregon, life in the desert began to awaken for the day. It was September 7th and I was locked, cocked and ready to rock. I was ready to collect some bone. My mission on this trip was to find a shooter buck to stalk and put my tag on.

A fire 2 years prior had taken all of the sage and juniper pockets and transformed them into deep waist high grassy draws. New growth from the fire had brought the true life out in this country. I could feel the crisp crack of fall in the air. It was a beautiful morning.

I immediately started to see game getting that last little bit of nourishment before bedding down for the day. The daily highs were in the low to mid 80s and that means the thermals are easy to predict, deer will bed in good accessible places and the bucks will sometimes feed longer in the mornings with an equal heart pounding experiences. As I glassed an area that I scouted prior to the season, I spotted 3 nice bucks bedded on the south side of a long ridge. There was one juniper tree on the ridge and the bucks were lying around the base of the tree. My good buddy Ryan was with me on this trip and another buddy Kreg that had come into town for an archery antelope hunt that he was successful on, but that is another story. As I watched the 3 bucks bedded under the juniper, I turned to Ryan and Kreg and told them that I had located 3 bucks and at least two of the three were shooters. At the distance of over a mile, I could see that one buck was just a large 3 point and the other had a good frame but could not get a point count. I packed all of my optics into my pack and jumped on the ATV. I knew that the main road would take me about a mile or so away from the bucks. At first I tried to stalk the bucks from a side hill maneuver but as I got to within 85 yards, I could tell that it wasn't going to work out. I then backed out and decided to come in from the top of them. 3 hours later, I found myself within 70 yards of all three of the bedded bucks. Everything was in my favor including the wind. I sat and watched bucks and ran thoughts through my mind wondering if I should just sit and wait for them to get up and feed or just keep inching my way closer to them. I had just come to the conclusion that I am going to just sit and wait for them to get up and start to feed when all three bucks stood up in their beds, stretched, and began to nibble on some grass. They had started to feed up the hill towards me, and I began to get into position for the shot. The buck that I was targeting was a giant 3x3 that looked as old as dirt. He came within 31 yards down hill from me. I drew my bow and settled my pin, and took the shot. Now you can see that I did not mention what pin that I settled. I used my 30 yard pin instead of shooting that buck for 22 to 25 yards. I put an arrow that left a crease in his hair across the top of his back. This buck was another jaw dropper do to his 3x3 frame and all I can see of him now is a pretty blue flame coming out of his butt as he took off to orbit the moon. I missed again. I looked for the big 3x3 and the others for the rest of the day and they were no where to be seen.



After a long night of thinking of miss number two, listening, and watching elk bugle and walk through the light of the full moon, in the east, a blue haze began to appear mixed with some orange and highlighted with some thin clouds. Morning was coming and it was cold.

After loading my gear and a short cold ATV ride. I found myself glassing from the top of a big ridge where I missed the smoker 3x3 the day before. I saw a small herd of elk moving out threw the old burn. They were not spending much time in the open. They were on a mission to get to there bedding grounds. I had glassed for about an hour and had to get up for a moment and stretch my legs. I walked over to my left and to look down another small drainage and saw a really good buck below me feeding. I moved slowly forward to get a better look and it was the 5x6 that I had seen the day before with the big 3 point. I looked for other deer and all that was with him was a small noodle neck 2 point and the big 3 point was no where around. I am sure that from the day before, that buck surely lives in another town with a different zip code or he could be orbiting the moon as we speak.

I watched the buck for a few more minutes and began picking out areas to stalk this buck. Wondering if I could cut some distance and get in front of him while he was still up feeding, I grabbed my bow and day pack and away I went.

I was able to cut the distance to more than half and began to move with the buck. I finally got into a position that I could see were he wanted to lay his head for the day. Sure enough and as luck would have it, the buck came up the same little cut drainage that I was in and bedded below an old burnt juniper tree about 75 yards below me.

I quietly slipped off my boots and put my heavy wool stalking socks on. I knocked an arrow and was in route. I thought to myself, I am cupid and I am fixing to make a love connection. I was so locked, cocked and ready to rock that my legs began to move like Elvis Pressley singing Jail House Rock.

The yards began to minus in distance and I was getting closer, and closer as I crab walked down a wide open slope to this awesome deer. I was able to get into shooting position and made myself ready to let the air out of his lungs. I drew my bow and settled the 20 yard pin just a little high of my spot and gave a small kissing sound to get the buck to stand. The buck stood and presented a perfect broadside shot. As I touched the trigger to my release, I could see the arrow go and was flying in slow motion as true as an eagle in flight. The arrow hit its true mark and took out the fuel lines to his engine. Now we all know that motors do not run with out fuel and his engine immediately began to sputter.

The buck went about 150 yards at a dead run down the canyon and died. He then proceeded to roll all the way to the bottom of the canyon. I was on my knees praying that he would stop and not go all the way down to the bottom. Then our good lord told me that when he gets to the bottom he will stop for sure.

I walked down the canyon and walked up to my buck and I was jacked. He was everything that I set my goal for this year plus having some extras.

I want to thank my wife and kids for being so supportive of my madness for the outdoors and to thank all of the people for believing in me and helping me out. Our good lord has blessed me and I am thankful for that.

God Bless, my hats off to all of you fellow crazies and the AMERICAN SOLDIER.

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