

SKULL

BOWHUNTING JOURNAL

DISCIPLINE
PAYS
DIVIDENDS

EL HEFE

1 YEAR
CAN MAKE
ALL THE
DIFFERENCE

A SANDY HILLS HUNTING PUBLICATION

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el hefe

"THE BOSS"



How many times do you hear, "I wonder how much bigger he would have been next year?" Honestly, you'll never know if you keep killing young deer. That's what I asked myself several times while watching this buck in 2014. He was about 195" typical that year, but it was easy to tell he was a four year old deer. It was a hard decision to make, but I elected to pass. It was a big risk, but if you want to see a true giant, that's what needs to happen.

I watched Hefe through September while he still had velvet, but after he rubbed, he disappeared. I second guessed myself several times throughout remainder of the year, thinking I had made the wrong decision.

Fast forward one year, and I found myself on the same hill, overlooking the same area where I had last saw the young giant in 2014. On my third trip to the hill, after turning up only smaller bucks the first two trips, I had my doubts. I parked, began glassing, and the first deer I saw was a big non typical. It was early in the year, so I couldn't tell exactly what he would soon turn into, so I kept returning each week. Each week I watched him grow. I knew the buck would be BIG, but only time would tell how BIG. I glassed him for the next month from about a mile away, but the heat waves always prevented me from seeing any real detail. Finally, around the end of August, I got a good look at him and I knew right away it was El Hefe! I couldn't believe it! I was amazed and completely rewarded by my decision nearly a year prior.



2015 SCOUTING



When I realized El Hefe had survived and returned to the same spot I had found him nearly a year prior, I called my client and good friend, Todd McKenzie. I had been telling him we had two giants to pursue opening day if they stayed put, but until now, I had no idea one was Hefe. I sent him a picture I had taken the year before, and one from the present. He couldn't believe it either. The main frame was almost a mirror image of the year prior, slightly bigger, but with many extra points.

Now, we just had to pray he didn't rub his velvet and move like he did in 2014. As opening day neared, the buck remained in the area and I knew we had to make it count if we were given an opportunity. Todd arrived a day early to get settled in, and to go look at both of the bucks I had found. The other buck was also a buck we had let go the previous season. Todd actually harvested a 190" deer that was with him that year, so we were very familiar with this buck as well. Both of the deer we passed on in 2014 grew nearly 50"! Todd and I went out that afternoon, but did not locate either one of the bucks. We rode back to town a little worried, but still confident, and ready for the next morning.

Opening day was finally here, but it brought fog and limited us from seeing a section of the field. I told Todd we should go around, but we were going to have to be careful not to be seen. We took it slow, glassing our way in and eventually made it to a high spot where we could see a majority of the field. It didn't take 5 minutes and we spotted Hefe out feeding just along the edge of the fog. Now, we needed to see where he was going to bed for the morning. He fed out of sight, but I had an idea of where he headed from all



the summer scouting. The fog lifted, so we walked out to another point. Being unsure of the buck's exact location, we sat down waiting for him to stand. We sat there for about an hour, and at mid-day he stood and walk about 100 yards, and bedded again. All we needed now was some wind to cover our approach and we could attempt a stalk. Fortunately, when the wind came up it was hitting the buck straight in the face; everything seemed to be lining up for us. Once the wind was strong enough, we left our perch and started in on him. We made it to fifty yards relatively easy and sat down to rest and study our situation for a minute. Todd and I both agreed the wind was blowing hard enough that we needed to be at 40 yards or under. We crawled to a better position ten yards in front of us, got set up again, and I asked Todd if he wanted to be closer? He replied, "No, I am good here.". The waiting game began, and after an hour of sitting on our knees, El Hefe's head snapped up from a resting position, so I told Todd to get ready. It wasn't long and the giant buck rose from his bed. Todd was almost at full draw by the time the buck hit his feet.

It all came down to executing the shot in a stiff wind - I remained motionless waiting for the arrow to fly. It seemed like an eternity, but Todd always takes his time to unsure the shot counts. The arrow couldn't have hit any better! We both immediately knew we had just harvested a once-in-a-lifetime deer. As the buck tipped over, Todd tackled me out of excitement. We sat there for a few minutes in disbelief of what had just happened and as we walked up to the deer, both of us were amazed at how truly exceptional this buck had become.

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BUT I AM SURE GLAD WE GOT THIS ONE!"

246 1/8"

El Hefe ended up taping out at 246 1/8" gross. It was an incredible day to say the least. I was proud to share it with not only a client, but a good friend. Todd said "I would have been happy with either buck, but I am sure glad we got this one!". The other buck I had scouted was killed during the rifle season by a hunter I knew, and he taped out at 237". It just goes to show that if certain bucks get the chance to make it to their prime, it's pretty amazing what transformations can take place.

I just want to say thanks to Todd for an unforgettable hunt and being such a great friend!

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