

Handicapped hunter takes 160-class buck

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After a motorcycle accident left Clay Egan a quadriplegic, doctors told him he would probably never shoot a gun or tie his own flies again.

Or take a trophy deer.

They didn't know Egan, a Utah resident who cut his teeth hunting and fishing, very well.



"With extreme stubbornness and determination to prove them all wrong, and a year of physical therapy, I can do all of the things by myself which they said I probably wouldn't be able to do, including shooting a gun."

But how can a wheelchair-bound hunter expect to take a fair-chase buck? With help of friends. And determination.

"About three years ago, a buddy of mine who is also in a wheelchair led me on to Wade Heaton of Color Country Outfitters, home of some of the most massive mule deer in the world," says Egan. "My friend told me they had special management tags each year, and that they try to give one of them to a handicapped person. After a lot of persistence, Wade finally told me he had a tag for me."

When Egan met up with Heaton at his outfit near Alton, Utah, they



CLAY EGAN shows off his 22-inch-tall 3-point mule deer. A quadriplegic, Egan hunted on a special tag for the southern Utah deer with Color Country Outfitters. (Remington Photo Contest entry) Contest ID 2009UT

discussed the hunt parameters. First, the handicapped tag was for a "management buck," one that was unlikely to grow into a Booner. The buck couldn't be wider than 25 inches, it couldn't have more than three points on a side, and it couldn't score more than 160 Boone & Crockett points.

A half hour into his hunt, with guide Ben Sorensen, the hunters spotted a contender. The buck was a 23-inch 3-point. Egan got the go-ahead to shoot him.

"I pulled up the crosshairs and thought 'This is a nice buck, but I'm looking for something a little better,'" remembers Egan. "I didn't shoot, even though Ben said that was about as large

a management buck as I could expect. I explained that I was looking for something more heavy-horned, and tall. Besides, if I had taken that buck, my hunt would have been over in an hour. I didn't want that."

By evening Egan hadn't seen another shootable deer, and was regretting his decision to pass the 23-incher. Then, just before sunset, they spotted a deer about 75 yards distant. Sorensen figured it was the same buck they had passed earlier.

"It didn't look like the same buck to me," says Egan. "But I decided to take him. I took a deep breath and squeezed off a shot. Ben thought I had gotten him. I thought I had missed. After arguing for 20 minutes, Ben went to take a look. Sure enough, about 50 yards away, there was my buck."

It turned out to be a different deer than the morning's buck, a better deer.

"Way better," says Egan. "I was so excited. Ben had done it. He had helped me get the buck that I was holding out for. It had great mass and was really tall. Twenty-two inches tall, to be exact, and it scored 159 7/8. I couldn't have gotten a better buck. Thanks to Wade Heaton and Ben Sorensen of Color Country Outfitters. They made a hunt of a lifetime for me come true."

— Andrew McKean

• Eastmans' Hunting Journal •



Clay Egan
South Jordan, UT

After putting in for eight years Clay drew a Utah lion tag. With guide Steven Carter he treed a tom and made the shot with a Ruger pistol and CCI Maxi Mag hollow points. Confined to a wheelchair, Clay still can do what he loves, and that is hunt. Way to go Clay!



Clay Egan
South Jordan, UT

Clay took this once-in-a-lifetime buck with Wade Heaton of Color Country Outfitters in Utah. He passed up several lesser bucks before deciding on this one. It scores 159 7/8. Way to go, Clay!