

Rock Star

paralysis doesn't stop this hunter from climbing to the top

Clay Egan, a quadriplegic and rockcrawling legend from South Jordan, Utah has been competing professionally in the extreme sport of rockcrawling for the last seven years. Clay is one of the most recognized drivers in the world, competing against all other able-body drivers. But his true love of the outdoors has always been hunting.

Fifteen years ago, Clay was on a motorcycle in eastern Utah when his motorcycle collided with a stray horse

that was loose on the road. Fighting for his life, Clay was life-flighted to the University of Utah Medical Center where he spent the next three months. Knowing he would never walk again, Clay was bound and determined to not let that circumstance get in the way of the things he loved most, which was anything off-road or anything that had to do with hunting.

In the beginning Clay's right hand was completely paralyzed and so he began to learn how to do everything left

handed – including shooting his rifles and driving his jeeps and trucks with specially-equipped hand controls.

When Clay started driving professionally he quickly became the fan's and media favorite and can currently be seen on MTV's Nitro Circus with Travis Pastrana.

Clay has gone on to compete in four Supercrawl World Championships and constantly places in the top 10 in the nation. Since then he has been nicknamed the "Rock Star."



During the last week in October, the Utah rifle deer hunt started. Clay got a call from a good friend, Kelly Edwards, who had permission to take Clay on some of the most pristine private property in northern Utah.

The property had everything any hunter would want to hunt trophy mule deer – plenty of water, lots of canyons and draws and plenty of cover. But it also had some great meadows that opened up for some great visible shots.

On Oct. 22, six days after opening Saturday, Clay and Kelly met at the entrance gate of the property at about 6:30 a.m. and made a game plan on where they would set up.

For Clay to hunt successfully, they basically had to find a spot for his truck to be positioned for the best vantage point. Being in a wheelchair allowed Clay to get a special permit to shoot from the vehicle. He has a specially-made rubber mount that fits perfectly on the window.

To ask Clay, it's a pretty cool way to hunt – access to the heater, goodies, water and a dang good rest for your rifle.

Clay and Kelly hunted the day before and saw some great bucks but were never able to get a good, clean shot. One of the bucks they saw was a real nice four-point still in the velvet. So they planned to try and find that buck in the morning.

Before dawn, Kelly got Clay into position and waited for sun up. As the sun rose, Kelly glassed down a draw where they had seen the velvet buck the day before and spotted about 20 head of deer, half of them were bucks. Of those bucks, four were pretty decent four points grazing at 500 yards out.

They watched the deer for a while but no velvet buck. So they decided



***“One shot right through the pump station,”
Clay recounts of his northern Utah mule deer
hunt on private land.***

to drive some of the trails and see if they couldn't spot it somewhere else. Throughout the morning they saw quite a few deer with some good bucks but weren't having any luck finding the velvet buck.

At about noon, they met up with a local girl, Carrie Atkinson who was familiar with the property. They had arranged the day before for Carrie to

come up and help push some of the draws where they had seen the velvet buck. Carrie was very knowledgeable about hunting and knew the property well.

Around 3 p.m. they all went back to the draw where they'd seen the buck before and decided to make a push. Clay drove Kelly and Carrie up on top of the draw and dropped them off and



From world-class rock crawling competitions to monster mule deer hunting ...

then drove back down the canyon and got his truck set up so he could see both sides of the draw.

As Clay watched the canyon, he ranged a couple of different points on the hillside to get prepared in case of a shot. Not five minutes after Clay was settled, a couple of deer walked just below the top of the ridge at about 300 yards.

Clay pulled out his binoculars and got a closer look at a nice four-point but it was too far to tell if it had velvet. The deer were very calm and had not detected Kelly and Carrie above nor Clay below the draw.

After only watching the deer for a moment, Clay decided to take the shot. With his rifle resting on his window mount, the deer stopped and gave Clay a perfect broadside shot. Clay racked one in and took a big deep breath and squeezed the trigger.

The shot rang through the canyon.

The deer lunged forward and then hunched up and fell backwards, rolling about 30 yards down the hill and ended up wedged against some shrub oak. It was down.

"One shot right through the pump station," Clay recounts.

He got out his binoculars again and tried to see where the buck had fallen, but it was still out of view.

Just then his cell phone vibrated. It was Carrie. She asked Clay if he had taken the shot. Clay said he had and that he'd hit a nice buck that had rolled down the hill and was going to be a bugger to get out. Carrie said not to worry that it wouldn't be that difficult.

Carrie and Kelly hiked over the hill and Clay was able to guide them to his buck.

"Thank the Lord for cell phones," Clay thought.

As they got down to the buck, Kelly got on the phone and said they found

his buck – a three-by-two. Clay's heart sank.

"How could it be?" he thought to himself – I knew it had to be bigger. "Are you freaking kidding," he said frustrated. "It looked so much bigger."

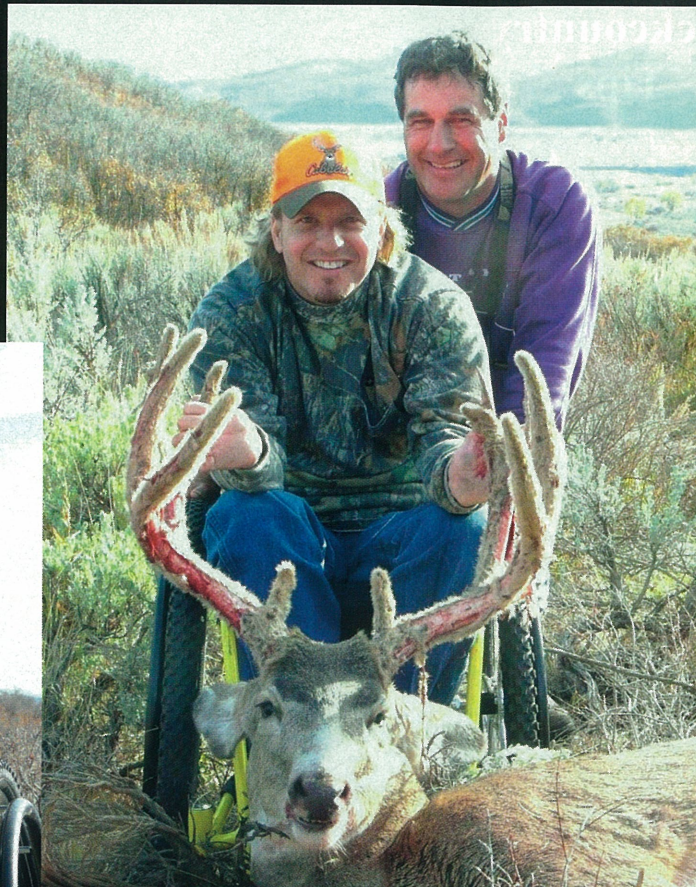
They hung up phone and Kelly and Carrie began to clean the deer.

As Clay sat in the truck in disbelief and stewing over the poor judgment shot, he rethought the scene over and over in his mind. He couldn't understand it. Clay feverishly tried to look through his binoculars to see if he could see the velvet buck, but no luck.

After about 45 minutes of Kelly and Carrie dragging the buck down the hillside, Clay finally got a glimpse of the buck. He could see that it was bigger than Kelly said.

As Kelly and Carrie drug it up to the side of the truck, Clay could finally see that it was the buck that they'd been looking for. It was a perfect four-point

Clay Egan doesn't let a disability keep him down



with a small kicker off the G3 on the right side and it was all in velvet.

Clay couldn't believe it. Kelly and Carrie just busted out laughing and high-fived Clay.

"Nice shot," were Carrie's first words through her laughter. "It was perfect – right through the lungs.

Clay replied, "I was so mad for shooting such a small buck. I can't believe you lied to me and let me sit down here for an hour feeling sick about it."

Kelly apologized and slapped Clay on the shoulder and congratulated him.

It had been the hunt of a lifetime for Clay. A velvet buck during mid-October shot from the road is very rare. For Clay it was a true trophy.

With the success of deer hunting and being a champion rockcrawler, Clay has become a champion of life. He regularly travels the country and

delivers his inspirational message to audiences of all kinds.

His book "Over The Top" continues to be a regional best seller and has prompted a documentary on Clay's life story, that will begin filming towards the end of December.

Clay is also in the process of producing a new TV show called "Jack'd Up" about extreme athletes with disabilities, that will hopefully air sometime in 2010. But until then, Clay is pursuing what he loves most, which is hunting mule deer.

Clay would like to thank Paul Reeb and the whole Reeb family for letting him hunt on their special property and also his good buddy, Kelly Edwards, for always being willing to donate his time to take Clay hunting and his new found friend Carrie Atkinson. "She is one heck of a 'bird-doggin' woman," he said. "I couldn't have done it without either of their help."

To learn more about Clay's compelling life story you can visit his Web site at www.clayeganracing.com.

