



The camera caught young Hunter Frankfurt as she spotted the big black beast of the forest. Her shot was true and soon the hard work began. Hunter has to thank her dad, Shawn, who got her interested in the sport and greatly encourages her to do what she enjoys. Hunter can't thank Brian Nielsen and Barry Theis enough for taking her hunting after her dad ended up in the hospital. It was a hunt she will never forget.

The hunting season started back in May when our family began to plan for our hunting season in fall. Deciding which draw tags to apply for and when I should book my holidays is always a major decision. The draw forms were filled out and we waited anxiously to see if one of us would be lucky enough to receive a tag or have to settle for hunting during the regular archery season.

At the end of June, Hunter received news she would be attending the World Archery Championships in Orlando, Florida, with the school NASP archery team. This was fantastic news for a young archer, and it would be the fourth time she would be going to World's. It wasn't a week later when I received notice the draw tags were available. I checked the computer and, lo and behold, Hunter was drawn for bull moose. We knew the zone she was drawn in had some tremendous bulls because we have some nice sheds to prove it. We also hunt in this area for whitetail and have witnessed some decent bulls over the years. Hunter and I were super pumped to find out we would be pursuing the largest animal that inhabits this neck of the woods. It was going to be a thrilling hunt. In all honesty, I am not sure who was more excited, Hunter or Dad!

Preparations began immediately. All year our family takes time out of its busy schedule to practice shooting bows. This year was unusual for us to not take part in at least one 3D shoot, so we made up for it by taking our bows along on camping trips. The kids shoot all year with the Broken Arrow Archery Club, and Hunter shoots in school with the NASP program.

A huge decision was to be made in the Frankfurt household. The trip to Orlando for the World Archery Championships was the same week Hunter was drawn for bull moose. Now to be honest, she has a full month to hunt, but we all know the prime time for the rut is the first week of October. I explained to her that if she truly wanted a chance to harvest a mature bull we needed to hunt that first week of October. She agreed it was her goal to take a mature bull with her bow, BUT, how do you turn down a trip to Disney World? The travel agent needed to know ASAP if we were booking flights. Like every teenage kid would do in this situation, she chose to stay here in Saskatchewan in October to pursue rutting bull moose with her dad instead of travelling across North America to sunny Florida! That's what happens when you take a kid hunting with you from the time she was in diapers; I think she got brain-washed! This decision really put the pressure on old Dad. I really had to take my scouting seriously and produce a trophy bull moose or else I would never hear the end of it.

We had a pretty good grasp on the layout of the land we were going to concentrate on for moose. We took lots of scouting trips with our quads, hiked in some of the more remote areas, and even took the occasional canoe trip down the river in hopes of finding that honey hole for moose. By the end of August, I had it narrowed down to three areas that looked most promising.

During the September archery whitetail season, I spotted a huge bull moose. He was living in exactly the spot we wanted to hunt opening morning. Hunter and I were getting pretty anxious for the season to start, especially after spotting that mature bull. It was now a week away from the season opener.

We took inventory of our hunting gear, making sure our clothes were washed in scent-killer soap, her BowTech Diamond bow was sighted in, and her broadheads were razor sharp. A quick call to Cabela's to order a moose decoy and some spray was made. Now we were fully prepared!

Hunter and I wanted to make sure we had covered all bases and stood the best chance of harvesting a good bull come October 1. So one afternoon a week prior to the season opener, I hung scent bombs along the trail where we had seen the big bull, hoping this would hold him in the area or lure another good bull to that spot. By the end of September, this hunt was well-prepared for by both of us. Hunter was dialed in with her bow, and we had all our gear ready and the spots picked out. She was already getting her homework done ahead of time so she wouldn't fall behind in her classes at school. That way she could spend extra time in the field if need be.

MOOSE on the LOOSE

BY SHAWN FRANKFURT

September 28, only a couple days from the opening of the season, I was working my last two day shifts at the fire hall before going on holidays. It was just a regular day at the fire hall when in the early afternoon the crew was performing a training exercise. That afternoon would change our dream moose season drastically. I injured myself, rupturing a disc in my lower back. I was rushed to hospital by ambulance and was in excruciating pain for the next two days, being sent for X-rays and CT scans and seen by four different doctors. I was going to be bed-ridden for awhile awaiting a surgeon's decision whether surgery would be needed or not. Nevertheless, my hunting season was done for 2012.

It was the morning of September 30 when reality set in that I was done for the year and so was Hunter's moose season.



Hunter Frankfurt of Yorkton, Saskatchewan, is all smiles after she arrowed this big bull moose on October 1, 2012. Greatest spread on these antlers is 47 4/8 inches, which would make even a rifle hunter happy to harvest an animal like this. The final score on this rack is 168 inches. Hunter is also a team member of Cody Robbins' "Live2Hunt" TV show. At only 14 years old, Cody knew that Hunter has immense passion to live her dream.

Even worse, she had cancelled her trip to Orlando for this hunt. Could this be happening? I had a chat with her on Sunday and told her I was sorry, it looked like our moose hunt was over. Hunter explained to me that it wasn't important right now, and she wanted me to focus on healing and getting better. It makes you proud as a parent when you have children like that, but it was ripping my heart out because I knew how much she was looking forward to this hunt. She is one dedicated and serious bowhunter.

I was feeling crummy about the hunt and in terrible pain because of my back. Not a good day that Sunday. Late that afternoon my crew from the fire hall stopped by to see how I was doing. Two longtime firefighters and very experienced woodsmen and hunters asked if they could take Hunter out for moose. I was overwhelmed with their generous offer and told them, of course, I would allow that. I signed a consent form allowing them to be Hunter's guardians for this hunt. Maybe the hunt could be salvaged after all.

Now these two guys, Barry Theis and Brian Nielsen, I respect greatly not only as brothers at the fire hall but as hunters. These guys have harvested several big game animals and have

also raised their families with the strong belief of hunting with their kids and enjoying the great outdoors. So I knew Hunter was in great hands, and these two guys would also teach her a lot during this hunt. I made a quick phone call to my daughter to tell her the good news. She instantly began scrambling to make her lunch for the next morning and day's adventure.

The night before the big hunt Barry picked Hunter up to go scouting. She was blown away by how many moose she had heard and seen! Barry informed Hunter to have her stuff ready by 4:30 a.m. sharp. I don't think she got much sleep that night.

Right on schedule, Barry and Brian arrived at the house and quickly loaded Hunter's gear. It was a perfect cool, crisp morning for calling moose, with not much wind.

When they initially arrived at the area we had scouted all year, the three of them walked into a pasture and called blindly in hopes of attracting a bull using the decoy. It was frosty and cold that morning, and Hunter said her fingers were frozen. They moved along the trail where the scent bombs were hanging. Then they followed a small trail that led into the heavy timber. Barry was close behind Hunter when they noticed a flash of black, and

the three hunters froze; it was a small bull. Too small for using her special draw tag, especially in this zone.

All of a sudden Barry tapped her on the shoulder and whispered, "Big bull!" Hunter froze . . . there he was . . . exactly what she was looking for . . . a mature bull moose with nice palms and good fronts. He was walking slowly right towards the small bull. The moose was at 33 yards. Brian, who was situated close behind them, made a moose grunt which stopped the big bull, giving Hunter a quartering-away shot. It was now or never, and she released one perfectly spined Easton arrow shaft tipped with a 100-grain Muzzy broadhead. Her BowTech Diamond set at 45 pounds was enough to send the arrow through into the opposite shoulder. The huge bull only ran 100 yards before expiring. To say the least, all three hunters were ecstatic.

It was a pretty restless night for me in the hospital. I was anxiously waiting to hear from my daughter around 9:00 a.m. to give me a breakdown on how her first day had gone with the two veteran hunters. I was expecting a long colourful conversation about how they led her around the countryside and saw a few moose. However, at approximately 7:50 a.m., I received a call in my hospital bed from Hunter. She could barely talk, her voice was shaking with adrenaline pumping through her veins, as she said, "Dad, you won't believe what I just did! I got him, I got him, he's huge!"

Now, if you know Hunter, she likes to pull your leg once in awhile. I thought this was her way of trying to cheer me up by calling a prank. I immediately told her to not pull my leg. She let Brian talk to me to confirm the truth. It was true, she did it, and I congratulated her and told her, "Now the work starts!" Hunter

said she had to go because they were on their way to get the quads and bring her moose out before it got too hot.

Well, that morning I felt a little less pain in my back and simply laid there for awhile, staring at the ceiling and playing in my mind how much I wish I could have been there with her. As a little girl I took her everywhere with me, from shed hunting, hanging stands, and scouting to actually hunting. All in the hope that when she was old enough I could share these moments with her. How sweet it is to see your daughter grow up and enjoy the love of the outdoors as much as you do. What she accomplished that morning she will cherish the rest of her life and that brought a huge smile to my face.

I owe a huge thank you to my two very dear friends and fellow firefighters, Brian Nielsen and Barry Theis. Sometimes people step up and go out of their way for friends and family and this was one of those moments. Also thank you to Al Bohn for coming to the rescue and helping to retrieve this bull in a timely fashion to preserve all the meat. Hunter is pretty proud to be the only one in the family in 2012 to supply the meat (ha, ha!).

EDITOR'S NOTE: When I attended the Parkland Outdoor Show and Expo in Yorkton, Saskatchewan, I ended up meeting Hunter Frankfurt. It didn't take long before I realized I was talking to someone who immensely enjoyed hunting and the great outdoors. Even at her young age, I believe most hunters would have a hard time keeping up to her. Hunter can shoot a bow like no other, and I think we will be hearing a lot more from her in the future. In fact, I am dead serious that if Hunter keeps going the way she has been, her name could become legendary real soon. 🍏