



#1

## Dan Wolff

The largest buck of the year was Dan Wolff's monster 15-Point from Norfolk County Massachusetts. This massive non-typical grossed 185 7/8" and netted 177 0/8" B&C.

# New England's Best Muzzleloader Bucks

Blackpowder hunting is the fastest growing segment of our sport, and continues to gain popularity with hunters of all ages, particularly here in the Northeast. As manufacturers improve the effectiveness, range and ease-of-use of these firearms, hunters are buying muzzleloaders in record numbers. And it doesn't hurt that states are responding by increasing the length of muzzleloader seasons and creating more liberal bag limits! And hunters in some states are forgoing the trusty shotgun during the firearms season and grabbing their smokepoles instead! As you might expect, the results are increased harvest numbers throughout the region, and a growing number of record bucks harvested by blackpowder hunters. According to the Northeast Big Buck Club, the regions' record keeping and scoring organization, muzzleloader hunters harvested a great new batch of bucks that made the NBBC record book during the 2008 season, including a new state record! Huge bucks fell to muzzleloader hunters across the Northeast. Here is a roundup of the best bucks taken during the 2008 muzzleloader season.

## New England's Best Muzzleloader Bucks of 2008

It is important to note that at the time this article was written (summer 2009) there were likely some great bucks from the 2008 season had yet to be officially scored. (For the purposes of this article, all rankings reflect Northeast Big Buck Club records, with supplemental information provided by other local scoring organizations.) So what follows is not the final tally of the best bucks from the 2008 muzzleloader seasons, but it certainly is representative of many of the best bucks taken. It is also worth noting that we are including the states of Rhode Island, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont in this article. Although the NBBC scores deer from New York, Pennsylvania and other states and Canadian Provinces, we will focus primarily on New England in this article.

As of August of 2009, the Northeast Big Buck Club had already scored more than 35 blackpowder trophies from New England's 2008 season. Of those entries, many bucks topped the 140" mark. A handful topped 150", and a new state record was established in Vermont. Let's look at all of the outstanding trophy class muzzleloader bucks taken throughout the region.

According to the NBBC, the gross B&C scores for the biggest muzzleloader bucks taken in the New England during the 2008 season were:

Rank	Score	State	Scorable points	Hunter
1.	185 7/8"	Massachusetts	Non-Typical 15-Point	Dan Wolff
2.	156 3/8"	Rhode Island	Non-Typical 11-Point	Peter Haberek, III
3.	151 1/8"	Vermont	Typical 8-Point	Skip Woodruff
4.	150 3/8"	Rhode Island	Typical 10-Point	Gregory Schultz
5.	150 1/8"	Rhode Island	Typical 10-Point	Patrick Murray
6.	148 1/8"	Rhode Island	Typical 10-Point	Albert Bergeron, Jr.
7.	146 6/8"	Massachusetts	Typical 8-Point	Kristopher Balestro
8.	144 3/8"	Connecticut	Non-Typical 10-Point	Charles Masse
9.	143 0/8"	New Hampshire	Typical 9-Point	Jayne Benson
10.	141 4/8"	Connecticut	Non-Typical 11-Point	Nathan Collelo

*continued on next page*

# From The 2008 Season!

by Jeff Brown



#3

Skip Woodruff



#5

Patrick Murray



#7

Kristopher Balestro

According to the NBBC, the gross B&C scores for the biggest muzzleloader bucks taken in the New England during the 2007 season were:

- |              |               |                      |                    |
|--------------|---------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. 184 5/8"  | Connecticut   | Non-Typical 12-Point | Ed Daly            |
| 2. 170 4/8"  | Maine         | Typical 10-Point     | Foster Meserve Jr. |
| 3. 167 4/8"  | Maine         | Non-Typical 19-Point | Phil Forsman       |
| 4. 163 1/8"  | Connecticut   | Non-Typical 14-Point | Reinhart Hermann   |
| 5. 161 0/8"  | Massachusetts | Non-Typical 13-Point | Mike Garrepy       |
| 6. 154 0/8"  | Massachusetts | Typical 9-Point      | David Joseph, Jr.  |
| 7. 151 1/8"  | Massachusetts | Non-Typical 10-Point | Martin Jalonski    |
| 8. 149 6/8"  | Massachusetts | Typical 8-Point      | Cary Bedor         |
| 9. 149 3/8"  | Rhode Island  | Typical 10-Point     | Jeffrey Giles      |
| 10. 148 5/8" | Massachusetts | Typical 8-Point      | Paul Germain       |

As you can see from these scores, New England's muzzleloader hunters produced fewer top-end bucks (scoring 160" gross B&C or better) in 2008 than they did in the previous season. You may also notice that Connecticut and Maine dominated the top of the rankings in 2007, while Rhode Island returned the favor in 2008. If we look at recent history as our barometer, when viewed as a "region" New England continues to produce some very impressive muzzleloader bucks from all states. In fact, New England's blackpowder hunters have recorded no fewer than 35 record book bucks in each of the last 5 seasons as follows: 2004 - 60; 2005 - 51, 2006 - 48, 2007 - 52; 2008 - 36 (so far, with more likely to be scored in the coming months). In looking at the expanded records it is interesting to notice that during the last five years all New England states have put bucks into the "top 15" for the year, proving that from north to south, blackpowder hunting is successful throughout the region.

Now that we have looked at the region's results for the last few years, let's take a look at a few of the best bucks from 2008!

## 2008 Results

Over the years Rhode Island has been the one state in all of New England that consistently produces a large number of muzzleloader trophy bucks (defined as bucks that meet the Northeast Big Buck Club's minimum entry score of 100" gross Boone & Crocket for typicals, and 115" for non-typical). Despite its diminutive size, Rhody's muzzleloader season typically runs during the peak rut of early and mid-November, and therefore has an advantage over most of the other New England states, whose muzzleloader seasons tend to run later in the year. However, the growing popularity of muzzleloaders has hunters using them during the firearms seasons in some states, giving them the opportunity to hunt with them during the rut in other states as well. In recent years the biggest muzzleloader bucks have fallen in states such as Massachusetts, Maine and Connecticut. In fact, 8 of the top 10 gross scoring bucks of all time in the NBBC's muzzleloader category have come from those three states! In 2008 it was Massachusetts that produced the largest entry, but Rhody dominated the top 10 muzzleloader bucks from last year. Let's look at the top bucks.

## Best Bucks of 2008

The largest buck of the year was Dan Wolff's monster 15-Point from Norfolk County Massachusetts. This massive non-typical grossed 185 7/8" and netted 177 0/8" B&C. It was taken

during the late-December muzzleloader season, just two days before Christmas. Wolff's buck currently ranks #2 all-time for muzzleloader bucks from that state behind Bill Tatro's massive 190 1/8" Berkshire County monster from 2006. Wolff's buck was also the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest gross scoring buck from New England recorded by the NBBC for the entire 2008 season, bested only by a CT archery buck that grossed 191 5/8". Massachusetts also produced the #7 and #11 muzzleloader bucks of 2008, giving it a great showing again last year.

The #2 buck came from Rhody last year – Peter Haberek, III's 156 3/8" Washington County non-typical that dressed a whopping 225 lbs. This state had a great showing again with four top-10 entries, proving that the little state comes up "big" during muzzleloader season.

The biggest surprise of the year was the new Vermont State Record Muzzleloader Typical taken by Sip Woodruff. The monster 8-Point grossed 151 1/8" and netted 146 4/8". It represents this state's first top 10 muzzleloader buck in several years, and it replaces the former state record for that category by more than 6"! Let's hope we continue to see great bucks like this coming from Vermont.

Connecticut topped the rankings in 2007, and put up some impressive bucks again in 2008 taking the #8 and #10 spots. New Hampshire had one entry at #9 in 2008 (a great 9-Point shot by female hunter Jayne Benson in Sullivan County). Interestingly enough, in 2006 New Hampshire hit the top 10 with Jayne Allard's 160-class typical 10-Point – so that is two years in a row with female hunters from NH hitting the top 10! Maine did not pierce the top 10 in 2008, although Maine did it in 2007 with the #2 and #3 bucks from that year: Foster Meserve, Jr.'s typical 170 4/8" 10-Point from Sagadahoc County and Phil Forsman's 167 4/8" 19-Point non-typical from Somerset County. Maine, and New Hampshire often produce some of the region's biggest bodied muzzleloader bucks, dressing upwards of 240 pounds. Often times the great bucks killed in these two states are not entered to the NBBC records, which is a shame. We know that many more big bucks are taken there with muzzleloader but are not scored or are not entered to the NBBC.

## Best Counties

Since 2000, certain counties in New England have produced more muzzleloader bucks than any others. Want to know which ones? According to the NBBC, more record book muzzleloader bucks have come from Providence County in RI than from any other in New England! In fact, Washington County, RI finishes second on the list, with Worcester County, MA finishing third, and Kent County, RI finishing fourth. Each of those counties had at least twice as many entries as any other county in New England, so if you want to put a muzzleloader trophy on the wall, we suggest you try to find some land to hunt in one of those counties!

## 2008 Summary, and the Outlook for 2009

The last several muzzleloader seasons in the Northeast have been outstanding. It seems that each year brings us a new crop of great bucks in this category as more hunters take advantage of the extended season offered for muzzleloading and the continuous improvements in muzzleloading equipment and technology. New England has set many new state muzzleloader records during that time period. Given the growth of muzzleloader hunter numbers across the region, and the success they have been experiencing in recent years, it is safe to assume that the Northeast's 2009 seasons will likely produce one or more new state records as well. In any case, we can certainly expect to see blackpowder hunters taking some of the most impressive bucks in each state during the coming season. To learn more about the big bucks taken in 2008 throughout New England, visit the Northeast Big Buck Club online at [www.bigbuckclub.com](http://www.bigbuckclub.com), or contact them by mail at 390 Marshall Street, Paxton, MA 01612; by phone at (508) 752-8762; and by email at [jbhunts@aol.com](mailto:jbhunts@aol.com).

**Note:** The NBBC's 5th record book, Northeast Trophy Whitetails V, is available for purchase on their website at [www.bigbuckclub.com](http://www.bigbuckclub.com). Or you can order your copy through the mail by sending \$35 plus \$5.60 postage to the NBBC at 390 Marshall Street, Paxton, MA 01612.

# #8



Charles Masse

# #9

Jayne Benson

