



# “Sweet November”

## Teenager Shoots Great Pennsylvania Bow Typical in 2008 by Jeff Brown

**T**he state of Pennsylvania is well known for its great deer hunting tradition. More deer are harvested here each year than most of the rest of the northeastern US combined. And in recent years this state has also gained respect for its trophy whitetails. In 2007 a batch of fantastic trophy bucks fell in the state during all hunting segments – archery, firearm and flintlock. And again in 2008 some phenomenal bucks have been taken. This story will feature one of them – a great archery typical that just might be the best from last year! And to make the story even more interesting, the great buck was taken by an 18-year-old!

**Galen Halteman** is now 19 years old and has been hunting whitetails for about seven years, since the tender age of just 12. He was a relative novice bowhunter heading into the 2008 season, having taken five does during his three years as a bowhunter. While he had not taken a buck with his bow leading into the 2008 season, he had become a fairly accomplished hunter. He had taken several other deer over the years with his rifle, including two bucks. His experiences prior to the 2008 season had led him to transition from a pure deer hunter, to more of a trophy buck hunter. He felt he had gained enough experience and skill to set his sights on a mature buck. And as he would find out later, he had the persistence to make his dream a reality.

In fact during the 2007 season Galen saw a 10-Point during the doe –only season that was big enough to haunt his dreams, and

cause him to focus on shooting that buck, or at least a buck that big! During his scouting efforts the next summer, he saw the big boy again. He now knew he had survived the winter, and he set his sights on this buck. He just had to figure out how and where to hunt him. In an attempt to draw the deer out of the timber Galen decided to plant some food plots in late summer. He could then set his treestand about twenty yards back off the field, in an attempt to ambush the buck as he headed to the field to feed.

Once the season began, Galen had some proof that the trap would work. In October, he had an opportunity at a beautiful eight pointer, but he let him pass. Galen was focused on the 10-Point, and was filled with hope that this monster was still out there. And if he was out there, Galen would get him!

### **The November Encounter**

According to Galen, the morning of November 1st looked to be a perfect morning in South Eastern Pennsylvania. It was clear, cold, and bucks were finally starting to chase. But as is often the case on these “perfect days” for hunting, things started off uneventfully. But then our hunter saw a good buck chasing a bunch of does through some thick brush. That was all he needed to see. He knew the rut was on, and that he was in the right place. He hoped that “the big one” would be doing the same sometime soon. He just had to be patient!

His patience paid off around 9:30, when a mature doe came walking down the edge of the field. Galen looked back behind her, and as fate would have it, the giant 10-point was following closely behind the hot doe. He had only one thing on his mind, and that just might give Galen the chance he needed. Galen ranged the doe in the first of two very small openings at just over twenty-five yards. He got ready with his bow, drew, and waited for the buck to hit the opening – and he did! Our young hunter stopped the unsuspecting buck with a grunt, and then let his arrow fly. He knew right away that the shot hit back a little farther than he would have liked. The big buck ran out into the field, stopped, and then started walking slowly into a thicket on the other side of the field. All Galen could do now was wait and hope.

He decided it would be best to back out of the stand and let the wounded giant sit for a good eight hours. Galen showed great judgment and patience, and at 5:30PM, eight hours later, he just couldn’t wait any longer! So he got some help and headed back to the scene of the crime. Galen and a buddy of his would head into the thick

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woods, while Galen's dad got in position to watch the field in case they jumped the big buck. Of course, Galen entered the woods with hopes of finding the buck dead. Shortly after they entered the thicket the two men heard a buck jump up and crash through the brush. And Galen's heart sank. Wrestling with his disappointment, Galen and his buddy talked it over and decided it would be best to first look for the buck's bed and then just back out and let him sit for the night. So they found his bed, and it was not at all encouraging. They found a little hair and just three drops of blood. They were crushed, and knew their chances of finding the buck were slim – at best! The night of November 1st was one tough night for our young hunter, as he kept replaying the shot over and over again wishing that he could have it back.

Early the next morning Galen and his buddy went back to scan the woods where they had last seen the buck. There was some hope (but not much) and to their credit, they kept up the search. After about twenty minutes Galen turned into a small opening, and saw a sight that he never expected. There under a pricker bush laid one monster of a Pennsylvania 10-Point!

Galen spontaneously shouted, "Dead deer baby!" The big buck had only run eighty yards from the edge of the field where Galen's dad had last seen him. Galen said that the feeling he felt when he saw the big buck laying there cannot be explained. Killing this buck was particularly special for him because of the short history he had with the buck. According to Galen, "It was only by the grace of God that we found this buck, my first buck with a bow, and it couldn't

have been scripted any better." Well said young man, well said!

### The Score:

The buck was scored by Northeast Big Buck Club scorer Jim Hale after the 60 day drying period. The Halteman typical 10-Point grossed 159 7/8" and netted 154 1/8". The inside spread was impressive at 22 7/8", with main beams of 25" and 24 2/8". Several tines were over 8" long, with the longest on each side at 8 7/8" and 9 5/8". The bases were just a hair under 5", and the mass was good throughout. All in all this rack was very impressive! And so was the body size. The deer dressed out at 179 lbs.

Many other good bucks were arrowed in 2008 across the state. The NBBC also scored a Chester County taken by David Kochel in October. Kochel's buck scored 151 1/8" gross and 142 2/8" net as a 9-Point typical. And just one year earlier in 2007 Adam Stout arrowed a Mifflin County typical 12-Point with a gross score of 170 5/8" and a net of 165 3/8". This buck was among the top five archery typicals killed in all of the Northeastern US in 2007, according to the Northeast Big Buck Club, demonstrating that the Keystone State can produce some of the region's best bow bucks.

### PA Deer Harvest Information

This state's deer hunters took about 336,000 deer in 2008, up from about 325,000 the previous year. Hunters took 122,410 antlered deer in the 2008-09 seasons, up from the previous license year's harvest of 109,200. Also, hunters harvested 213,440 antlerless deer in 2008-09, which is almost the same as the 213,870 antlerless deer taken in 2007-08.

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The year before that it was about 362,000, while it was about 354,000 in 2005-06 and about 409,000 four years ago.

### Summary:

While many other great bucks were taken during the 2008 season in Pennsylvania, Galen Halteman's stands out because it continues the trend of outstanding archery trophy bucks. Since 2002, several 200-class non-typical bucks have been arrowed by compound and crossbow, including bucks in Allegheny County and Westmoreland County. And archery bucks scoring between 180-195" gross B&C have been taken in Lehigh and Schuylkill counties. It seems that this state is headed back towards a more consistent production of outstanding trophy bucks, given the monster bucks that the NBBC has scored over the last several years. But I guess only time will tell. Certainly the results in 2008 are encouraging!