



*Dean Porter arrowed this 167" monster 10-Point in western Massachusetts in 2008.*

# Preview of Northeast's Best Bucks of 2008...

**A**t the time I was writing this article (late November 2008) many of you were still out chasing big whitetails. The 2008 season was far from over, with many big bucks still to fall to gun hunters, muzzleloaders, and late-season archers. However, some big bucks had already been taken. And while we may only have “green scores”, pictures or rumors to share with you, we thought you might like a bit of a “Preview” of the stories and information that will follow in upcoming issues of **Northeast Big Buck Magazine**. Of course, none of the bucks we have scored from this season are “official yet”, pending the mandatory 60-day drying period. But we knew you would want to hear about some of the unofficial scores, to get a feel for what states and seasons are stacking up potential record-breakers! Enjoy this brief and still incomplete profile of the 2008 season!



Chris Belisle

## Overview

Because I have been writing this type of “preview” article for many seasons now, there are a few trends in terms of early season results. We tend to hear more about archery deer, of course, because archery seasons are typically the first to start in the Northeast. We tend to hear about many more southern New England deer than northern New England deer, because most of the big deer in northern New England are taken by gun hunters. The 2008 preview results tend to follow these trends. Of course, many other big deer have been taken, and we will have info for you on those deer in later issues of this magazine. So let’s get started. Remember, all scores are “B&C gross green scores”, so they are not official yet.

## Southern New England – Big Bow Bucks Already Reported, Including a Possible CT State Record!

**Connecticut** always produces some of the region’s best archery bucks, and 2008 is looking like it will continue that trend. The biggest we have heard of so far was scored by Regional Director Carl Lieser. He called and told me about Chris Belisle of Wolcott and the monster 11-Point typical he arrowed on 9/24/08 in Hartford County. His buck green scored nearly 177” gross B&C, and over 171” net. If the score holds up to panel scoring, it will be the new #1 bow typical from the state, besting the 175” 10-Point arrowed in Litchfield County by Ron Tavruck in 1989. We’ll have the full story for you in the Spring 2009 issue of this magazine. Chris was not the only hunter to bag a big bow buck in the Constitution State. Two big typicals were green scored, both from New Haven County. Paul Johnson shot a 226 lb. 10-Point on 9/20/08 that grossed over 164”, and Zsolt Boldogh arrowed a 159 5/8” 11-Point on opening day (9/15/08). Both bucks will be officially scored soon.

*continued on next page*

# So Far!

by Jeff Brown



Steve Oaks



Paul Johnson



Geary Buterbaugh



David Zagorski

And for you gun hunters, how about this great buck taken on state-land on November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 – a 200 lb. 11-Point with an inside spread of over 30”! Steve Oakes shot this monster, but said he almost had a heart attack when he first saw it! Well, that’s a nice batch of early returns for this state. Stay tuned for more news from this state in the next issue of the magazine.

You may recall that **Massachusetts** had a banner year in 2007, including a new state record non-typical bow buck. We’ve heard about several big bow bucks from 2008 that are supposed to gross well into the 160’s, including a rumor of a giant non-typical arrowed in Norfolk County again this year that may go in the 170’s!. We also have a great 10-Point typical taken by Dean Porter in Hampden County, with a green score of 167”. We have seen many photos and green scores of 140 and 150-class bucks taken in Bow and Firearms seasons. Of course, the muzzleloader season had not yet begun as of the time we wrote this article. One buck that has been green scored is our cover buck, shot by Jeff D’Amico in eastern part of the state. Jeff’s story can be found at the end of this article.

The news out of **Rhode Island** has been sparse so far, but of course most of their big bucks are killed during the November muzzleloader season. We did get word that a 164” non-typical was green scored by Ed Klosowski, but we don’t have further details.

## ***Northern New England – Nothing Big Reported Yet***

We rarely hear much early from the North until after the season’s end. It isn’t usually until February when bucks are officially scored that any information on monster bucks starts to work our way. I spoke with Roscoe Blaisell, President of NHASTC, and he said that there wasn’t anything earth-shattering green scored yet. But you can bet that **Maine** and **New Hampshire** will produce some of the region’s best rifle and muzzleloader bucks in 2008. **Vermont** started to see some improvement in 2007, and we hope to see at least one whopper of a buck from this state. Our scorers are out there scouring the taxidermy shops now, so we should hear something very soon.

## ***Pennsylvania & New York***

Some nice bucks have surfaced from Pennsylvania already, and we expect to see many more in the coming months. Neither of these bucks have yet been green scored, but we can show you the photos. Geary Buterbaugh took a wide 15-Point with a 23” inside spread in Clarion County on 12/2/08. He told us he was not a fan of antler restrictions, at least until now! We also received a photo of a wide and heavy 12-Point taken in the western part of the state shot by David Zagorski, also on 12/2/08! Guess that was a good day....

Surprisingly, there is very little advanced news out of **New York**. We know this state will likely produce some of the region’s biggest and best bucks, as it does year after year. But the news has been slow in coming so far! You can expect we will bring you MANY great photos and stories in the coming months!

## ***Summary***

Well, we hope you enjoyed this little preview. This is by no means a complete review of the best of the 2008 season. It is just a little “appetizer” for what will likely be a great “multi-course meal” we will bring you in our Spring issue. It will be packed to the gills with big bucks, great stories, and more broken records, so don’t miss it! Also, keep an eye on our website at [www.bigbuckclub.com](http://www.bigbuckclub.com) for up-to-the-minute photos of the season’s best bucks.

# Cover Story:

## The Jeff D'Amico Buck

(in his own words)

In this fast paced world we live in (as sportsman know all too well) it is hard to juggle work, family, and other commitments, let alone find the time to scout for hunting season. So when the company I work for decided to shift my start time from 8:00 to 9:00 am, I thought this could be the time I needed to do some pre-season scouting. I figured I would abandon my usual hunting areas and find some place closer to work so when the season started I could hit the woods for a couple of hours before work. I drove my daughter to school every morning for 7:30 am then spent the next hour and a half before work scouting a Wildlife management Area (WMA) fairly close to where I work. This ritual of scouting started in early September. The first time I went there I saw a nice year and a half spike with long beams. A few days later I saw a nice 2 1/2 year old 8 point in the same area, so my confidence was growing. I concentrated on food sources nearby, and found a number of mature apple trees loaded with apples tucked away in some very thick brush and over growth. Because acorns were very scarce, I decided this was going to be a hot spot for deer until the apples were gone. I started looking for stand locations close to these apple trees. I found a row of spruce trees fairly close to the thicket that would provide me with easy access and concealment. I found an early season scrape under these trees and thought it would be a great place to setup. One morning I set out my stand, and a couple of days later I went in to cut some branches and a couple of shooting lanes. On October 12<sup>th</sup>, the day before the archery opener, I went back to put up a few bright eyes and put up a pull rope. On the way in, once I was within 30 yards of the stand, I noticed a tail of a deer about fifty yards away. The deer never noticed me watching him with my binoculars. I watched this 1 1/2 year old 4 point for five minutes before he noticed me and ran off. I finished what I went in for and then quickly got out of there. I had now seen three different bucks in this area and was looking forward to the following morning.

October 13<sup>th</sup> was opening day, and Columbus Day, I still had to work, but there was no school so I was on stand just after 6 am, with legal shooting time at approximately 6:30. At about 7:10 I had a mature doe come in within five yards, quartering away. Since I had a doe tag I took the shot, and to make a long story short after calling into work to take the day off, I had my 1st deer of the year tagged. I did not have any time to go back during the week but was excited to go back on Saturday October 18<sup>th</sup>, the first full day I would be able to hunt. Unfortunately, it was also the opening day of bird season. I thought if I got in my stand early enough I could let the bird hunters push things around and hopefully have something go by my stand. I arrived in the parking lot at 5:45 am and one car was already there. Two more arrived minutes later, but I was the only archery hunter there. I got my gear together and started up the cart road. I had gone about 200 yards in when I noticed a truck parked on the side. It was an environmental police officer. He got out and said that I couldn't come in until sunrise. I told him I wasn't hunting birds, but archery hunting for deer. He told me it didn't make a difference during bird season. He said you don't have the 1/2 hour grace period before and after sunset. I couldn't believe it! I asked if this was in the abstracts and he said it was, but after bird season it would go back to normal. That wasn't doing me any good this morning!

**"This deer had the greatest send off of all time! Every bird hunter had to take a picture of him on the way out of the woods. I'm just happy to be the one lucky enough to be able to be pulling the deer cart that day." Jeff D'Amico**



Jeff D'Amico and his 163 7/8" (green score) "cover story" buck that weighed an impressive 242 lbs, dressed.

I told him I was hoping to use the pressure to my advantage. I think he noticed my disappointment and said he would cut me some slack and let me go in today only, but from then on it would be under bird season rules. I thanked him very much and headed off to my stand. I still managed to get to my stand and settled in by 6:15. It was a beautiful, frosty, moonlit morning. Once tied in my stand I pulled out my rattle bag and True Talker grunt tube. I started with a little light rattling, followed by some young buck grunts and a few doe bleats. It was around 6:30 when I heard leaves rustling from behind me, I thought it was a early squirrel. I looked back and noticed a set of legs and the body of a large deer. I reached for my Mathews Drenlin and put my release on the string loop. I saw the deer stop under a spruce behind me and work a scrape, and play with an overhanging limb. I now knew

it was a buck, but still couldn't tell what was on his head! As he finished his scrape he started walking by me at about five yards. I drew back but had a hard time seeing my peep sight. I could hear guns firing off in the distance so I knew it was legal shooting time. I still had a tough time seeing my peep so I anchored my hand in my normal shooting position and put my pin on the deer. I now could just see the antlers and knew it was a good buck. I had him ten yards in front of me quartering away, I put the pin behind his shoulder and set off the release. I heard a good thump of the arrow hitting the deer and he ran off straight out in front of me.

The buck went about seventy-five yards into some thick trees and stopped just out of my sight. I was quiet for about two minutes then I heard some loud crashing and thought that was the buck going down. I didn't know where the hit was, or how good, so I stayed on stand. I texted my hunting buddy Jeff Orason to tell him I shot a big bodied deer. He didn't respond so I called another hunting friend who was in the area. He called back and I told him I would stay on stand a while longer before getting down. I was in my stand around 7:00 am when I could hear some bird hunters yelling about a buck that they saw on the cart road. I thought I heard them say that some poor guy shot a deer and didn't find it last

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Stu, that was some nice of that fellow from Connecticut to give us these radios, they're like brand new, he said he upgraded his radio, man what can he have, these have 7 mile range, I didn't know they got any better than that! We always wanted these, just couldn't afford them. Those two bucks, Old Hook & Scrape, will have their hands full, I should say their hooves full, now that we can talk to each other and all.

Lou, chasing them two bucks we don't need radios. Why, them twin bucks have never been apart ever since we started chasing them, never, not even when they're with a hot doe, they don't fight they just share, never been apart that we know of in the 4 years that we've been chasing them. When are we going to use the radios?

I don't know, you're right Stu, but it sure is nice to have them, we'll use them sometime, we'd better get to bed there is snow coming and we'll want to start early.

Lou, look at that 3-4 inches of new snow and it just stopped snowing, it's perfect, quiet to walk in, it's a killing snow for sure, let's

The Jeff D'Amico Buck  
continued from page 17

didn't find it last night. That's when I started panicking and sent my bow down, got my tether off and climbed down. I immediately started looking for the arrow but it could not be found. I found plenty of blood and started following it. I had a very easy blood trail and thought I must have double-lunged it. The deer didn't go more than a hundred yards where he piled up on the cart road that the bird hunters had been on. When I walked up on the deer I was just blown away by the body size and the antlers on his head. The first person I called was my dad in Vermont and told him I finally shot a Pope and Young buck. It took a while for it to sink in... I knew it would make the 125 inch net score, but even as a scorer for the Northeast Big Buck Club I was conservatively thinking he might net in the 130s. I was so excited I never really even looked the rack over that well to estimate

get to it!

Aw, the battery is dead, didn't you put the charger on it?

Stu, I thought you put it on, whatever, let's get it on, it won't take long to quick-charge it. There, we're running, now let's go. What the hell, we've got a flat tire, both of us walked around the truck and neither one of us saw it.

It was dark, Lou, how could we see it, you know the spare is flat, that thing's been flat for 6 months, we kept putting off fixing it, now what do we do?

Stu, I'll get the tire off, you call Ed, he's up at this hour and he'll give us a ride to the garage and back.

Lou, that garage didn't open 'til 7, now it's 8 o'clock and we're just getting started, the best snow of the season and we blew it, every track made before daylight will be old. We'll be 3-4 hours behind, fat chance we'll find fresh track on them two buck, they don't move much in the daytime.

Stu, stop! Tracks right there, look at that, it's them and they are fresh, they came out of there, walked up the road, look they stood around here for a while, why look at that,

the score. Never in my wildest dreams would I have thought that this deer would score this high as it did. I guess when it is YOUR DEER you tend to guess low. I had my buddy Jeff Orason score it for me, and it "green scored" 163 7/8" as a 12 point non-typical gross, 155" plus as a typical gross score. The weight of this deer also blows me away at 242 lbs. dressed. I think this deer is 5 1/2 or older by looking at the lack of teeth.

This deer had the greatest send off of all time! Every bird hunter had to take a picture of him on the way out of the woods. I'm just happy to be the one lucky enough to be able to be pulling the deer cart that day. So the change in my work schedule gave me the time I needed to do a little scouting and make the best of a bad situation. So if you only have an hour a day before work, a lot can be accomplished and anything can happen! What a great way to start the season.

# In The Next Issue

## Feature Story:

### "New" Connecticut State Record Non-Typical Found Dead

## Plus:

- Massive Early Season Bow-Bucks from around New England, Including Two New State Record Typical Bucks from CT!
- Monster RI Buck Taken with Crop Damage Permit!
- Big Bucks from NY and PA!

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