



First Bow Kill Wins Family Competition

**By Kylee Sutherland
The Goldthwaite Eagle**

My family is all about friendly competition.

From racing to the passenger seat to eating the most steak at dinnertime, it's all a competition, and no one likes to lose.

At the start of this bow season, Slade Sutherland (my cute little brother), Kody Sutherland (my dashing father), and William and Wesley Manuel (a few of my trouble-making uncles) all decided to have a little contest.

"The first person to kill a deer with their bow would win," Slade said. "The others have to give them two bags of Mr. Buck's corn and soybean mix, which would be 300 pounds of corn. It doesn't matter if the deer is a doe, spike, whatever - just the first person to kill a deer."

Naturally, my brother loves to win. At five in the morning he was in the stand. At five in the afternoon, he was in the stand again and stayed until dark.

"This is my second year to bow hunt," Slade said. "I've never killed a deer with my bow. I shot one last year, but I hit it too far forward in the shoulder. So I didn't retrieve it, but that changed this time."

Luckily for him, Slade's competitive spirit paid off.

"I'd been sitting in the stand since 5:30 that afternoon, but no deer showed up until seven," Slade said. "There were four or five does. She came from across the creek to try and get downwind of me. She was probably around 10 yards from me at one time trying to sniff me out and listening, but finally she just had to go get the corn."

Well aware of the contest and its prizes, Slade knew he might not get a chance like this again before one of the other guys shot a deer.

"I could hear her munching on the corn," Slade said. "I pulled back



Slade Sutherland and his first bow kill, a nice Mills County Whitetail doe.

my bow. She never even looked. I had buck fever when she was walking up, but I forced myself to sit back and breathe while she was eating, so I was calm when I shot. I made myself get my breath steady and put the competition out of my head. I released it and there's a distinct sound. It was like a big pop noise. I knew I hit her."

Slade's bow stand is close enough to the house that our dad can see the feeder.

"He heard the shot and texted me: I'm on my way in the ranger. Get down from your stand and look to see if you can find the arrow or any blood," Slade said.

He crawled down from the stand. His phone started buzzing in his pocket.

"We have a group chat going and all the other guys were texting in," Slade said. "They were saying: Ah, you missed her. Shakey, shakey. Buck fever. That kind of stuff, just messing with me. I got down and saw the arrow."

He bends down to look

at the arrow.

"I did this last year and thought I missed, that the arrow fell short. I look and there's blood on the arrow. I started shaking and I texted them: There's blood on the arrow," Slade said. "I was pretty quiet because I didn't want to scare any deer still close. On the inside though I was screaming and jumping. It was pretty intense. I saw where she went over, so when my dad got there we didn't have to look for the blood. She was laying there."

Feeling the triumph of his first bow kill and as winner of the contest, he texted the others on the group chat.

"I took a picture of her and sent it on the group message. I said: Pay up," Slade said. "I'm going to have bragging rights for a year."