

took the time to calm down, talk about the shot, and talk about the difference between shooting from the blind and rattling the buck out.

We realized that with the time pressure, no rest for his rifle, and the excitement that goes with trying to take the trophy buck, while it was certainly a very exciting hunt, there was also a higher rate of injury to the animal rather than a clean kill.

Half an hour later, we went into the brush following the blood and tracks. I felt confident out of the gate, being I had heard Brady's shot and knew it connected hard. We trailed the buck about 100 yards through the brush, and it seemed like forever, with me starting to think maybe we had just wounded him, which would have been awful.

Finally we found him, and Brady had made a beautiful shot. It was just a really strong buck!

I got the photo of him dragging the buck out of the brush, which made for a perfect front cover for this year's hunting guide. Once they were clear, we also got a bunch of those trophy photos, which are also included in this year's edition.

I was very proud of Brady that day because he had gone through the process to become an experienced deer hunter ready for that next level, and when presented with the opportunity — even with the challenges of rattling the buck out in the field — it was a great shot.

We went home, showed off his buck, and then later that day we went back out to the ranch and went fishing. Brady also caught a bunch of good fish that day.

It was truly a memorable day with a great hunting buddy, and I'm sure our readers will see him again in the paper and the hunting guide in years to come.



Pictured Right: After downing his ten point buck, Brady guided Flint Bridges on a somewhat chilly bass fishing excursion on the XTC Ranch. The boys landed a double before their hands got too cold to cast. Great job hunting AND fishing boys!



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