

# Train Wreck Elk Hunt, From Page 12

slope. I looked back and saw the guys waving me back to them.

I slipped back across the slope only to be waved back down toward the lower bull. This time, Mat and Doug moved down the slope with me about 100 yards and set up to call. I snuck down another 75 yards past the callers on the edge of a small meadow.

There were two little openings on the uphill side of the meadow. As I approached, I had my eye on an opening on the right side of the meadow. A log lay across the upper side of the opening. I thought I could sit on the log in a shady spot and hold a commanding view of the entire meadow.

As I approached the log, I could see hundreds of sticks on the other side. If I crossed the log to get to the shady spot, I'd make tons of noise. So, I turned to the other little opening.

The other opening was smaller and was flanked by a small tree. That tree blocked my ability to shoot toward the far right side of the meadow. I could still see the right part of the meadow through the tree, but I wouldn't be able to shoot that direction. I thought to my self, "Of all the places the bull might come, what are the chances of him coming through that ten percent where I can't shoot?"

It only took a few minutes of the guys' calling to answer my own internal question. I watched through the little tree in horror as the bull confidently strode out into the meadow on the right ten percent. I was stuck just watching the bull, unable to make a shot.

I thought to myself, "I wish he'd turn to his left and get clear of this tree." Just as sure as I had an elk remote control in my hand, he turn and walked across the bottom of

the meadow nearly clear of my little tree. Then he looked back uphill past me to the callers.

I leaned to my left a little to clear the branches and raised my rangefinder. I put the crosshairs on his shoulder and clicked the button... '43 yards' flashed in red numbers. But that wasn't all I saw through my rangefinder. I saw the bull catch my movement and turn his head and stare right at me. I froze.

I thought to myself, "It would be a great time for you guys to commence calling."

Sure enough, I heard the sweet sound of plaintive cow calls from above. The bull turned his head back and focused uphill past me. I slowly lowered my rangefinder and clicked my release on my bow string. I was just about to lean out from behind the side of my little tree when the bull turned his full attention back to me.

I thought to myself, "My remote control has worked for me so far... I wish that bull would look downhill behind him to maybe check on his harem."

Sure enough, the bull slowly turned his big head to look downhill.

I leaned to the left from behind the tree and drew back my arrow all in one motion. As my 40 yard pin settled on his shoulder, I saw the bull's head turning back to look my way. I released my arrow.

I watched in awe as my arrow arched in the sunlight across the meadow. Just as the bull's head stopped and focused on me, my arrow sank in right behind his shoulder. As the bull turned and blasted into the blow downs below the meadow, I could see only the fletchings of my arrow sticking out of his side.

My shot was a little high, prob-



*Doug Ulrich and guide Mat Cain with Doug's spike elk.*

ably due to the downward angle of the shot. I'm sure my shaking hands contributed too. Plus, the bull was not exactly broadside. He was facing slightly toward me. But I was reassured by the penetration my arrow made.

I moved to where the guys could see me. They heard the bull run off, but didn't know if I shot or not. I signaled that I had taken a shot. Which may or may not have looked like a silly touchdown dance.

As is protocol, we waited an hour before tracking the bull. I took the shot at 11:30 in the morning. So we sat down in the sun to eat lunch and discuss my shot.

At first I was confident of my shot. But as I played the events over and over again in my head, I began to get nervous. Was the shot too high? We he quartering toward me too much? As the questions mounted,

this lunch hour turned into what seemed like the longest lunch of my life.

Finally 12:30 came around and we slowly approached the spot where the elk stood when I shot him. We could clearly see where he turned and ran downhill, but we could see no blood or hair.

We all looked at each other and whispered together a plan. Mat and I would slowly stay on the bull's tracks while Doug would focus on trying to find blood.

I nocked an arrow and snuck from track to track. Mat followed behind me peering into the trees with his binoculars every time we paused.

After ten minutes, Doug excitedly whispered, "Hey! I have blood over here!"

Mat and I rushed back to Doug,

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