

## WYOGA HUNTING STORY CONTEST WINNER #2

### *License Plate Moose*

By Clark Schmitz, Brunsville, Iowa

The air felt crisp and cool as I walked to the lodge to eat breakfast. It was 4:30am on day eight of the nine day Wyoming archery moose season. With time running out I felt a little tired and saddle sore but still anxious to head up the mountain once again in search of a good shiras moose. My two previous moose hunts to New Foundland and Alaska were equally as exciting with lots of game observed but both ended with an unfilled tag.

After a quick breakfast my guide Carlton Loewer, of Camp Creek Outfitters, and I headed for the trailhead. With the days provisions secured to the horses we headed up the mountain still well before first light. As we neared the first ridge top Carlton motioned to me that he had spotted a moose. He had actually spotted two nice bulls, one hard horned and a second still in velvet. Carlton quickly suggested we ride down the ridge approx ½ mile and then I would attempt a stalk. As we rode I decided to remove the string protector/sling from my bow. While doing so I accidentally spooked the horse sending him into full rodeo mode! I fell back, trying to hang on to my bow and stay on the horse as I raced past Carlton and his horse. I finally was able to reach the saddle horn and pull myself up to grab the reins and get the horse stopped. Carlton quickly rode up to me and calmly asked, "in a big hurry to shoot a moose or what!" Well, I have to admit my terror was some what calmed by his humor!

After I got my composure back we rode to the point were I began my stalk. At about 100 yds from the two bulls the



noisy underbrush gave me away and the bulls slowly moved off. We made a wide circle around an aspen grove the bulls had gone into to get ahead of them. I now began sneaking into the aspen grove on a well used game trail. At 50yds in I could see the two bulls slowly moving through the aspens. Now crawling on the remarkably quiet trail I was getting close to the trail the bulls were traveling on. More crawling and now the range finder showed 30 yds to the trail they were on. Just then

the lead velvet bull turns and starts to quarter towards me. As the two were really getting close now, I remembered what Carlton had said, "if they both offer you a shot, take the velvet bull, he's bigger". The velvet bull was now at 20 yds but quartering to me. "Let him walk past for the broadside shot" I thought as the bulls continued their slow pace. As the lead bull was now broadside I slowly raised my bow and began to draw. The bull caught the movement, turned and trotted out to 40yds and stopped to look back. Now quartered away and my bow at full draw I squeezed the release and watched as the arrow penetrated to the fletching in the bulls side. The bull trotted off with the hard horned bull following close behind. After ample time to ensure the bull was down for good, we began to trail the bull. We first spotted the hard horned bull raking a small tree and the downed velvet bull was not far away!

It was a huge thrill and a close encounter I will never forget. Carlton Loewer and all at Camp Creek Outfitters were great to spend time with.

Now every time I see a Wyoming license plate with the bucking bronco, I wonder if the rider is at a rodeo or hunting moose! ■