

SPORTSLOOK

Four-day antlerless hunt is Dec. 9-12

All deer hunters with a valid antlerless tag/tags for the county and land type they are hunting are encouraged to take advantage of additional opportunities to hunt deer in December.

A four-day antlerless-only hunt will take place statewide Thursday through Sunday, Dec. 9-12, following the statewide muzzleloader season that ends on Wednesday, Dec. 8. Hunters may fill any unused antlerless tag while hunting in the proper deer management zone, unit and land type specified on the tag.

Archery and cross-bow season remains open through Jan. 9, 2022.



Apply for bear, turkey permits before Dec. 10

Black bear and wild turkey hunters are reminded to submit their applications for the 2021 season permit drawings before midnight on Dec. 10. Applications for permit drawings can be purchased through Go Wild or an authorized license agent.

For upcoming hunting season dates and application dates, visit <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/hunt/dates>.

WINTER SPORTS SCHEDULE

Girls Basketball

Friday, Dec. 3

St. Croix Falls (A)

Tuesday, Dec. 7

Ashland (H)

Boys Basketball

Thursday, Dec. 2

Cameron (A)

Tuesday, Dec. 7

St. Croix Falls (A)

Hockey

Thursday, Dec. 2

Chequamegon (H)

Tuesday, Dec. 7

Baldwin-Woodville (A)

Wrestling

Saturday, Dec. 4

Mondovi Tournament

Tuesday, Dec. 7

Ladysmith (A)

Two-year quest for 'Moose' ends successfully for Ebner

Thirteen-year-old harvests trophy buck during gun season

BY TYLER FLORCZAK

Some things are just meant to be.

A two-year roller coaster ride of physical exertion—literal blood, sweat and tears—along with sleepless nights filled with mental anguish came to an end last week for one of the most determined and passionate 13-year-old deer hunters around.

Cameron resident Sawyer Ebner accomplished an incredible feat during Wisconsin's annual nine-day gun deer season when he harvested "Moose", a massive 185-inch, once-in-a-lifetime buck.

Beyond the harvest of the incredible 16-point Barron County buck—which sported a unique set of palmated antlers resembling the antlers of a moose—unfolded a wild quest where Sawyer specifically targeted this buck and had 13 encounters with the amazing animal while hunting with his dad, Travis, during the 2020 and 2021 archery and gun seasons.

Hunting out of a box blind in an area where the two had multiple run-ins with the mature buck, Sawyer finally had the opportunity to seal the deal and cap a two-year goal of harvesting Moose. The buck made the fatal mistake around 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 23, when he gave Sawyer a 207-yard shot with his trusty 30.06 rifle.

"That morning, we decided to try a new spot so



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTINE EBNER

Sawyer Ebner and his father Travis, of Cameron, had 12 encounters over a two year time period with "Moose", a 185-inch trophy buck before the 13th encounter finally allowed the 13-year old to harvest the massive, palmated 16-point buck on Nov. 23. The father-son duo had thousands of trail camera photos and run-ins with the Barron County buck but persistence by the two gave Sawyer an opportunity to take a buck of a lifetime during Wisconsin's annual nine-day gun deer hunt.

Sawyer could shoot a doe. While hunting that morning, my cellular camera snapped a photo of Moose with a doe heading toward the pines. We knew the morning doe hunt was over and we needed to plan for the afternoon hunt and go after that buck," Travis recalled while telling the

unforgettable story.

Later that afternoon, the doe that Moose was tending to came out roughly 50 yards from the blind but was still in the pines.

"As soon as we saw her, I told Sawyer to get his gun up and get ready even though there was only a small window of op-

portunity to shoot into the pines. Two or three minutes after she walked through, I could see tines between pines and, luckily, Sawyer found him in his scope right away," Travis explained.

"Even though I couldn't see the entire deer, I could see his front shoulder in

the scope. Dad told me to just put it on his front shoulder, so that's what I did and I shot," Sawyer said. "As soon as I shot, he mule kicked and trotted into woods, and we thought he went down there. It just happened so fast. We'd seen him

SEE EBNER BUCK PAGE B3

'Dogs come up short in season opener, lose 58-56 to Augusta



BY TYLER FLORCZAK

Hungry for its first win since March 3, 2020, the Chetek-Weyerhaeuser boys' basketball team nearly tipped off the 2021-22 season with a hard-fought win. Instead, the Augusta Beavers fended off the Bulldogs' late comeback attempt and hung on to a 58-56 victory in Chetek on Tuesday, Nov. 23.

C-W	56	C-W (0-1)
AUGUSTA	58	opened the season in the

"Dog pound against Augusta (1-0), jumping out to a 34-25 lead in the first half. However, the visitors outscored C-W 33-22 in the second half to pull away from the Bulldogs.

"It felt great to be back in the gym in front of our home crowd. I'm really proud of the boys' effort. Despite being outsized, we did a good job on the boards," explained C-W head coach Hans Olson. "Execution-wise, we just need to be

SEE BULLDOGS PAGE B4

The Bulldogs boys' basketball team lost a nail-biter in the 2021-22 season opener to the Augusta Beavers and 58-56 last week. Pictured at left, senior Ashton Kummert drives to the hoop to score two of his team-high 19 points against Augusta. Pictured at right is junior Benson Paulson shooting a three-pointer, one of three that he buried in the first half. Paulson also finished in double figures with 10 points.

Lampert Lumber

617 Knapp St. • Chetek • 715-924-4803

LampertLumber.com



WINDOWS • ROOFING • SIDING • DECKING • CABINETS

EBNER BUCK: Thirteen-year-old bags Barron County bruiser in gun season



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTINE EBNER

Sawyer Ebner, middle, poses with "Moose," a 16-point, 185-inch buck he harvested on Nov. 23. Pictured with Sawyer are his parents, Christine and Travis, along with his sisters Addyson and Harper. Travis found both sets of antlers the buck shed in March of 2019 and 2020.

FROM B1

multiple times while in the stand, so I actually didn't get hyped up too much before the shot."

However, emotions flooded the teenager and he instantly started crying, as Travis started filming him during the memorable moment.

"As I was filming him sobbing with excitement, we hugged a little and I congratulated him. I remember seeing him messing with his gun a bit. But I didn't notice he was so excited that he had unloaded his gun and set the gun down," Travis noted.

Suddenly, Travis looked up from the celebration, and Moose emerged out of the patch of woods.

"It was a real slow walk. I told Sawyer, 'There he is, shoot him again' as he was now 50 yards closer than the first shot," Travis said.

During the excitement of finally shooting Moose, Sawyer had unloaded the gun and set the clip on his dad's knee.

"Unfortunately, by the time we realized it all, we didn't get the gun loaded in time, and he disappeared," Travis said.

"I still had a lot of faith he was going to die in there though," Sawyer added.

Travis began calling people to get their opinions on what to do next, but reiterated that they knew he was hurt because he mule kicked—often a sign of a fatal shot; although him walking back into pines had Travis and Sawyer confused.

With easily 20 to 30 people waiting in anticipation at the Ebner house, a small group went out to check for blood later in the evening. After Travis' cousin located some blood heading into the pines, Travis said he shined ahead and could see a rack in pine boughs—the buck only went about 20 yards into pines and approximately 60 yards from where they had last seen him on the hoof.

Sawyer's shot ended up hitting the buck slightly back and split the liver into two pieces.

When the group called back to the house, a big celebration ensued.

"You could hear everyone yelling and screaming in the background. Then they all came running to the woods breaking branches to come see the buck. 'I'm just happy that I finally got to shoot him; I knew I hit him good and knew he would eventually go down. I've been dreaming about it since 2019 when we first got pictures of him as a 2 year old,'" Sawyer said with a big smile on his face.

"The kid set a personal goal and passed up a lot of bucks kids his age and even adults would rarely ever pass up—there were a lot of good ones he let go. I told others that I can't make my son shoot something he doesn't want to shoot," Travis exclaimed.

It was lucky encounter No. 13 for the Sawyer, but it was the only instance they saw him while gun hunting. They had eight run-ins in the 2021 archery and gun seasons and five last year.

The duo's first encounter with Moose came in the first week of the 2020 bow season when they had him at 40 yards. From there they had a couple encounters from a distance.

Last year on Nov. 14, Sawyer let an arrow fly at the 3-year-old buck, but he used his 20-yard pin instead of his 30-yard pin and shot an inch or two under heart.

Sawyer was frustrated and heartbroken but was not deterred.

Following the 2020 gun season, the Ebners saw Moose from the road coming home one day and began getting trail camera photos of him to confirm he made it through the season and into the holiday season.

With just a couple weeks left in the archery season, the Ebners had the chance to harvest Moose, but opted to let him walk since he had potential of being a 200-inch class whitetail.

"We were in the blind, and I told him to pass up the 180-inch buck. It's crazy to tell a 12-year-old to that. We had two encounters late season last year and let him go at 20 yards," Travis said.

According to Travis, the buck would not shed its antlers until March each year. They even saw him breed a young doe/fawn in March last year. In 2019, Travis found both sheds from Moose was a 2 year old.

Still carrying his antlers on March 9, 2020, Travis noticed from a trail cam picture Moose was still carrying just one side of his antlers. A few days later he had none.

After he combed the woods and found the right side of Moose's antler, Travis was determined to find the other side, expanding his circle to find the second antler.

"I walked 67 miles according to my OnX Hunting app over the course of 17 days to locate the other antler. I worried someone else would kill him this year, and I promised Sawyer last year if he let him live in late season as a 180-inch buck so he could grow one more year, that I'd find his antlers. If someone else shot him, I told Sawyer we would have those sheds mounted, so he could at least say he passed up the Buck. I did it for Sawyer because I took an oath I'd find it for him."

Sawyer was so dead-set on this buck he not only dreamt of him, he literally slept with Moose's shed antler.

Sawyer admitted he wanted to harvest Moose with a bow and arrow more than anything, and the father-son combo had five encounters with world-class buck this year.

On Sept. 22, Sawyer was at

full draw for a minute and a half but knew he didn't have the best shot. In the same stand four days later, Moose was "walking down the Yellow Brick Road," heading right to the tree the Ebner's were concealed in, according to Travis. But once again, the buck averted death when coyotes 100-yards away began to howl and yip, scaring Moose off.

Two weeks before the nine-day gun season on Nov. 7, the Ebners were positioned in the stand where Sawyer missed him with an arrow the year before. Moose wandered within 45 yards but again outsmarted the two. Travis was able to get him to come back to a snort-wheeze call but the buck again maneuvered away.

They always knew he was hanging tight to their hunting grounds based on cell camera photos, logging thousands of pictures over the years.

"It means a lot to shoot him. I always felt like I deserved to shoot it," Sawyer noted.

"Hunting the way he did is hard. There's a lot of time, emotions, sweat, and money put into this. I guarantee he's hunted harder than any adult this he set out to harvest Moose. I personally haven't touched my bow in almost three years because I wanted this to be his deal," Travis said. "I think he learned some valuable lessons. You can't just walk out in the woods and shoot a buck like that; it's not going happen every time you go out. I always tell him that you're not going get one on the couch and that you have to put in the time and effort. It was tough because there were tears after almost every encounter."

Certainly a buck of that caliber is something Sawyer, Travis, their family and friends will always remember.

"It's pretty special having a chance at a nearly 200-inch buck in Barron County. It became a family affair for us. His sisters—Addyson and Harper—were always the first ones at the door asking if he shot him. It was a pretty emotional journey," Travis added. "A lot of naysayers would tell us that we can't keep passing up the bucks that Sawyer did. We let him go, knowing he was living at our place and confident we'd have chances at him."

Sawyer understands it could easily be the biggest buck he ever shoots, and stated he won't be setting the bar necessarily higher in the future, but aspires to harvest more mature bucks especially with his bow.

Now that the final chapter has been written in the Ebner's quest for Moose, Sawyer plans to enjoy time ice fishing, playing sports and doing pretty much anything he can outdoors.

But then again, he's likely already dreaming about next year's target buck.

CHETEK POOL LEAGUE

Week 7 Results	W / L	Score	Score
1. R Bar 2.....	67/29	5. Chetek Lanes 1	55/41
2. R Bar 1.....	76/36	6. Tiki.....	53/43
3. Buck/Beams 1 ..	63/33	7. Chetek Lanes 2	59/53
4. Buck/Beams 2 ..	70/42	8. Skippers.....	49/47
		9. Gilligans 1	56/56
		10. Brass Rail.....	44/52
		11. Pokegama	51/61
		12. Phill's.....	38/58
		13. Sassy's	44/68
		14. Red's	36/76
		15. Gilligans 2	23/89

Preliminary deer harvest, license sales for 2021 gun deer season

The Department of Natural Resources released information from the 2021 nine-day gun deer season on Tuesday, Nov. 30.

As of 11:59 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 28, sales for gun, bow, crossbow, sports and patron licenses reached 808,224. Of that total, 564,440 were for gun privileges, including gun, patron and sports licenses. The year-to-date sales for all deer licenses are down 1.5% from the same time last year.

Preliminary figures show that hunters registered 175,667 deer during the 2021 nine-day gun deer hunt, including 84,952 antlered and 90,715 antlerless deer. Since archery seasons opened Sept. 18, hunters have registered 270,046 deer statewide, showing the growing influence of earlier seasons on cumulative harvest.

Compared to 2020, the total firearm deer harvest was down 7.9% statewide, with buck harvest down 1.3% and antlerless harvest down 13.2%.

The Northern Forest management zone showed harvest increases from 2020 for both antlered and antlerless kills, while the other three zones showed declines in harvest. The Central Forest (-3.0%) and Central Farmland (-8.9%) had similar declines in total harvest from 2020 levels, while the Southern Farmland showed a larger decline in total harvest of 17.0%.

While opening weekend saw mild temperatures throughout the state with some snow in the north, DNR staff across the state reported good weather throughout the season. Snow cover and frozen wetlands would



have improved visibility and access for hunters.

Hunters are required to register harvested deer before 5 p.m. the day after recovery. Any hunter who failed to follow mandatory registration rules should do so now, despite having missed the deadline.

To read more and get a full breakdown of the season, visit <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/newsroom/release/51616>.

SEPTEMBER 1—NOVEMBER 30, 2021

Bell Press Newspapers

'TRAIL CAM CONTEST

SPONSORED BY



The **Ardisam**™ Advantage



TRAIL CAMERA OF: RACHEL MOSER, RUSK COUNTY

Starting September 1, 2021, enter weekly for your chance to win one of the grand prizes! Winners chosen weekly to enter into the grand prize contest. Contest runs September 1 through November 30, 2021. Photos must be e-mailed to tyler@theteketalert.com each week by noon on Friday.

FIRST PLACE PRIZE

RIVERS EDGE LOCKDOWN 21 FT 2-MAN TREE STAND - LD202
Valued at \$329.99

SECOND PLACE PRIZE

OX5 BARRONETT GROUND BLIND
Valued at \$269.99

THIRD PLACE PRIZE

PROWLER 200 GROUND BLIND
Valued at \$149.99

ARDISAM'S FEATURED PRODUCT OF THE WEEK:

THE TEARTUFF™ XL LOUNGER™ FROM RIVERS EDGE TREESTANDS



The Teartuff™ XL Lounger™ features a flip-up, Teartuff™ mesh seat and armrests paired with a 24" wide x 37" deep large platform and footrest providing plenty of extra room for standing shots. The unique Big Foot™ lever action system and noiseless strap attachment creates a secure and silent installation during your hunt.

Check it out now at www.huntriversedge.com

*Photos must be from this year (2021), with time and date set on photo. ABSOLUTELY NO PHOTO-SHOPIING IS ALLOWED—SUBMIT ORIGINAL PHOTOS ONLY. Photos must be from Chippewa, Barron, Dunn, Rusk or Washburn counties. At least one photo will be featured each week at the discretion of The Bell Press. By November 30, winners will be chosen by The Bell Press & Ardisam staff. When submitting photos, please include info on date and time of photo, where photo was taken (east, west, north south of Chetek etc.), the county the photo was taken in and what is featured in the photo. To enter photos, email photo to tyler@theteketalert.com OR drop off at The Chetek Alert, 312 Knapp Street, Chetek, WI 54728.