

THE FIRST BUCK

After turning 12, Olive Thunell makes her first hunt count

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

It's the magic number for many young hunters: 12, the first year you can apply to hunt big game.

When 13-year-old Olive Thunell hit the big milestone last year, she was excited for the opportunity to begin preparing for her first big game hunt.

She had experience helping her family pack out an elk or a buck, assisting in any way she could when they went hunting, but this was her first time with a tag.

Thunell said, upon drawing the tag, she felt several emotions.

"I felt excited but nervous at the same time because I didn't have a lot of practice shooting," Thunell said. "I was afraid I would miss and not be able to fill my tag."

Thunell practiced shooting with her dad to prepare for the hunt. The preparation reduced her nervousness and built excitement for the hunt.

"I was afraid the gun would kick and hurt my shoulder, but my dad said, 'Don't think about it. It's not going to hurt you, and don't go too close to the scope. Otherwise you'll scope yourself,'" Thunell said.

When the season came, she, her father and her little brother set up camp on Murderers Creek. After several days of hunting, Thunell had her chance to make personal history.

"During the end of the day, right when we were about to go home, we decided to go on one more hunt before we left, and that's when I shot my first buck," Thunell said.

When Thunell and her father saw the deer, they got out of the truck and hiked up on a little hill to get a better shot due to bushes surrounding the animal.

She said she was standing about 100-150 yards from the animal. She had to calm herself down before taking the shot with her 7mm-08.

"I told myself don't panic, stop shaking and just calm down and be ready," Thunell said. "I shot it, and it ran to the road because it wasn't far from the road, and it fell in the ditch."

When they caught up with the buck, she shot it again to complete the hunt.

"I was really excited and happy I got what my goal was, which was at least a three(-point)," Thunell said. "My little brother (Mikey, 6) loves to go hunting with my dad, and he was just so electrified that he

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Contributed photo

Olive Thunell shot her first buck in her first hunting season last year.

was bouncing up and down because he got to witness my first buck."

Her dad dragged the animal to the road so it would be easier to load, and she worked with her father to load the buck in the truck.

Thunell said she was happy for the help her father gave her and learned to keep calm when under pressure.

"There shouldn't be any pressure and just try and do your best," Thunell said.

To top off her first year of hunting, she won a 6.5 Creedmoor rifle from Pioneer Feed's Third Annual Big Game Drawing with a picture submitted of her and her first buck.



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Olive Thunell poses with her family and the prize she won from Pioneer Feed's big game drawing last year.