

2008 AZ Big Game Super Raffle Elk Winner
Robert Dunn
Story by Jim Mullins

After speaking with Jake Dunn, Robert's son, we could tell right away that this was going to be an incredible hunt with some incredibly nice folks! Robert had made it clear that he did not want to just show up and shoot, he wanted to work hard and experience all he could before pulling the trigger! With this being the case, Robert and Jake showed up about 2 weeks early and went to work! It was awesome to see and hear the excitement in their voices each day when they would return with great video of awesome bulls. The weather turned bad and changed our game plans which broadened our search for the bulls we wanted. This is when we really valued having the Dunn's helping us and they did an outstanding job locating and videoing bulls! Closer to the hunt, Jake's cousin "Clint" and Jake's son Caden came up to help also and by that time we had the rest of my family there as well.

Now with the hunt starting, the moon was full and the storms had dropped water in every last hole it could find which had the bulls scattered and difficult to locate. We had 3 bulls in a certain area that were all over the 400" mark and Robert, my brother Matt and I would hunt that area while everyone else went different directions to catch the bulls in case they had moved.

A bull was still in the area but never showed while the rifle was on Roberts shoulder and everyone had great bulls to watch in the areas they had gone to during the first two days. On the second day of the hunt, Jake and Clint had located a giant bull and we headed over there to see which bull it was. Once we saw it we told Jake it was just a little 385" bull and that he should keep looking.

So with that we left and headed back to our original spot again. The storms were rolling in but we grabbed our jackets and stuck it out. On that night Robert passed up a giant 390+ bull at close range along with several 370-380" type bulls. Right after taking his scope off the giant bull, a lightning bolt struck close by and the clouds opened up! They were about 1 mile from the truck and I was about 1 1/4 miles at that moment and we all had "lightning rods" in the form of tripods or rifle hanging off us, so you can imagine the speed in which we ran! It was definitely worth the risk and drenching we endured to see such amazing bulls, especially with a valid tag present!

That night we returned to camp to find that Jake and Clint had videoed another bull shortly after the 385" bull. The video showed a giant bull tearing up a dry wallow in a clearing just before dark. They did an awesome job video taping and locating and my hat was off to them, they were quickly becoming elk hunters....and spoiled ones at that!

Robert really liked the character of this bull and especially liked the fact that his boys had located the bull. But what I think sealed the deal was that as a tribute to their Grandad, they

named the bull "Skeeter"! We all sat around and tried judging the bull because we knew his pedicle was twisted which is a common trait in this unit, and this tends to stunt the front tines. The bull had an incredible top end and with certain angles we could see he had very heavy mass, so it was determined this bull had enough up top to make up for what he lacked and it was indeed a 400" class bull! We now finally had a reason to pull out of our original plans and get a closer look at Skeeter.

That next morning found my brother Matt, Robert, Jake, Clint and Caden in the same spot as the evening before. Right at first light I found a couple bulls, including another giant 390-395" bull! We admired this beast as he made his way into the trees, but you could tell Robert had his mind on Skeeter! Shortly after that Jake and Clint again located Skeeter and he had already made it into the treeline but was still feeding. Robert, Matt and I dropped our packs and took off on a mile long stalk that put us within rifle range but too low to pick out the bull. We learned that he had bedded while on our stalk and I crawled around two different knobs trying to pick out his tines but with no luck, so we decided to back out and get on them in the evening. Unfortunately Jake, Clint, and Caden had to leave that afternoon and that really had me thinking of a way to get Robert in on the bedded bull so Jake could be there, but it was just too risky.

That evening we headed back over there. It took seconds to re-glass the bull and with an early cloud cover the bull was up feeding at around 4:30. There was one small strip of burnt trees on the ridge and Skeeter was feeding toward it, so Matt, Robert and I again dropped our packs and took off as fast as we could. With sweat pouring off us we finally made it within rifle range and the bull hadn't cleared the last tree yet before entering the burn. I had the camera set up and had Robert on the shooting forks, but he was visibly excited and unable to hold steady so we made one last dash to get closer. Now well within range and all set up, Skeeter started to appear right where we had planned. I reassured Robert that there was no rush and he didn't need to shoot but if he wanted this bull, it was 400" class and he'll need to shoot now. Robert told me he wanted it and then waited for the perfect broadside shot.....BOOM.....BOOM.....HE'S DOWN!!!! Robert didn't even need the second shot, the first was perfect and the bull was going down as the second shot connected! It was one of the more emotional times we've shared with a hunter and one that we'll never forget.

Robert and his family treated us like family from the first day and we all quickly became friends. To witness such a person harvest an animal that had special meaning to him, really was an awesome experience for us all and the only thing that would have been better was to have his boys there too! This bull is something you need to hold to appreciate. The mass throughout is amazing and the top end is world class! Robert had mentioned early on that he liked character bulls and this bull is definitely not lacking in the character department! The bull is just a giant and his body more resembled a moose, especially his head! He had 66 1/2 inches of mass, over 21 G3's, and pushing 25" on his G4, but all the "roll" that he has makes him very unique and gorgeous!

I do want to thank the Dunn family for allowing us to be a part of such an awesome experience! I'm not just saying it to say it, but I sincerely feel that Robert is truly a deserving person of that tag and that bull. It was refreshing to hunt with folks who appreciated all the little things that most of us take for granted. Robert wanted that bull not because of what it would score, but because of what it meant to him and his family. I knew it as soon as they named him after their Granddad it was all over, that bull was going to hit the ground and the bull will probably be more admired and respected than any other bull taken that is comparable in score! I think this sport and this world could be a little better place if there were more people in it like the Dunn's. Congrats again Robert!