

This story began during the hunting season of 2008 when I and my husband, Mark, were scouting land that we were leasing for 2009. The landowner, a friend of ours, rushed us up to the spot where he had seen a huge buck and another young buck bedded just off the main road next to some cedars in tall CRP grass. After driving by a few times, trying to locate the spot, we suddenly saw him take off running in a crouched position about 20 yards off the main road. After this encounter, we decided to call him "Sneaky Pete" because of the way he had tried crawling out to avoid being detected.

While walking through the area where we had spotted him, I found a shed of his from the previous year. The only thing we could think about for the next year was, "Is this buck still on the property?"

when I looked up to my right and all I could see was antlers about 60 yards out, rubbing a tree like he was going to saw it down! It was Pete, without a doubt, because there was no mistaking those antlers. He continued to rub trees, staying at least 60 yards out the whole time. I tried to grunt, but he didn't respond and continued on his path out of view. Although a shot was not available, it was still a great encounter.

With the approach of the rut, we had more sightings of Pete and noticed that more deer were out roaming. It was now early November and signs of the pre-rut were evident across the property. Although we frequently saw bucks, we still had not had a shot at ol' Sneaky Pete.

November 7 rolled around, and after not seeing the big guy for a few days, I was ready for another encounter. I

# Sneaky Pete

## From Kansas

By Lacy Shomaker

After a long year of talking about and planning how we were going to get a chance at taking this buck, the time was finally drawing near. After many hours of target practice with our bows and plotting where to place our stands and trail cameras, we were finally ready for the trip to our hunting property.

With the arrival of opening day of bow season, Mark and I went out and hung stands and trail cameras around the 200-acre property. In early October, we returned with our hunting licences and tags, and after more scouting and reviewing of the trail camera photos, we finally caught our first pictures of Pete. He really gave us quite a show with a dozen great shots. Seeing the pictures just fuelled our excitement to get out and start hunting.

Taking every opportunity we could get in the stands, we were very encouraged to see many other bucks, which we passed on to let them grow. We continued seeing pictures of Pete on camera, and there were also numerous times out in the field when we saw him right at dark while walking back from our stands. On one occasion, I was in one of our stands

*Lacy Shomaker of Manhattan, Kansas, with the world-class whitetail she arrowed in that state. The 16-pointer has a tremendous frame with very long tines. Main beams run 26 3/8 and 26 2/8, with brow-tines reaching 6 7/8 and 7 3/8 inches. G-2s are 11 7/8 and 12 4/8, and the G-3s go 12 6/8 and an awesome 14 inches long. G-4s are above average at 11 and 10 5/8 inches. Bases are 5 4/8 each and the majority of the other circumferences average 4 5/8 inches. The buck has an inside spread of 19 3/8, giving it a net typical score of 194 4/8 inches. With 20 7/8 of abnormals, its final Boone and Crockett score is 215 3/8 non-typical points. Photo by Mike Charowhas of Abilene, Kansas.*

didn't know it then, but that wish was right around the corner. That morning I was in one of our stands when, at about 8:00 a.m., I saw antlers emerge from the other side of the field in front of me at 100 yards. No doubt again, it was Pete. He crossed the field, heading away from me, but somewhere along the way he picked up on a doe, which led him straight in to me. The doe was walking quickly, and at times trotting, to stay out of Pete's reach. She went down the hill behind my treestand and directly underneath me. It happened so fast that by the time he passed behind my tree, I was still seated. Although I was





Lacy and her daughter, Lexi, with "Sneaky Pete" just after she arrowed the high-tined brute.

able to draw back the arrow, I could not get the angle right and the bow was hitting the seat. Just as I decided to try standing up, a nearby neighbour started his tractor and spooked the deer just out of range. I was overwhelmed with frustration at the thought of a missed opportunity at the shot of a lifetime.

It would only be another day before Pete made another appearance. This time it was Mark who was in the same stand as I had been a few days earlier. As Pete showed himself the second time near that stand, Mark pulled back his bow and took the shot but quickly realized it went over the deer's back. Pete looked at Mark and took off to the safety of the woods.

Feeling we had put too much pressure on Pete in that area, I opted to try my chances in a treestand on the other side of the property. Knowing he had been bedding there, we had left it undisturbed, never walking through it and only hunting the outer edge of this bedding area.

On the evening of November 8, I saw Pete out in the field, but he did not stay long. He was just cruising through the area, looking for does, and never came within range.

The following morning, I got into the same stand as the evening before, while

Mark chose one on the other side of the property. Before early light, I could already hear a buck walking near the stand, but once it was closer, I saw that it was a young eight-pointer that we knew well. First light came quickly after that, and I spotted several does and a couple fawns feeding out in the field. Knowing Pete was aggressively cruising for does, and after several appearances from him during the week, I knew there was a good chance of seeing him.

Just before 7:00, I suddenly saw Pete come out of the woods, and just like all the other encounters the adrenaline began racing through my body. With his head down, he chased off the two fawns that were feeding with the does and then turned to one of the does standing nearby and started chasing her around the field. The doe initially took him in the opposite direction from my stand, but then turned and led him back toward me down to the creek that came right to my stand. I saw the doe pop back out into the field, but Pete was no longer following her. He was sniffing the ground like he'd found a different scent to follow. I watched anxiously as he



Here is a trail camera photo of "Sneaky Pete," a world-class whitetail indeed.

wove a path directly out in front of me. I had a spot picked out ahead of him and hoped he would step into that opening, where a 15-yard shot would make him mine.

As Pete made his way toward me, I drew back my bow at 20 yards. At this point, I was trying to maintain my cool amidst the excitement building and my heart racing. I couldn't believe that I was about to get a shot at the monster buck we had been watching for the past two years. Pete finally took a step right out in front of me, like he was being led by a string, and at the 15-yard mark, I released the arrow and immediately saw it barely sticking out of his side for a double-lung shot.

Pete took off and I heard him crashing through the woods as he ran almost in a circle around me. I sent a text message to Mark to tell him the exciting news, and then met him back at the house to give Pete time to expire and for me to tell my amazing story.

One hour later, we headed back out to track him. It was pretty tough finding blood at the start because he had run quite fast, so we opted to begin tracking at the last place I had seen him. Once we found that spot, the blood got thicker and frothy, and we suspected he wouldn't be too far away. We had tracked him for another 20 minutes when our friend the landowner found one of his sheds from the previous year. Shortly after that, we saw the magnificent buck lying along a trail of huge rubs that we believed were his.



Another look at this amazing Kansas whitetail.

Upon recovering my trophy, I was disappointed to see that coyotes had already started eating his rump, but I soon forgot all about that when I held the rack of the buck we had named Sneaky Pete in my hands for the first time.

A few days later, I went back out and was able to find the other side of Pete's rack from 2008. This was definitely the most memorable hunt for me as I was able to take a buck of a lifetime and recover both of his sheds from 2008 and one from 2007. 🍀