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Eben's First Elk - 150 Yard Muzzle Loader with PeepRib™ Sights

Story by Eben Brown

When my son Hector invited me out to Colorado for the muzzle loader Elk season, I was quick to say "Yes!" I had never been Elk hunting before and neither had Hector. We didn't even know HOW to hunt for Elk but Hector has a friend (Sam) who used to be a hunting guide and we asked him what we should do. He said to look for a well used water hole, then set up and wait for the Elk to come in near the end of the day... And that's pretty much what we did. Muzzle loader hunting and the rules for Colorado are kind of confusing for non-residents. So, here's my story...

I applied for a Colorado Antlerless Muzzle Loader Elk tag over the internet which for a non-resident is about \$250. I received the tag sometime last Spring. And, we began making plans...



Colorado Muzzle Loading Rules - Its important to remember that in Colorado, you can't use a riflescope, sabots, or pellet style powder when muzzle loader hunting. So, I set up my Encore with one of our [PeepRib™ Sights](#) to get the most precise open sight aiming capability. My load was 90 grains of Pyrodex RS loose powder under a [Thompson Center Maxi-Ball](#) 320 gr solid lead conical bullet with a [VariFlame](#) 209 Primer adaptor using CCI small rifle primers. I used the same [EABCO Muzzleloader Accuracy Loading Method](#) we developed for sabots and sighted my rifle in for 3" high at 50 yards.



Our Hunting Method - Hector (left) and I decided to still hunt our way through the day and scout for a place to stand hunt at dusk. We hiked and glassed with binoculars mostly. We came across three clearings with water holes... but we didn't see any Elk tracks or poop. Once as we were sneaking along a trail, a group of 6 mountain bikers rode up from behind and

passed us! That was interesting... After that we decided to climb higher up the mountain and found a beautiful clearing at around 8,000 feet in altitude. There was a nice clear pond, a beaver dam, and LOTs of Elk tracks and poop... Just what we were looking for!

The clearing was about 200 yards across so we looked for a major trail we might set up on to get a 30-40 yard shot. That put us up on a hillside behind some scrub brush.

After an hour or so, the sun started going down and son-of-a-gun... Two Elk came out of the woods. Not on the close-in trail but way on the other side of the clearing, 200 yards away. One of them spooked but the other began walking and angling closer to us. I waited until it got to about 150 yards away and decided that was good enough to try a shot. From a sitting position, I was resting pretty steady with my elbows on my knees. Sighting through the PeepRib aperture, I put the fiber optic front sight right on the shoulder-spine and squeezed the trigger. When the smoke cleared, the Elk was down... Shot right through the spine at 150 yards!

It was getting dark and we had a two hour hike back to camp, so we filleted out the back straps and quartered the rest to pack out in two trips. We hiked back to camp by moonlight and arrived around 9:00 PM... I was soaked with sweat and nearly exhausted. But I absolutely LOVED every minute of it!



This being my first Elk hunt, I learned a few things that I'll know better next time. First, its important to practice shooting in practical hunting positions and know your equipment. I was a little pressed for time before this hunt and my sight-in and practice got squeezed into a Prairie Dog hunt in South Dakota (above). I had the gun sighted in 3" high at 50 yards but didn't get a chance to confirm where it would be hitting at 100 and 150 yards. So when it came time to shoot my Elk, I used Andy Giambi's trick for aiming at an unknown distance: Aim for the spine and if you miss low, you'll hit vitals. If you miss high, its a clean miss. That method worked but next time, I'm going to know my trajectory better before I get out there.

For my first Elk hunt, I am thrilled to have seen one, shot it, and brought it home. More than that, I did it hunting alongside my son Hector... Who was an excellent host and good natured partner... Packing out on one of our rest stops I asked, "How much do you figure this hind quarter weighs?" He said, "Right around now I'd say 250 Pounds!"... Yes, we were pooped!

Equipment Used - I shoot a stainless Encore 209x50 muzzleloader with 26" barrel, PeepRib rear sight and fiber optic front. I dressed it up this year with a new set of Pro Hunter thumbhole stocks and sling... A very nice rig. My Colorado load is the 320 Grain 50 caliber TC Maxi-Ball conical lead bullet over 90 grains of Pyrodex

right through the spine at 100 yards:

We did our best to accurately pace off the distance as we hiked over to see our Elk. As we got close, I said "Gee, I thought they were bigger than that." Sure enough, I had shot a young one. But the son of a gun was still bigger than the biggest deer I've ever shot. Way too heavy to drag.

maxi-Dan conceal load bullet over 50 grams of 1700px RS loose powder, ignited by a CCI Small Rifle Primer in a VariFlame adaptor. Consistent accuracy is attained using the Accuracy Loading Method described in our EABCO [Free Tech Reports](#). If you get a chance to go Elk hunting, I encourage you to do it!



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