

Hunting For A Cure!



Saturdays Harvest: Austin McCann, J.B. Capps, Kyrus Clark and Cory Blackwelder

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Many of you may remember a story I did last year about a Turkey Hunt held at Indian Creek Outfitters in Savannah, Tennessee to raise money for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. As the time for the 2nd Annual fund raiser got closer, I began receiving phone calls from two of the guys in charge of putting on the hunt, Dr. Cliff Higgins and "Super" Dave Norval both were making sure we would be able to attend. As we talked, I learned that there would be 40 youths hunting; 20 on Saturday and 20 on Sunday. Also there would be a lot more people helping this year than there were last year. They were expecting a lot of kids so TWRA arranged to set up their youth archery range and pellet gun range at the lodge. I could tell they were going to top last years event with no problem. I drove up Friday night and stayed with my friends Jason, aka Worm, Stacy, Terry, John, Scottie, and Adam of Team Marlow. Worm filled me in on the rest of the volunteers that had came in to guide and film the juvenile hunters. Woodhaven Calls Sting Team, Tomafage, Backcountry Adventures, Livin' The Good Life, and the list kept on going. The hunts were all to be filmed and some of them will be shown on the Outdoor Channel, The Men's Channel as well as turkey hunting videos produced by Woodhaven Custom Calls. Event sponsors included Bass Pro Shops, Knight & Hale, RealTree, Avery, MothWing, Buck Gardner, DoAll Traps, and Primos just to name a few.



This was the set up; a guide draws a child's name and then the team is assigned a farm in which they will hunt. On Saturday, I would be hunting with Chris and Nick who would be guided by John and filmed by Worm, of Team Marlow. The night didn't last long we were up at 4:00 a.m. to meet our hunters. Nick would be hunting and his brother Chris just watching. It was a cold 38 degrees when we set up, and we had four birds hammerin' hard on our left, right and out in front. We stayed put and tried to call'em in but were unsuccessful. We didn't try to stalk'em; so not to bump 'em because we would be hunting the same area that afternoon and the next morning. Nick hadn't been feeling well so we went back to the lodge, after giving it a hard try with no success.

Driving up at the lodge, we could see one hunter had returned with a great turkey. It wasn't long before there were two, then three. By lunchtime, there were five birds that had been harvested. The neat thing was that they were all long beards and for all of the youths that harvested them, it was their first bird.

Larry Rae MC'd the event for Indian Creek and began the main event. After Thanks was given, and lunch was served, we were entertained by 3 performers. This gave people a chance to look at the items that would be auctioned off. And before I knew it I heard the auctioneer rolling and I do mean rolling he was saying sold before



Austin and Dr. McCann

I could figure out the price he was calling. Then he moved on through the items from prints to handmade turkey calls to hunts; even a registered lab puppy and six weeks of training. Indian Creek

Outfitters had worked hard on this years event and it showed when they announced the over \$30,000.00 was raised, it was awesome! EVERY PENNY raised went directly to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. After the auction, each kid received a bag that was full of different calls, hats, a lazy leg, and much more.

It was time to head out for the second part of the hunt. This time we set up on a field where we knew they would have to come though. We sat there for about three or four hours and waited. We heard one bird but it was too far off to know where it came from. Once it was completely dark we walked back to the camp; empty handed. As we talked to the kids, they didn't seemed bothered by the fact that they had not harvested nor had seen a bird; they had fun sitting out there and listening to God's creations. Adam cooked dinner after we got back from the afternoon hunt. We all sat around talking about the day and what all had been going on. Around 9:15 we went inside the camper and watched a little video footage from the mornings hunts, before going to bed.

We got up at two different times Scottie, Adam, Stacy, and Terry all got up around 3:00. Worm, John, and I didn't get up until around 4:00. We would be hunting the same farm. We listened for the birds to hammer on the roost so we could go after them. Just like the morning before, we heard the same birds gobble from the same areas. We went to the one that was hottest, which was back where we had set up the afternoon before. We got down there and we could tell that he was across the property line but we would try and call him across. John started calling to see if we could get him to at least fly down on our side of the tree line. Not long after he started calling, three hens pitched out into the field. Every time they would make any sound John would make the same, which seemed to really get to the birds. As two ran, one flew across the field to the area where we were sitting. After messing with them for a few more minutes, we quit calling for two reasons. One was so the hen didn't get scared and put off and the second was because we heard the gobbler

pitch into the other field. We didn't hear many birds gobblin' but we figured we would walk the property and see what we could locate. As we walked down a road, calling every fifty to a hundred yards, we didn't hear one bird. When we started back to the truck, we must have done something to spook this bird. All of a sudden, he flushed like a quail and flew not ten feet over our heads. It scared all of us especially the ones closest to where he got up.

Next thing we knew, it was time to head back out. Since I would be driving home that night I decided to go with Jerry Vickery because he was hunting Haggard Farm, closer to the lodge. It was the last afternoon and we were hoping to get out there early enough so we didn't have to scare birds out of the field. As we started walking down the hill to the creek where we would have to cross, the dad that was with us spotted a hen in the woods to our left. We looked and decided she may have a long beard with her. We crept back up the hill to hide behind the fallen shack aka "The Haggard Hilton." I belly crawled into the field to put out decoys. As I looked in the direction of where we had seen the bird, I saw a tail fan of a gobbler. I knew those two birds weren't alone. There were 4 birds in all. We called for a while but they did not answer. We decided to make a move on them; we jumped in the creek and headed after them. When we got there, there were no birds, but



Team Marlow and J.B. Capps

knew they weren't far. As Jerry went across the creek to put the decoys out every one else set up. Not long after, two long beards flew down into the field. As they began walking the tree line, we knew there was no

hope because they both did a half strut once and never paid any more mind to the decoys. We then went up on the ridge to try our luck there but, again, the birds wouldn't answer our calls.

There were six birds taken in all that weekend. The successful hunters were; Austin McCann, J.B. Capps, Kyrus Clark, Cory Blackwelder, Tony Pollard and Zander Santi.

After a great weekend that was much appreciated, I decided it was time to head home and get ready for another week of school.

I look forward to the 3rd Annual "Hunting for a Cure" Turkey Hunt in 2007!