BIG BUCK CONTEST

First buck is a special one

By **NICK WAGNER**
Sentinel sports reporter
nwagner@lewistownsentinel.com

McALISTERVILLE – Sometimes in sports, one man's loss is someone else's gain.

For 15-year-old Toby Auker, of McAlisterville, that's exactly what append on the first morning of the 2011 Pennsylvania rifled buck season.

Auker set out to claim his first deer. Along with his father, Joel, the two made their way to Tuscarora Mountain. About 25 minutes after daylight, shots were fired. But the shots did not come from Auker's .243 Winchester.

"Me and my dad were sitting on a log and we've been sitting only 25 minutes and we heard two shots so we turned to the direction of the shots," he said.

The young hunter then saw a deer running toward the pair of hunters. Auker said the deer moved behind a tree before he could get a shot. Finally, Auker let his .243 fly and the deer was down.

Auker knew what he shot at was a buck. But he was not ready for what was in store when he made his way to the deer that only moved about 15 feet after the shot.

"When I saw it running – it was obvious – it wasn't hard to tell it was a buck," Auker said. "That was the first indication. When we got up to it and saw how big it was, it was incredible."

Auker's very first deer was good enough to win the youth division (junior license holders and mentored youth hunters) of The Sentinel's Big Buck contest.

Toby Auker, 15, of McAlisterville, shot his first deer at 7:20 a.m. on opening day on Tuscarora Mountain using a .243 Winchester rifle. The eight-point buck has an outside spread of 19 7/8 inches. He was hunting with his father, Joel Auker. He plans to have a rack mount done.

The buck was an 8-point with a 19 7/8-inch spread. Around the bases the score measured 5 3/4 inches and 5 1/2 inches, respectively. Auker plans on getting a rack mount from his first deer.

With his first deer being such a nice buck, Auker said he will now try his hand at archery hunting as well as muzzleloader hunting.

"Its incredible," he said. "It kind of takes a load of your chest if you want to get a nice buck and now that I got it I'll start trying archery and muzzleloader. At this point, I'm fine with what I have."

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