



MAKING MEMORIES

Imperial Whitetail Clover Helps a Family

Take a Second First Buck. ■ by *Kyle Cafferty*

In 2019, my oldest child, Kenzie Cafferty, was featured in *Whitetail News* Vol. 31-1. At age 9, she had harvested her first whitetail: an 8-point buck.

Four years later, my youngest son, Cooper “Coop-Dog” Cafferty, 10, is on the board, and not for lack of trying.

In 2021, Coop had an amazing encounter with a buck of a lifetime. Unfortunately, it was at last light, and he couldn’t locate the buck in his scope. He asked me if I could shoot it for him, but I told him that’s not how hunting works. He was disappointed. I was in shock at the size of the buck. It was probably one of the biggest bucks I have seen on the hoof, and it was on our farm.

Fast-forward two years later, to Sept. 30, 2023, the youth weekend at Virginia’s Eastern Shore. We were at our family’s 100-acre farm, *Krazy Acres*, sitting in a ground blind we call the *Apollo stand*, as it resembles the *Apollo spacecraft*. We had seen a small doe at first light, and then things got quiet, except for squirrels scouring for nuts.

Cooper dozed off because of the early-morning wakeup and our late arrival at the farm the previous night. I took the helm of the *Apollo* for a minute before I also started to doze off. I took another look with the binos and noticed a few deer in the distance. As I studied the deer through the trees, I saw there was a small buck, some does and a nice buck behind them.

I whispered to Coop, “We have a nice buck in front of us.” He said, “Stop teasing me, Dad.” I told him I wasn’t. As he got up to look, I realized we had deer to our left and in front of us. We closed the front window so we didn’t get caught

moving in the blind.

Cooper grabbed his Savage .243 and pointed it out the window. At that point, there were three does within 10 yards to the left of the blind. As Coop tried to locate the buck in his scope, he bumped the gun on the blind, alerting all the deer. A few seconds later, they spooked off, except for the larger buck. I told Cooper the buck wouldn’t stick around long. Coop held his composure and took the shot. I couldn’t see what transpired from my position in the blind, so I figured it would be best to wait an hour.

I asked Cooper how he felt about the shot. “Dad, my mind is telling me that I missed, but my heart is telling me I got him.”

We got out of the blind and looked for blood but couldn’t find any. Coop showed me where the deer had been standing, and I started to think that he might have missed and hit a tree. Coop was also starting to believe that he might have missed. I decided to look near a ditch, and that’s when I noticed the downed buck. A second later, Coop yelled, “Dad, I think I might be on the trail.” He said there was no blood, only kicked-up leaves. He headed toward me, and that’s when he noticed the deer. Coop took off running toward the buck and yelled, “Dad, it’s a hoss.” His excitement is the reason why I still do this. The buck was a very nice 9-pointer. Being a competitive child, Cooper said to his sister, “Mine is bigger than the one you got.”

■ Cooper Cafferty took this tall 9-pointer at his family’s 100-acre property on Virginia’s Eastern Shore.



Two of my three children have now taken nice bucks at *Krazy Acres*. My focus will now be trying to get my middle child, *Colt*, on the board.

We have been using *Whitetail Institute* products in our 5-acre food plot since 2018. Our food plot is near the road, so we planted hundreds of eastern red cedars and loblolly pines for coverage in 2017. Planting *Conceal* gives us the additional coverage needed so passing cars do not scare the deer. It also gives the food plot some height definition between the tree line and crops. We also plant *Tall Tines Tubers* and *Oats Plus* before fall to keep deer coming in during winter. *Imperial Whitetail Clover* is a year-round food source that we refresh every year by frost seeding in January and February. This food plot has produced amazing results and is the go-to place on the farm for late-season hunts.

