

Bowhunters Don't Aim Too Close to That Front Shoulder

By Scott Bestul



I hear a lot of deer hunting stories from fellow bowhunters. Inevitably, a small but notable percentage of them start like this: “I thought I hit him perfectly, right behind the shoulder....” Yet it turns out that the hunter couldn’t have hit the deer perfectly because he either failed to recover the animal or only found it after an arduous tracking job.

I think bowhunters need to redefine the “perfect” shot, which has likely been influenced by the 3-D targets we use for practice. Most full-body deer targets sport a neat little 10-ring immediately behind the “animal’s” front elbow, over an area that would result in a heart-shot deer. Naturally, putting an arrow in a real buck here will kill him within seconds and probably within sight.

But there is something critically wrong with this shot: Namely, it leaves too little room for error. And while wearing extra clothes, and eyes tearing from the cold, and knees wobbling under the influence of buck fever, error is all too common in the field. If you do not make this shot perfectly, the likelihood of disaster becomes roughly a coin toss. That is, if you miss too far back, you’ll probably be okay. But if your forward, your broadhead will find the shoulder, the brisket, or leg—none of which is at all good.

The solution is simple. Forget the 10-ring on a 3-D target. Erase that perfect shot from your head and replace it with one three or four inches farther back—that is, roughly on the center of the lungs, which are about the size of a basketball. If your arrow flies perfectly, your deer is dead. If the shot is a little off, there’s a lot of lung surrounding your new 10-ring. Get anywhere close to it with a sharp broadhead and you will find your deer.

(Courtesy of www.fieldandstream.com)