

## Preparation

### *Dominant eye test first step in choosing bow*

By Dick Ellis



*With the archery season approaching, the writer learned that establishing eye-dominance is essential to hunters in the market for a new bow. In addition to choosing from many great models of bows, safety is another important factor in selecting accessories. The hunter shown is shooting a Mathews Monster while hunting from a Lone Wolf Treestand while utilizing the Hunter's Safety System harness and vest*

Some time in the mid-1990s, Gary Gardocki, owner of Warrior Archery in Milwaukee, handed me a new bow and told me to give him "X" amount of money. That was the extent of my "shopping." There was no bargaining. If my friend liked the Martin Firecat,

*"Shooting with the dominant eye reduces problems ...  
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It lets you shoot comfortably and with ease..."*

I knew it would be beyond good for me. I also knew that the price would be rock-bottom

In addition to spending many hours at Warrior Archery in those old days listening to Gardocki hunting stories, including adventures of Gary's father and famed archer Fred Bear, he spent time at our cabin in northern Wisconsin chasing whitetails. I remember Gary's grin in the cabin at the height of the rut when a few drops of his doe-in-heat somehow fell out of the bottle and on to the rear-end of the fawn beneath his tree. Before his passing after an illness in 2002 at age 43, Gary Gardocki brought a good shot of life wherever he went.

Through all of the seasons that have come and gone, the hundreds of trees climbed, the Firecat has come with me. Part of that is a writer's budget and the fact that rugged camera equipment and essentials like a laptop computer are more important to the tasks at hand than a new scattergun or waders that don't leak. Part of that is because I can still hear Gary's booming laughter in my head and see his face.

When I do find myself with high quality field equipment, it's because people like Gar-

docki insisted. Usually, it's my wife, Lori taking care of me. The Lone Wolf I carry on my back with the Hunter's Safety System vest and harness were Christmas present after she learned from hunting partners that the climber I hunted from for two decades carried a "50-50 absolute-guarantee-of-probable-season-survival-maybe" from the now-defunct manufacturer.

In 2009, I will be shooting a Mathews



*Karl Herman of Madison and the Professional Bowhunters Society shoots his bow during a three day July shoot on the Ojibwa Bowhunters property in Waukesha County*



During the Professional Bowhunters Society three-day gathering at the Ojibwa Bowhunters property in Waukesha County, Tom Sonntag of Madison walks and shoots the range of three-D targets.

Reezen. With the help of friends and archery experts Danny Flood and Scott Heitman, I approach the September hunting season with a few other changes too. Flood is a shooting addict, technical student of the game and owns several high quality bows. He is living proof that practice makes almost perfect. Heitman sets up customer bows at Buck Rub Archery in Waukesha and is an avid bowhunter on family owned land in Adams County. This column is not a recommendation of what to buy specific to a bow or accessories. You know what you like. There are many great bow manufacturers and numerous archery shops throughout Wisconsin with the professionals to help your own purchase. It is important though, that you consider eye-dominance prior to even stepping in a shop.

We quickly determined through the "Dolman" method that I am left-eye dominant and ordered a left-handed bow. For your own home test, take a CD disc, hold it up and view a distant object through the center-hole with both eyes open. Alternate closing each eye. One eye, your

dominant eye, will remain fixed on the object. The object will jump from view when the non-dominant eye is tested. Approximately two-thirds of us are right-eye dominant. A "small portion of the populace" according to internet sites, does not have a dominant eye. The rest are left eye dominant.

"Shooting with the dominant eye reduces problems," Flood said. "It gives you the ability to shoot with two eyes open which gives you depth perception. It lets you shoot comfortably and with ease. The dominant eye will always command the line of sight when both eyes are open. With one eye open, you have a poorer field of vision and cannot follow the flight of the arrow."

Switching from right handed shooting to left was uncomfortable and felt uncoordinated for only a short time. The transition overall was smooth and the benefits reaped from the change will last a lifetime. After dropping a few arrows to the floor off the rest in uncoordinated fashion, my proficiency with left handed shooting at the Buck Rub range in 30 minutes using a Flood bow

prior to making my own decision was a pleasant surprise. As stated on one internet site, establishing eye dominance "may be especially important in sports which require aim, such as archery, darts or the shooting sports."

Because it is initially uncomfortable, the shooter may want to lower pounds pulled temporarily until they gain confidence in the draw. Normally with 60 pound limbs maxed out to 62, for example, I could decrease the poundage to 50 and if that pull weight continues into the hunting season, said Flood, so be it.

"With the Reezen you're drawing one of the fastest, most efficient single cam bows on the market," Flood said. "At 55 pounds or less, it's more than enough to make a quick, humane kill."

Heitman prepared the bow at Buck Rub Archery to my preference. Although more high tech and expensive arrow rests and sites may be on the horizon when my evolution (improvement) as a shooter warrants change, I purchased those accessories based on ease of use. The Reezen now holds a well-tuned Drop-A-Way Trophy Taker rest which reduces any contact between the arrow, its fletching and the rest. I also chose a slider, single-pin site which utilizes one pin but "slides" to change with the precise (or estimated) distance of the animal or target.

The single pin was chosen over a multi-pin site to eliminate any chance for aiming off the wrong pin which, for this archer, could happen with the clutter of a multi-pin site. The hunting environment can already invite mistakes if the shooter does not know his limitations or pushes those limitations. Toss in the intangibles including emotions in need of corralling during a close encounter with a good buck. Because a good hit and recovery is

my highest priority, I won't shoot outside of 25 yards anyway and the single pin is more than adequate.

Heitman also fastened a 3/16th peep site which offers enough of an opening and light to hunt low-light conditions confidently. The site allows the shooter to center the site ring in the peep site and establishes a third anchor point in addition to, in my case, a thumb on the jawline and string on the nose.

Finally, we attached a D-Loop to the string as the anchor for the trigger instead of electing to go with a brass nock set and shooting directly off the string. The D-Loop allows the archer to fine tune his adjustment when anchoring on the jawbone and drawing directly behind the arrow. All of this preparation boils down to placing the arrow exactly where the archer intends it to hit.

"It's called 'ethics'," Flood said. "Recovering the deer is the first priority in our hunting camp. Who wants to spend the next two days of your hunt looking for the deer?" *OWO*



Tom Hort of Erin, Wisconsin hones his shooting skills at the Professional Bowhunters Society gathering at Ojibwa Bowhunters club in July.