



# SPORTSMEN'S VOICE



**YATES PREVEDEL**  
**\$5 EXPO TAG**

SPRING 2018

# Expo Desert Sheep

Yates Prevedel • Desert Bighorn Sheep • Utah

**Now I've never been the "lucky dog" to win much of anything in my life, but in 2017 that all changed, and I'm telling you—I hit it big!**

It was a Friday in February and I planned on rolling out to the Western Hunting Conservation Expo, in Salt Lake City, Utah. At the time, work was kind of holding me back, but I managed to break free and join in on all the fun. My Brother, Dustin, and a Friend of mine, Brandon, came over to my place. I asked Dusty if he could help me with my last minute five dollar applications, while I scrambled to get ready, so we could finally head out.

I submitted about 45 bucks in hunts, which is not a ton, but hey, we gotta have our name in the hat.

About a week later I was at home having dinner with my family, when I got a call from Brandon. He said, "hey man, do you like sheep hunting?" I remember replying, "well, yeah" and wondered why he would call me and randomly ask such a thing. He said

"well, lace up them boots, because you just drew the Desert Bighorn tag at the expo." I remember saying, "Quit messing with me man" as he assured me with, "I kid you not." At that point I got a little hot in the face, ticked off, and sensitive, thinking that is not something to joke with. I hung up the phone and logged onto the website. I scrolled down about as fast as the thumb could scroll, until BOOM, there was my name with Desert Bighorn tied to it. Holy cow, I drew the only resident desert sheep tag at the expo. Heck, I still can't wrap my mind around it.

Getting blindsided with a sheep tag is the best thing that can happen to a guy, but it didn't take long to realize the obvious—I didn't know a darn thing about sheep. Being a guy from upper Northern Utah, I never came across them or had an opportunity to be on a hunt for them—most guys don't. I mean, I thought I knew what a big ram was, but did I really? And would I be able to judge them in the field and find the right ram? Not having the funding for a guide and having zero sheep hunting experience, I found myself super excited in one hand and stressed out at times



in the other. All I knew was that I had my skills, good legs, good boots, great optics, and a sheep tag in my pocket—that's all that mattered.

With the lack of knowledge in sheep country, I started to do my homework. Listening to podcasts and following hardcore "sheep heads" like, Randy Johnson and Bronson Outfitting, really helped out a ton. I was able to have a visual and be introduced to what kind of country I'd be hunting in. I was also able to see the quality of sheep that the country had to offer and a ton of mature ram pictures for reference out in the field. I also had a great guy reach out to me by the name of John Sorenson. He hunted the unit a couple years prior and took an awesome ram. It is nice to know there are fellow sheep hunters out there, willing to help a guy out. He gave me some good leads that helped a ton.

The day before the opener, me and Brandon were loaded up and headed south. With excitement on my mind; I guess I rode the gas pedal a little heavy, and the next thing I knew, a patrol officer had us pulled over. He asked for my information and what we were doing down in the area. I handed him my info and told him we were on a sheep hunt. His eyes widened and his face lit up with a smile. Next thing you know we were on the side of the

highway talking about chasing rams for the next fifteen minutes. He let us off with a warning and said, "Go on boys, you got some sheep hunting to do." I still keep that sheep tag in my glove box to this day.

That first trip down we covered a lot of ground and familiarized ourselves with the area. We saw some nice sheep and got our ears wet. The country chewed us up and spit us out and we could not wait to get back.

It wasn't until late October when we were finally able to make it back to sheep country. On this trip, I was accompanied by my brothers, Dustin and Cody, my dad, Scott, and my uncle Wayne. The next few days, we hunted our tails off in different areas in search of a worthy ram. I recall one day, Wayne radioed us saying; "he had a good ram spotted." So we hightailed it over to the country he was in. We got to the base of the mountain and looked up at a rocky, steep, cliff face. About half way up, I radioed Wayne and asked if this was in fact the way he made it up to the top? I was starting to feel like, one slip and this sheep hunt could be all over, and not the way I wanted it to be. We got to a point where a boulder the size of a pickup truck, had fallen and was wedged between two larger rocks. Underneath, there was a gap that



looked like maybe a raccoon could fit through. Wayne assured me that this was where he climbed through. At this point I didn't want to go forward, and looking down, I didn't want to go back. Dustin and Cody decided they would live to see another day and backed out. I don't blame them. I had to strip off my pack, rifle, and binos, then hand them one at a time through the rat hole. Only then, I was able to squeeze by and we didn't have to grease me up. Unfortunately, we were unable to catch up with that ram. He disappeared in the cliffs and put the slip on us.

Sunday came, it was the last day of the trip. We covered more country and saw quite a few sheep, but nothing worth shooting. We packed up camp and headed home. About an hour into our travels, I was informed that my work week was going to be slow. So as soon as we arrived home, I jumped in the truck with my dad and my uncle, and we were headed back to the sheep zone.

That evening we got back into the area we'd been hunting, but on the opposite side of the mountain, where I had yet to look. It was just about primetime when we spotted a large group of sheep and a couple good rams that stood out. I was able to get the Phoneskope set up on the spotter and get a good look. The ram that caught my eye was clearly an older ram. He stood out from the rest of the bunch. He was super flared, battered looking, and

broken off a few inches on one horn. As cool as he was, my first thought was to hold out. The more I glared at the old warrior, I fell in love with his look and what truly stood before me. I told myself he's the one, and I opted to shoot. I had my muzzleloader on one shoulder and my rifle on the other. I got down on my muzzy to squeeze a shot off, and that's when "sheep fever" set it. The first shot rang out and I gave his belly a haircut. All the sheep were on the move and headed into the steep rocks. I quickly went to my rifle and was able to make a good shot on him. I even managed to follow up with another miss in the heat of the moment. I could see he was hit good as he made his way down some grey cliffs, where he hunkered down.

Not only had I killed a Desert Bighorn, but I did it with my Dad and my Uncle by my side. Walking up on that sheep and finally getting to put my hand around those curls that were aged at 10.5 years old, was an experience I'll never forget. Sheep hunting has changed my life and my future hunting goals. The "sheep bug" that you hear guys talk about is all too real. I'd like to thank everyone who came out to help and make this hunt possible, especially my fiancé, Michele, and my daughter, Kapree. I'm thankful they allowed me to be away at times to chase my hunting dreams. One down and three to go.