

Clifford Richter
Number Two in the World
183 5/8 B.C.
Columbia Blacktail Typical
Clark County, Washington 1953

The year was 1954. For the United States military, and Clifford Richter in particular, the conflict in Korea was winding down. What Richter didn't know, however, was that things were just starting to get interesting.

October, and Richter, then living in the small town of Washougal, Washington, was home on leave from the U.S. Army. Together with his brother-in-law, the serviceman and avid hunter decided to spend a morning hunting blacktail deer along the Little Washougal River not far from his home.

"We'd split up that morning," said Richter, "and I was going up this hill. It was about 10 o'clock in the morning – pretty late in the morning – and I was going up there real easy. I was just slipping along there, and I almost got to the top of the hill, and I saw this buck standing there, feeding. He never knew what hit him," said Richter. According to the hunter, it was a 180-grain Nosler style bullet from a favorite Winchester .30-06 that was used on that particular morning.

As with many big game harvests, the work for Richter began after the shot.

"I had a heck of a time (because) he was so big and heavy. I tied a rope around him and got him over the top of the hill and down the other side. It wasn't too bad going down. I got him down to the Little Washougal River – that was right at the bottom of the hill – dumped him in the river with a rope tied to him, and floated him right out," said Richter.

Once the huge buck arrived at Richter's home, the rack was removed and, as the hunter states, "hung up on the barn." Richter moved quite a bit following the hunt, due to his military status, and during that time, the rack was stored in his brother's attic. After Richter's discharge from the service in 1968, the rack was retrieved and once again hung "on a shed."

The time is now February, 2000. Richter's son and a friend have convinced the hunter to bring his rack to the O'Loughlin Trade Shows' Pacific Northwest show in Portland, Oregon, to have it scored. Glenn Abbott, an official measurer with the Boone & Crockett Club (9 years), the Pope & Young Club (12 years), and a resident of Sandy, Oregon, scored the new potential record.



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"I knew (when he laid the rack on the table) that it was very, very close to a new world record. I've measured two 180-class blacktails already, and I knew that it compared to them. My initial guess on Richter's rack was that it would score a 185," said Abbott. According to the measurer, Richter's blacktail scored 183-5/8 inches, bettering the current world record blacktail ranking of 182-2/8 inches held by Lester Miller. Surprisingly, Miller's blacktail, harvested in Lewis County, Washington, was also taken in 1953, and less than 75 miles as the crow flies to the north of the Little Washougal River, Clark County, Washington where Richter killed his buck.

According to Abbott, the Boone & Crockett (B & C) Club will have to verify that Richter's buck is indeed a Columbia blacktail. Once verified, a panel of B & C judges will give the buck an official and final score. Abbott's measurements, he says, operate only to get the buck "called back" in front of the B & C panel judges as one of the year's Top Five animals. Entries for 2000 must be submitted before the end of December, with a panel meeting, according to Abbott, held in April or May of 2001. A final scoring will be presented to those attending the club's annual convention in the summer of 2001.

And what does Richter think of all this?

"It was just another big buck to me. That's all I knew. I knew it was a nice rack, and that's why I kept it all those years. We didn't even stay while he (Abbott) measured it. We just dropped it off, and when we came back, he said that we had a probable here. I'm still in shock," said Richter. ■