

# Katikati Advertiser



Your Community Voice

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**TOP GUNS:**  
Pictured with their winning hunting spoils are from left, Troy McLean, Thomas Darling, Nathan Darling, Mike Darling and Polaris New Zealand manager Anton Giacon.



## Long drive bags a red stag

By BETTY JEEVES

They may not have had the heaviest weights in each class but based on the average weights four Katikati men won the Polaris Big Four Hunting Competition run from June 25-29.

There were four categories in the competition sponsored by Polaris and Pacific Toyota.

Contestants had to bag a red stag, boar, pheasant and trout anywhere in New Zealand. Each animal was gutted before weigh-in, which was set for 3pm on the Saturday at the Top Shot Bar, Te Puna.

Competing as the Sore Shoulders Team, it was the first time the men had shot together as a team. Mike Darling and his nephews, Nathan and Thomas Darling,

along with Troy McLean came up trumps and all completed their mission on the Wednesday.

Mike drove through the night in a Pacific Toyota Hilux SR5 to Blenheim, arriving at 9am. That afternoon, using a .308 calibre Steyr Scout rifle, he shot a 104kg, 14-pointer red stag.

Keeping it in good condition for the Saturday weigh-in was relatively easy for the hunter as he had shot it in snow and after gutting the animal packed snow into the cavity.

This caused a lot of interest on the ferry when travelling back to the North Island, a trip home which took a while longer than the trip down.

"On our way back I was so tired I missed the turn off at Bulls because my navigator

'Shogum' was sound asleep and we ended up in Wanganui — that added another 100km to the trip," Mike laughs.

A 49.2kg Captain Cook boar was stuck by Troy on the Thames Coast.

"It was just on dark. I was three hours from home with a pack of four dogs and no torches," he says.

The dogs stopped the pig about 100m off the track at the top of a hill. Troy estimates it was about three to four years old.

Thomas, 17 was charged with bagging a pheasant which he says was about three years old.

"I shot it on an orchard in Woodlands Rd, Katikati," he says.

The bird was not only judged on the weight of 1.3kg, but also on spur length — 26mm and tail feather bars which

numbered 32. The teen, who is well known for his shooting skills, used a Zoli Kronis 12 gauge shotgun.

Lake Tarawera was the setting for Nathan to catch his rainbow trout. He caught the 2.53kg hen while harling using a toby lure.

"I only fished for about a day and a half," he says.

To keep their trophies in good condition for weigh in, the trout was kept on ice while the pheasant and boar were hung in a chiller.

The quartet won a Polaris Ranger 500 ATV valued at \$17,000, dog food valued at about \$360 and \$200 worth of processing from Base Camp.

They plan to sell the ATV and split the proceeds.

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