Jordy Kudrna goes hunting with NASCAR driver Ward Burton

By JoDee Brooke

Thirteen-year-old Jordy Kudrna has been fighting cancer for a couple of years now. Despite the downs Jordy experiences, he still loves to go hunting and he's been able to do quite a bit of it in the last couple of years.

While all of Jordy's hunting trips are memorable, the memories of his most recent trip will no doubt stay with him for a long time.

"It was great," Jordy said as we talked. Jordy on his cell phone as he was returning from a full day of tests in La Crosse. Despite the long day, Jordy said he's feeling good as he talked about his hunting adventures.

"I've gone on an elk, a bear and two deer hunts. I liked all of them."

Jordy and another young man who has the same type of cancer Jordy has, A.J. Benson, 16, spent three days hunting with NASCAR driver Ward Burton.

Burton is the founder of the Ward Burton Wildlife Foundation. The organization was founded to promote awareness of conservation and stewardship of the country's natural resources.

The joint venture between USSA (United Special Sportsmen Alliance) and Burton's wildlife foundation was to provide Jordy and A.J. with an adventure they would not soon forget.

The boys were able to go with Burton on a hunt on Burton's foundation's land in Virginia while spending a couple of nights in a cabin in the woods.

Burton's teenage son went along on the trip.

The first night was very cold with temperatures dipping below freezing. The first morning out hunting didn't last too long because it was so cold.

Even though the boys didn't have much luck at hunting, they had a wonderful time.

Brigid O'Donoghue, founder of USSA, said Jordy and A.J. hit if off right away.

"The fact that these two boys had the same type of cancer, and that both had been through some of the same treatments and all that goes along with them, created this bond that was so neat," said O'Donoghue.

"We were riding in the car and listening to them talk about everything, asking each other questions only they would understand. A great friendship was made on that trip," explained O'Donoghue.

Burton was able to bag a buck, a doe and a turkey and made sure the boys didn't go home empty-handed.

Jordy came back to his Northfield home while A.J. headed to back to his home in Michigan.

"It was just awesome," Jordy said. "All of the people that go along are really great."

USSA is an organization that provides hunting and fishing trips to individuals who are terminally ill or disabled, and with the help of other caring organizations involved in hunting, fishing and wildlife preservation, these adventures become possible.

Often the equipment is donated by sporting goods suppliers. The hunt is many times provided by preserve owners.

Everyone who becomes involved in any one of the adventures that have been granted goes home with memories he or she will never forget. In fact, those who are able to be a part of one of these adventures are reminded often of the unique experience and the special friends he or she met.

A hunting trip none of these guys will ever forget left all these guys smiling. Pictured (from left) are Jeb Burton, his father and NASCAR driver Ward Burton, Jordan Kudrna and A.J. Benson. Jordan of Northfield, and A.J., Taylor, MI, are fighting the battle of their lives these days as each has been diagnosed with cancer. Still they smile with each other having shared a hunting trip many only dream about.