

Foltz 'Pitches' Wildcat 'Shutout'

BY BOB ELLIS
Enquirer Correspondent

The Union, Ky., wildcat is no more.

This 25-pound predator of Boone County wildlife was shot Thanksgiving Day on the farm of Bruce Ferguson by Ronald Foltz, 22, son of Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Foltz, US 42, a mile south of Union.

Ronald, should some of the enthusiasts recognize the name, is the same Ronald Foltz who has been pitching for the Cincinnati Reds farm teams. Last year he pitched for Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He will report to the Reds spring training camp in February.

The Ferguson farm is just across the road from the Foltz farm.

Mr. Ferguson said it is the same animal he saw recently lying on the roof of his sheep shed.

Atlas Lynn, conservation officer said the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife, after viewing the carcass, said it was a wildcat. Mr. Lynn did not identify the species.

This reporter thought at first it was simply a "wild" cat, commonly known as

fells domestica. But this cat was lean, long, muscular and very heavy. It would have been more than a match for a pair of beagles.

Checking pictures in the Encyclopedia Britannica, we came to the conclusion that it looked more like the English wildcat than any other.

But Ronald, who has his younger brother, Billy, 16, to verify his tale, said that when the cat charged at him, mouth open, spitting, snarling, eyes blazing, it was the "wildest wildcat" he had ever seen. "And I was scared," he said.

Ronald explained that he and his brother were rabbit hunting when the dogs got up the wildcat. The chase was in a wide circle, but the boys said they could see the animal.

They didn't know what it was until it came at them, they said.

When it came closer to them, the boy explained, it had the opportunity of running up a tree, but instead, it came at Ronald after it had been wounded by a shot from a 410-gauge shotgun. A second shot stopped it cold.



—Bob Sharp Photo

Union's Wildcat Displayed

... hunter Ron Foltz pitches for Reds' farm team