

▶ Van Gent

SEASON 2017 – WHAT WILL IT BRING?

In this article I will tell you what I have done until now and what I am planning until the first marathon race St Vincent, the start of the marathon season.

What is behind us...

I mated the breeders one month later than I always have done. The reason is just practical. The youngsters from the breeders go into their youngster section. But in this section are the hens of the racers during the winter. So with postponing the mating of the breeders I can also mate the racers one month later. Because I race them on the Natural system, I hope that the racers will keep their feathers also a bit longer. In 2016 I was not able to basket them all for the last races due to this.

Before the mating of the breeders I handled all pigeons, did some checks on their condition and gave them a drop against parasites.

So I mated the breeders in the last week of January 2017. This was the first time for me. Normally it was during the Christmas period that I mated them and it was a bit uncomfortable for me during that period.

Ten couples of breeders were mated and it went smoothly. Only one egg not filled and one pair of eggs being destroyed by the cock. They got the standard cure against trichomoniasis when they were breeding on their first eggs.

At the end of February, beginning of March I started with releasing the racers again. They were locked in the loft the whole period of the wintertime. So from the end of October until end of February. The conditions must be OK and I must have the time to let them out. Working 40 hours a week and pigeons during the wintertime is not a good combo. So lights on, feeding and lights out again.

During the second week of March I was on vacation with my wife and after that week I just opened the door between the hens and the cocks and opened the nest boxes. After two days I did some inventory and after again two days I did inventory number two. Of the 18 nestboxes, 14 were filled and in four was a cock but no hen. So I mated these last four and I moved the hens that were left back to the young bird loft.

During this process I tried to release the birds as much as possible, so that they could enjoy the mated life in freedom.

The racers also got the standard cure against trichomoniasis when almost all of them were on their first eggs. When I was

able to see if the eggs were filled, I moved them around so that I had at least one egg that was able to hatch for all of the race couples. So every couple was able to raise a youngster. I think this is good for the racers to get a feeling with the loft and know that they need to go home to the nest where they have had a youngster. Once they were breeding, I moved the single hens to the racing loft. So when a hen does not come home they can take their place.

After the clock moved at the end of March I started training the racers every day. And after two weeks I started with a toss on 12 kilometers, after that 25 kilometers twice.

club with the races on the second long distance race of Vierzon 600 kilometers. This only for the yearling racers. The two year olds and older birds will be on the one night transport only. This in view of the Natural system.

The yearlings will get two or three long distance races including the National race from Chateauroux. I believe in the learning effect of a National release of about 40,000-60,000 pigeons and that they need to find the way themselves.

The old birds will be on about 10 day old eggs when basketing for St Vincent and 17 day old eggs for basketing for the second



Then they went three times to Roosendaal, 115 kilometers. Previous week they got Asse/Zelik 185 kilometers and the following week they will get Roye 345 kilometers.

What is in store for the racers...

So after this week they will have about 935 kilometers done. The aim is to get them to 1,500 kilometers before the big races start. These are all training tosses. Organized by our province North-Holland alone or with the province of South-Holland. So no races with the club. I will step into the schedule of the

race Bordeaux. After the first two races I will make the planning for the rest of the season.

What can go wrong...

First of all of course the weather. Previous weekend we had 30 degrees, south eastern winds and clear skies, but on the edge of bad weather. That was not a good combo for the pigeons. Fortunately I was still with the training tosses, so I was able to avoid this weekend. The opposite is just rainy, cold weather. I can still happen of course, although June is approaching.

Secondly a very bad race. So lots of pigeons lost or that come home and need a lot of time to recuperate. This is always disappointing, but you must give them this time and toss them a few times on a small distance of 25-40 miles to test them and give them confidence again. And try to find the cause of failure. Maybe an illness, lack of motivation or even lack of quality. Check also the results and findings of your fellow fanciers on the same race. Maybe you can come to a conclusion together.

Thirdly there are always surprises during a season. A pigeon fancier must adjust to these and be creative. But try to put the pigeons first in these decisions and not

championships or goals set during the winter.

Tips and tricks...

Keep a diary. Write down what you do, what happened and you can also keep track on positions, the order of returning and other trivial stuff. And the fun part is that you can look back in time and check what you did a year back, or four years back.

When you choose for a system, believe in it and do change this every month. So when you planned to race Natural, do that and do not switch. When you planned to feed them a mix of grain, stick to it. Or when you have decided to do something on a certain date,

do it. Stick to your plans. Enjoy the fun moments, because normally speaking there are not that many. And when you write about it, you can relive these later!

When you are good with Excel and Word, make a plan in Excel for the pigeons. I have a list of the pigeons and the races that are available. I mark them when they are basketed and I also make a note of the order of returning. Doing this I can look back, make a calculation of the number of kilometers or miles flown and I can look back what the history of the pigeon is.

Have fun this season and I hope you will get some great results.

Van Gent

NORTH LIVERPOOL FEDERATION

The final inland race should have been flown from Portland on Saturday 28th May, but after a one-day holdover the birds were taken to Kingsdown and liberated at 08.35hrs into a north west wind with the North West Combine.

Bootle HS 10/121, 1st & 3rd on 1383.3 & 1362 Warren, Son & Garrity with a Willy Jacobs having its fifth 1st prize, right out of the stock loft, the sire '47' from Arnold & Johnson, this bird having won 12x1sts plus Fed and Combine for them, then a blue yearling Van den Bulck cock. Second on 1383.08 E. Naylor & Son with a Widowhood hen. Fourth on 1362 J J Corbett with a mealy Widowhood cock that's scored before. Warren, Son & Garrity won the Land Average, with Foat & Smith runners-up. Thanks Maria & John. **Litherland HS** 1st & 2nd Lloyd, Moran & Healey with a chequer hen which won as a young bird, also 4th North Liverpool Fed, bred by Tommy & Karen Hibbs from the Pirrie, a De Meyer x 'Whitetail' (thanks Tommy & Karen, from Fred & Ashley) and a chequer hen through Kev's stock having its first card (Fred & Ashley would like to say a massive thank you to everyone who has helped them out). Third Joe Perry & Son with a grizzle hen, a grand-daughter of 'Income Support' and 'Mr Reliable'. Fourth Alan Halsall with a home bred bird out of the stock loft. Thanks Ashley.

Princess Park HS 1st on 1396 and 4th T Dobbs (no details but all the members would like to congratulate T Dobbs on another Fed winner). Second Miller & Sons with a blue yearling Widowhood cock bred by very good friends D & C Smith of Edge Hill, the sire a blue Edwin Hoogerland, a direct son of 'Olympic Laureen', the dam a blue Vandabeele, winner of 3x1sts including 1st Club, 2nd North Liverpool Fed when only two birds made it on the day. Third Team Heague with a yearling blue Widowhood cock, a gift from Frank Bristow. Thanks Thomas.

Liverpool Central 12/195, 1st & 4th John Farley with a 2yo homebred Widowhood Sapin cock from Bob Fenech x De Klak through the late Ricky Woods and a 2yo Widowhood cock off the 'Welsh Scouser', Colin Rudd, which has scored before. Second & 3rd Tony Hawkins with 3yo Widowhood cocks, the first one through Albert Tarleton Coopermans, which has already won this year plus other cards, next a homebred Van Lint through Dean Pallatt. The members would

like to say a big well done to John Farley on topping the Fed from Frome on 13th May. Thanks Dan.

Vauxhall FC 1st McDowell & Son with the 2yo hen which was first in the clock the previous week, a full sister to Middle Distance UK and 1st Western Region Bird Award in 2014, the dam a direct daughter of Jan Huybregts Legend Pair and an Oak Villa cock, dam off a son of J & P Weeder's 'Junior' when paired to the 'Mossman Hen'. Second Williamson, Murphy & Barlow with a Mandelartz from John Gerard, same way bred as a Fed/Amal winner and also won £1,000 in the Taylors Arms breeder/buyer, out of 'Box 4'. Third & 4th Kelly Bros, Duffy Bros & Devin with two of their own stuff. Thanks Tommy. **Riverside FC** 4/64, 1st, 2nd & 4th Muirhead, Son & Roberts on 1388 & 1375 (2) with a pied hen having 5x1sts to her name, also 16th and 20th North Liverpool Fed this year, the next bird was bred by Paddy Cousins, and the bird in 4th has been 3rd this year. Third on 1339 A & J J Medway with the home bred Busschaert which was 4th Club the previous week. (Well done from all the members, JJ, on passing your driving test.) Thanks EO. **Netherton FC** 1st & 2nd Lee Morris, the winning birds sire was bred by Ian Smith and the dam was bred by John Gosling, and the runner-up was bred by John & Lee Maguire. Third Brian Halsall with the good hen '17', 'Mrs Consistent'. Fourth John Nixon (no details).

Some results for **Edgehill HS**. From Frome, 1st & 3rd Steve Moffitt with Widowhood hens, a Van Loon and a Koopman. Second & 4th Bobby Lane, the first one bred by Dennis Gerrard. From Portalnd (1) 1st & 2nd Colin & Alan Baker with a 5yo Borgman De Klak Widowhood cock which has won from Bedhampton, Messac and Niort, then a 3yo Widowhood hen, a full sister to the winner, which has previously scored 2nd and 3rd Portland and won Falaise. Third & 4th Bobby Lane with a multi-performing grizzle Widowhood cock and a Vandabeele Widowhood cock which took 1st & 2nd Monmouth. From Kingsdown, 1st Bobby Lane with his good 3yo Widowhood grizzle cock which has won a hatful of cards and even more pools. Second Steve Moffitt with another multi-card winner, a 2yo Van Loon on Widowhood that has had 2x1sts, 6th North Liverpool Fed, 24th North West Combine (the latter result from Portland in 2016). Third &

4th Colin & Alan Baker with a 2yo Widowhood cock bred by Terry & Tony Kirman which won twice as a young bird and the 3yo De Klak hen which was 2nd Club Portland (1) and has a nice collection of prizes to her credit. Darren says, "Well, Keith, all I can say is goodbye and good riddance to this Portland racepoint, if only for 12 months. The losses that have occurred in the last fortnight and the number of pigeons returning with their entire back wings torn out tells its own story. Maybe it's time for picking the best coastal racepoint with the pigeons' welfare in mind, as opposed to which organisation stands to benefit the most in the final result. Controversial maybe, but what is incontrovertible is the massacre of our pigeons that occurs when we race from Portland". Thanks Darren.

Kirkdale Workingmens HS 10/146, 1st, 2nd & 4th Vinny Maguire on 1380, 1375 & 1374 with a 2yo Widowhood hen broken out from John & Lee Maguire, a 3yo Widowhood hen, winner of 4x1sts including 1st Club, 2nd North Liverpool Fed behind Roy Reid, bred by Brian & Simon Maguire, and the yearling Widowhood hen that won the first race from Ludlow. Third on 1353 Kevin Birkett with a home bred yearling Hugo Claesens cock out of Roy Reid's stock. Thanks to daughter Clare for timing in (from Kevin). Thanks Vin.

North West Combine result for Portland on 20th May (496/10,493) liberated at 14.15hrs in a south west wind - 1st & 20th Mills, Rice, Abbott & Duffy, Ormskirk West Amal, on 1658 & 1613.697; 2nd & 9th Crowe & Worrall, Widnes Fed, 1653 & 1631; 3rd D Woods, Ormskirk West Amal, 1647; 4th & 12th C Harding, Widnes Fed, 1645 & 1620.9; 5th, 6th & 7th S & B Golding, Liverpool Amal, 1641, 1637 * 1635; 8th A Davies & Sons, West Cheshire Fed, 1632; 10th J Bowman, North Liverpool Fed, 1625; 11th Mr & Mrs Harless & Mr & Mrs Howard, North Liverpool Fed, 1623; 13th M Bentham, Ormskirk West Amal, 1620.6; 14th & 15th J. Perry & Son, North Liverpool Fed, 1618.5 and 1618.3; 16th Foulton, Meacock & Lee, North Liverpool Fed, 1616; 17th M & R McDonald, North Liverpool Fed, 1615; 18th B Walsh, Liverpool Amal, 1614; 19th P Coombes, West Cheshire Fed, 1613.697. Well done to you all (KW).

That's all for this week.

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Keith Warham