

▶ Van Gent

MY RACING SEASON 2012

At the end 2009 I replaced my old loft with a new one. My dad had the breeders and my parents were planning to move to an apartment, so I designed a new loft with room for some breeders as well.

In August 2009 my old loft was removed by a young beginning fancier and two weeks later my new loft was there. The new loft is 60cm deeper and 30cm longer. From left to right I have one compartment for breeders, then hall combined with Widowhood hens, then two lofts of Widowhood cocks with a hall at the front and at the end the youngsters. The breeders and youngsters have an open front and the loft in the whole depth of the loft. The initial layout was that the hall had an open ceiling.

In 2010 & 2011 I lost in both years 14 yearlings on two middle distance races. So 50% losses on two races two years in a row. Then I thought it had to change. I had three colleague fanciers over and they all said the same. There was too much air in the loft and a draft. From left to right and from the front downwards into the loft. So I closed the ceiling in the hallway with Plexiglas, I closed the windows and closed a strip of 10cm at the outside under my roof tiles.

Above the ceiling, the departments were already separated from each other, so the walls in the loft were totally to the roof tiles.

Then the birds became more alive and I still did not smell any pigeons in the loft, but there was a nicer atmosphere.

Conclusion of this is that one gets blind from your own environment and a fresh look is always good to have.

The youngsters in these years came home fine and I did not have large percentages of losses. But when they were moved to the old

bird departments it went wrong.

So early 2012 I removed all birds from 2009 and 2010 that were still there. They did not perform and I really did not have any hopes with these, or their parents had already left the breeding loft or brothers and sisters did not perform also.

In 2012 I only raced with yearlings. Still a bit afraid of the outcome I raced them on the natural system instead of total Widowhood. This to get a better connection with the loft. Normally I let them raise one youngster and then put them on the Widowhood system, but for my feelings I raced them on the Natural system. And I am a very happy man again. The first race that mattered was a long distance race from Chateaudun, 560km and North eastern headwind force four. So 1100 meters per minute and against the real specialists on this distance I had a very good result. Two early birds and five in the result list of the club. And only two losses of 20. Then two weeks after Orleans with Northwestern winds and again 1100mpm and again a good performance. Then I decided to put the yearlings one time more to the test with tailwind. That race went ok as well.

Again, I am pleased with the results. In view of the fact racing Natural instead of Widowhood, against specialized competition, the birds coming home in a good shape and well recuperating and with a desire to come home. Especially the tailwind race the birds were very high and dived home like rocks. Happy to be home and with spirit.

In 2011 & 2012 I raced the youngsters on three races with the Club to a distance of approx. 180km. In the years 2009 & 2010 I did not. I just did them with a private lorry 75km. I learned that that was not enough to get them prepared for their yearling year.

In 2013 I will race the 2011 & 2012 birds with the total Widowhood system. And the 2011's will make their debut on the extreme long distance races. They will get two races each and the 2012 selection will do a minimum of two long distance races and if possible an extreme long distance race.

Why Widowhood? First of all this system is better for me. I can basket the birds when I want to and I do not have to pay any attention to the hens for laying eggs, or the best period in the Natural system. Secondly when there is forme, it stays longer and thirdly you can enter the birds one time more on the extreme distances, in view of recuperating. Of course the Natural system brings more peak forme, but a Widowhood hen or cock can also perform very good.

The selection of the breeding loft was simple. The results of the youngsters from 2010 till 2012 were the basis of this selection. In September 2012 I purchased four late breeds out of Limburg Brothers from Zuidveen pigeons. Two grandchildren of the 1st National St Vincent 2012 (Rode Vanoppen) and two grandchildren of the Rode Marathon, one of the base birds of this very successful Combine. In these four is also the Spirit very dominant in the pedigrees.

At This Moment

All breeding boxes are closed. The hens and cocks are all separated. The Cocks in the breeding and racing departments and the hens in the young bird loft. The moult is proceeding. They all get two times a week a bath, lots of fine seeds and moulting mix.

Why This

It is hard to have two bad racing seasons. But when you have the feeling that it can go better, try to invite a few colleague fanciers to your loft and be open to them. Explain your thoughts and let them be open to you as well. Maybe they give their view to your problem. And open your eyes.

Let them also take a look at the pigeons and let them judge them. Let them give their thoughts about these as well.

When you get a question for a visit or you feel that someone needs it, do it. When you feel it is not up to you, why not. Every opinion counts. And after all, it is always nice to get a peek at someone else his loft and birds. This is always good for connections and a nice way to get through the winter season.

Tip

When you never tried this: pair your breeders and flyers when there is a full moon. A good friend of mine tried this with one loft with full moon and one not. He tried this two years in a row. After the season he found out that he lost 70% more youngsters from the loft mated NOT with full moon than the youngsters from the loft mated with full moon. The theory behind it is: there is more light and better weather with a full moon. The 10 days for the eggs and 18 days breeding hatching is with Full moon, then you separate them from the parents after 28 days with a full moon. Try it and maybe it works for you too.

