

IRISH NATIONAL FLYING CLUB YOUNG BIRD NATIONAL PENZANCE

The Irish National Flying Club Young Bird National was held on Wednesday 4th September with the birds liberated in Penzance at 8.45am in fresh south easterly wind. The race was sponsored by Frazers Animal Feeds and Veterinary Services for Birds. 466 members from across Ireland entered 2,652 birds and were racing for total pools and prizemoney of £19,620.

The south easterly wind was certainly a great help to the birds and we had possibly the best returns ever from this race with many fanciers reporting full returns. First reports of pigeons timed were in Dungarvan where pigeons were timed at 11.45am and this set the target for the day. It was to be early afternoon before there were any pigeons in the north but the northern birds were to take the top 35 positions in the Open result with Hector Cordner from Annaghmore turning out to be the clear winner, timing at 2.07pm.

1st North Section, 1st Open H Cordner Annaghmore, Vel 1648, Flying 301 miles, winning £913 and the J.M.K McGugan Perpetual Cup, and the Harkers Trophy for best average Yearling National and Young Bird National Penzance.

The clear winner of the Young Bird National this year is Hector Cordner, Annaghmore. Hector started to race pigeons when he was 9 years old but was out of them for 18 years, only starting back in 1998, but this year alone has seen Hector gain some considerable results. In the Yearling National he was 17th North section, 27th Open, in a race where he had five birds in the result winning £929. Then from Penzance with the NIPA he was 10th Open and 5th Open in the Classic race, but this win here is definitely the icing on the cake. Hector is also the winner of the Harkers Trophy for best average Sennen Cove Yearling National and Penzance YB National.

The winning pigeon now named "Wee Muriel" after his wife, is a Blue hen that had been sitting on eggs but Hector removed them four days before basketing and she was sent chasing again. As Hector lives some four and a half miles away from the loft he finds it difficult to get the timings right for the darkness system and as such this hen had dropped four nest flights before going to the race. The young birds had 12 tosses before their first race and after that they were flown morning and evening at home for 45 minutes to an hour. Her last race was Fermoy ten days before the National. Hector would be seen as a relatively small team man and started the season with 58 young birds. He clocked 3 in this race out of an entry of 6 birds.

The sire is Busschaert x Janssen that he bred himself and one from the same pair was 3rd Open Roscarberry last year with NIPA. The dam is from Robert Telford and is from Henry McLaughlin's Harthog x Lefebre-Dhaenens lines. Feeding is Frazers Supreme and Beattie's BasePlus through Robert Telford.

2nd North Section, 2nd Open Mr & Mrs C Hayes Ballyclare, Vel 1547, Flying 320 miles, winning £873 and the De-Scheemaecker Trophy for best two bird average.

Second Open in the Young Bird National goes to the Ballyclare partnership of Mr & Mrs Colin Hayes. Colin and Pat have had another great year racing but will be particularly pleased with this result as they target the National races. Their second bird in the race was 56th Open to give them the best two bird average in the race and the De Scheemaecker Trophy. Colin originally raced with his late father but when his father passed away his wife Pat joined the partnership. They only race a small team of young birds and they try to send them all to the Nationals. They are former winners of the NIPA Young Bird Talbenny to give an indication of the quality of fanciers they are.

This young bird was raced on the darkness and had every young bird race this year. It's a Blue cock paired with this race in mind and was sent sitting on eggs. Breeding is Nevin Bros crossed with Battenburg. This cross has been successful for the Hayes before. Training is twice weekly with the local transporter and feeding is Natural Young Bird mix.

3rd North section, 3rd Open D & H Stuart Ballymoney, Vel 1476, Flying 346 miles, winning £ 522

We move to Ballymoney to the lofts of D & H Stuart for our 3rd Open pigeon. This partnership is Darwin Stuart and his father Hugh. Their previous best performance in this race was in 2005 when they were 22nd Open from Wadebridge. This year they had an entry of 3 birds and had 2 of these on the day. They have picked up some very good positions throughout the year.

The bird at 3rd Open is a cheq w/f hen that was sent sitting on eggs 4 days. The sire is a Frank Sheader Soontjens that has bred a lot of winners including good section positions from Talbenny. The dam is Van Wildemeersch and is a daughter of club mate Stephen Laverty's 1st Open Tabenny in 2011 with the NIPA. Another direct daughter of this hen was 1st Club for Stephen in the first Young Bird race this year. Prior to the National this young hen had four races from Mullingar, Tullamore, Clonmel and Fermoy. Following the first race the young birds are flown at home in the evenings and then for the last 3 weeks before the National they were flown mornings and evenings. Feeding is Versele Laga GerryPlus.

4th North Section, 4th Open A Thompson Ballyclare, Vel 1473, Flying 321 miles, winning £808 and the Robin Duddy Trophy for best average Sennen Cove Yearling National and Penzance YB National (3 bird Nomination)

We go back to the Ballyclare club for the 4th Open bird to the lofts of Arnold Thompson. Arnold has featured regularly in the National results over the years and this year has been no exception. Arnold had an exceptional race here with six birds in the result out of nine he had in the clock, to take 4th, 114th, 119th, 122nd, 150th and 198th Open. This must have felt like an inland race to him. The pigeon timed is a grizzle cock sent driving. He had all races down Ireland prior to the National. The breeding on the sire side is from Preece Bros, Aberdillery in Gwent and is Lefebre-Dhaenens from the 'Gwasted' lines. The dam is a full sister of the pigeon that was 6th Open in the Yearling National for Arnold and a half brother of the dam was 5th Open in the Young Bird National. Breeding on the dam's side is Peter Van Eijdens x Bobby Smyth's Kenyons. Feeding is again Versele Laga. Arnold's loft is not located at his own house but alongside C & L Woodsides so its not just as straightforward to look after them and involves some very long days due to work commitments. His efforts were well rewarded as this result helps him to win the Robin Duddy Trophy for best average Yearling National and YB Channel National (3 bird nom) and a further £300

5th North Section 5th Open W McFettridge Rasharkin, Vel 1455.97, Flying 336 miles, winning £172

5th Open goes to the Rasharkin lofts of William McFettridge who had a great race here with his entry of two birds taking 5th and 18th Open. It's a great feeling on National race to close up your loft with all your birds home in such a short time. William was a close runner up behind Mr & Mrs C Hayes for the De Scheemaecker Trophy for the best two bird average. It's not often that two birds in the top twenty don't win this trophy.

The bird timed is a blue cock that was sent flying to the perch and had all races down Ireland. The sire is a great grandson of 'Laurel Queen', Henry Beattie's King's Cup winner in 1994, while the dam is a Van

Den Plas from Belgium, which were brought in as they are super middle to long distance pigeons. William's second pigeon is pure Van Den Plas. Training is with a local transporter which is usually three times a week to the Moy. When I was talking to William he was nursing a broken arm so I wish him a speedy recovery from that.

6th North section, 6th Open Collins and Douglas Blackwatertown West End, Vel 1455.86, Flying 300 miles, winning £127

We go to the Blackwatertown WE club for the 6th Open pigeon to the lofts of Collins and Douglas. This was a new name to me but when I was told who the partnership actually was it is one full of experience, and is made up of Sid Collins a life Vice President of the Irish National Flying Club and Jenifer Douglas, wife of former King's Cup winner Geoffrey Douglas. Sid hadn't raced young birds last year and wasn't going to race any this year either. He offered Geoffrey a half a dozen young birds to race for him and Geoffrey suggested that he join in partnership with Jenifer who was racing in Blackwatertown and so the racing partnership was formed.

The pigeon timed is similar breeding to the bird that was 9th Open King's Cup for Sid in 2012. It is from Gilmour & Beattie lines and Billy Irwin lines on one side with the other side being from the Tom Marshall lines. It was sent to this race in the same way as Sid's 7th Open King's Cup bird in 2012, that is sitting on 4 eggs and was slipped a big young bird before going to the race. Jenifer takes responsibility for the training and the birds are trained with Geoffrey nearly every day weather permitting.

7th North section, 7th Open, W & L McCaw, Ballymoney, Vel 1452, Flying 347 miles, winning £102

We go back to the Ballymoney club for our 7th Open pigeon to the lofts of W & L McCaw, former winners of the National Championships and well known distance fanciers. While the partnership name remains as W & L McCaw, this is only Leonard nowadays as William races on his own now. In the previous National race this year, the Friendship National Leonard won a Triple Award for a pigeon three times in the result from that race.

The breeding of the pigeon timed here is Van Braune, which were brought in from Albert Bennett of Church Stretton about 25 years ago, with just an odd introduction to them over the years. Leonard had two birds in the prizes with the second bird taking 144th Open and it's hard to believe that these birds were having their first race of the season. They had quite a few 15 mile tosses to Ballymena and then were sent as trainers with the Northern Ireland Middle Route club twice to Mullingar and were in Kildare a fortnight before the race. The blue w/f cock was sent to the National chasing his hen and was timed at 3.45pm Leonard mixes his own feeding and this is adjusted to suit the different stages of the year.

8th North section, 8th Open Reid Bros and McCloy Cullybackey, Vel 1445, flying 332 miles, winning £102

We go to the Cullybackey club for 8th Open to the lofts of Reid Bros and McCloy who have been having a great season with many fine positions. This partnership is now just Harry McCloy as the Reid Bros are now both deceased but Harry decided to retain the name. Following on from his 12th Open in this race last year Harry was looking forward to the race this year but his preparations were hampered as he had been in hospital for the last month and so the birds were just given an 'open hole', but they did get all the races. Harry had a great race here with 9 out of 12 on the day and ended up with 10 altogether.

The pigeon timed is a half De Meyer and half Reid Bros, Rock who are great flyers out of France. A half sister of this bird is the bird that was 12th Open in this race last year, and her nest mate was 49th Open Talbenny. This chequer hen was sent to the race flying to the perch. Feeding is all from Frazers. Harry would like to thank Sammy Steele for looking after the birds when he was in hospital in Alan Darragh who took the birds to the marking centre and then the clock to the clock station. I would like to wish Harry a speedy recovery following his recent hospitalization.

9th North Section, 9th Open Ron Williamson Bondhill, Vel 1430, Flying 301 miles, winning £77

9th Open goes to this year's King's Cup winner Ronnie Williamson of the Bondhill club. Ron has a tremendous record over the years at both Irish National Flying Club and NIPA level and has been a winner of the NIPA Open 57 times and of the Irish National Flying Club 5 times. Once again had a very impressive card here with three other birds in the result at 96th, 112th and 136th Open. He had 16 out of 20 on the day and his 10th bird was timed at 4.08pm.

The pigeon timed is a blue cheq hen and she was sent sitting on a 10-day-old young bird. The sire is a full brother of the pigeon that was 10th Open Yearling National in 2008 winning over £5,000. The nest mate of the sire bred this year's King's Cup winner. Their sire is the old cock from Maurice Wilkinson. The dam is off a nest mate of 'Lady Helen', Ron's Friendship National winner when there were only two birds timed. This was this young hen's third race with her two previous races being from Tullamore and Fermoy, both in heads winds. Apart from that she was trained 3 or 4 times a week on Ron's own transporter from Balbriggan.

10th North Section, 10th Open S Dando & J Bennett Beach Park, Vel 1429, Flying 301 miles, winning £77

We move to the Beach Park club for our 10th Open bird to the lofts of S Dando & J Bennett. This partnership is John Bennett and his granddaughter Shannon Dando. John had pigeons from when he was 8 years old and in 1986 he was 3rd Open in the King's Cup from Jersey. However, the following year he went out of pigeons due to work commitments but came back again in 2007 when Shannon joined him as a partner. This has been a very successful year for them as they were 71st and 121st Open in a very difficult Portland race, and the following week they were 96th and 100th Open in the Kings Cup. They seem to do things in twos as they had another bird in the result here at 132nd Open, and had three home out of their five birds entered.

The bird at 10th Open is a blue cheq hen, raced on darkness and sent sitting 8-10 days on eggs. She had missed a couple of races due to being 'eggy' and her last race prior to the National was from Clonmel. She is bred from a pair of De Weerds from Andy Gregson from Preston. Training is with Joe Brown once or twice a week and feeding is Beattie's Champion Supreme.

Thanks again to our race sponsors Frazers Animal Feeds, and Veterinary Services for Birds. I'd also like to thank Sid Collins and Willie Reynolds for help with photographs.

Brendan McLoughlin

Irish National Flying Club Press Officer