

IRISH NATIONAL FLYING CLUB SKIBBEREEN YOUNG BIRD NATIONAL 2016

The curtain came down on the 2016 racing season when the Irish National Flying Club held their Young Bird Inland National from Skibbereen in Co Cork on Friday 16th September. 310 members sent 2,966 birds to compete for £14,897 in pools and prizemoney. This was well down on last year's entry which saw 385 members send 3,623 birds. As with the Old Bird National the race was divided into 3 sections and I will cover the top 5 in each section in this article.

The birds were liberated at 10am in a light westerly wind and it was widely anticipated that the Open would be won in Wexford and the Wexford men were not to be disappointed with Dobbs Bros taking 1st South section, 1st Open Skibbereen Young Bird National. The Middle section was won by Anthony Mason from the Donnycarney club in Dublin while the North section was won by J Douglas & Son Lurgan Social.

1st Open, 1st South section, Dobbs Bros Wexford North & South, Vel 1653, Flying 130 miles, winning £160 and the Tom Marshall Trophy

The winners of 1st Open and 1st South section are Dobbs Bros from Wexford North & South. When there is a west wind blowing from Skibbereen Wexford is the place to be but competition is still very strong in this picturesque town on the east coast of Ireland. This partnership are previous winners of this race having topped the Open here in 1999. At that time the partnership was made up of brothers, Willie, Mattie and Leo but following Willie's death a few years ago the lads found it hard to get going again. Nowadays it is just Leo but the partnership name remains intact. Leo has been back racing four years now after a break of five years. He still had the pigeons all this time but with work commitments and with his heart not being fully with the pigeons they weren't raced. The winning pigeon here aptly named 'Willie's Girl' is a blue hen that was sent to this race flying to the perch. The sire is direct Louis Van Loon which has bred four different South Leinster Fed winners for Leo, while the dam is direct Pouuw Bros. She is the dam of four club winners and three Fed winners and is the grand dam of their pigeon that was 1st club, 4th Fed in last year's Friendship National. The young hen was lightly raced and had only four races but was 5th club, 12th Open IHUNFC from Barleycove. Leo gives the young birds three 20 mile tosses every week weather permitting. Leo asked me to pass on his thanks to Patrick Quirke, Leonard Bolger and Richie Butler for all their help and to congratulate Patrick on his success in this race.

2nd and 5th South section P Quirke Wexford North & South, Vel 1650.80 and 1610, Flying 130 miles, winning £198

We go now to the lofts of Patrick Quirke of Wexford mentioned above. Patrick had a superb race here with pigeons taking 2nd, 5th and 14th South section. Having been out of pigeons for just over ten years Patrick came back to pigeons in 2014 and has soon established himself as a leading fancier with many great results in the club and with the IHUNFC. This year he was 1st Open IHUNFC from Barleycove having been 2nd Open with the same pigeon in their previous race from the same racepoint. When Patrick timed his first bird here at 12.19 it was always going to be a leading contender for top honours in this race. His first pigeon was a pencil blue hen sent to the National sitting 10 days on eggs. The sire is Karel Boeckx from Tony Kehoe of Wexford, while the dam is a Staf Van Reet from Robbie Smith also Wexford. Patrick said that this hen was only lightly raced before the National and was trained two or three days per week from 15/20 miles.

Patrick's pigeon at 5th South section is a blue cheq hen sent to this race sitting 10 days on eggs. This one is pure Karel Boeckx again from Tony Kehoe. This hen again lightly raced was 5th Open IHUNFC from Barleycove on 24th August.

3rd South section B Cullimore Wexford North & South, Vel 1650.56, Flying 130 miles, winning £40

3rd South section goes to Billy Cullimore of Wexford, a winner of five Irish National Flying Club Nationals from Skibbereen. 2010 was a superb year for Billy when he was 1st and 2nd Open in both the Old Bird and Young Bird Nationals from Skibbereen. He also won back to back Old Bird Nationals in 2006 and 2007. The pigeon timed here is a blue white flight hen sent to the National sitting 12 days on eggs. She is a

daughter of 'The Boss', who was 2nd Open in the 2010 Old Bird National, beaten only by his loft mate 'The Special One'. The dam is the last daughter of the '99' cock; a Staf Van Reet, she has bred nine 1st Fed winners. The '99' cock was the father of the loft, responsible for most of Billy's top prizewinners. This young hen had most races on the land and was a consistent racer taking 3rd club twice as well as a 5th club. The birds are trained hard up to the fourth race and then are flown at home for an hour mornings and evenings.

4th South section N McGuire Wexford North & South, Vel 1641, Flying 128 miles, winning £40

Noel McGuire Wexford is 4th South section to complete the top 5 in the South section. Noel is no stranger to success at National level having been 5th Open Penzance Young Bird National about 10 years ago. Unfortunately due to work and family commitments Noel had to take a short break from racing but has been back racing for three years now. The pigeon timed here is a blue pied cock sent sitting on overdue eggs. He is a Staf Van Reet with the parents coming from Robbie Smith Wexford who won this race a couple of years ago with the same family of pigeons. This young cock got a knock early in the season so only started to race in the second half of the race programme, and this was only his fourth race. He was previously 9th club Kinsale (94 miles). Noel trains three mornings per week to 20 miles and they are then flown at home in the evenings. On days they don't go training they are flown morning and evening at home. Noel said he would be lost without his son Aaron who helps out around the lofts.

1st Middle section A Mason & Son Donnycarney, Vel 1514, Flying 180 miles, winning £278

The winner of the Middle section and a coveted Irish National Flying Club Diploma is Anthony Mason and his son Ross racing with the Donnycarney club in Dublin. Anthony and Ross were Fanciers of the Year in the Irish South Road Fed in 1998 and in 2000 but then went out of pigeons for a couple of years returning seven years ago but Anthony feels that it is only in the past two years that they have been able to get a good team together. The pigeon timed here is a blue cock sent to this race flying to the perch, but with a host of club prizes under his belt, having been 20th, 12th, 11th, and 10th club racing against approximately 500 birds per week. This young cock was bred in the racing loft; his sire is a Luc Van Mechelen from a pair from Young & McManus, Ahoghill bought at the Lisburn Show three years ago. The sire had a second club last year. The dam is from Gerry O'Mara and is a son of 'Rocket Ron' and an Ad Schaerlaeckens pigeon. The dam has a great race record herself having been 2nd, 7th, 1st, and 15th club last year as a young bird, again with approximately 500 birds competing. The birds are let out every morning for a 15 minute fly while the lofts are cleaned out. They are then called in and basketed for a 20 miles training toss with Jim McGovern.

2nd Middle section, L Donnelly & Son Finglas, Vel 1498, Flying 177 miles, winning £168

2nd Middle section are Liam Donnelly and his son Owen from the Finglas club in Dublin. Liam and Owen have a great record at National level having won the Yearling National from Sennen Cove in 2009 and this year they were 4th South section, 6th Open again in the Yearling National. They had a great race here with 5 pigeons in the Middle section result taking 2nd, 10th, 13th, 26th and 27th section. Their first pigeon, a blue cock sent to this race chasing a hen is a Heremans Ceusters x D & L Van Dyck with both bred by John Wheatcroft. Interestingly their second pigeon a Van Landenberg x Hutchinson Soontjens was bred by Safet Duran who was 3rd Middle section in this race. Liam and Owen give the birds lots of work tossing twice a day. In the morning they go with Herbie Thorpe to Rathangan (30 miles) and in the evenings Liam and Mick Gilligan go together to Kilcock in North Kildare (20 miles). This obviously helped for this race as they both had good races with Mick 5th Middle section.

3rd Middle section S Duran Blanchardstown, Vel 1497, Flying 174 miles, winning £171

Safet Duran Blanchardstown is a name that crops up regularly in National reports. He was 3rd, 4th, 13th, 15th, 26th, 27th, 32nd, and 33rd Middle section in the Old Bird Skibbereen in 2014, and 3rd section in 2012, a year when he was also 7th section, 8th Open Yearling National Sennen Cove. This is phenomenal racing from Safet who has only been racing pigeons for nine years. Indeed Safet had another wonderful race here with pigeons at 3rd, 8th, 16th, 20th, 21st, 24th and 28th Middle section. The first two pigeons are bred from Van Loon and Eijerkamp Janssen pigeons. The sire is inbred to one of the best pair of Van Loon pigeons 954-84

x 787-89, while the dam is from Eijerkamp-Janssen's old 'De Famous 05' lines. She is a granddaughter of 'Wonderboy 05'. This line has done particularly well for Safet breeding lots of multiple winners. Pigeons are trained from 30 miles Monday to Thursday. Safet would like to thank his family especially his sister for helping him to look after and race his pigeons. He also wants to thank Paul Foster for helping to keep his loft clean due to his health problems and Liam Donnelly for bringing his pigeons to Lisburn.

4th Middle section A Walton Dublin North County, Vel 1495, Flying 187 miles, winning £50

Anna Walton from the Dublin North County club is 4th Middle section. Anna at 14 years old is one of our younger members and isn't it great to see young girls getting involved in the sport. Anna's sporting interests could have taken a different turn as her father is none other than golfer Philip Walton who played a crucial part in Europe's Ryder Cup win in 1995. Anna's lofts are located at the Ballybougall home of her uncle Derek. Derek and his wife Bernadette are both keen fanciers. Anna just keeps a team of 20 pigeons and the pigeon timed here is a grizzle cock sent to this race flying to the perch. The sire is from Raymond Hermes, the German winner of 15 International races. The dam is a grizzle hen from William Dezutter's Tournier pigeons. The young cock timed here at 4th Middle section had all the inland races with the Irish South Road Fed and was a steady racer. Before racing the pigeons are trained every day weather permitting to either Tallaght or Bray (20miles). Then when racing starts this is reduced to twice a week, Tuesdays and Thursdays to Tallaght. They are also flown at home for ¾ an hour a day.

5th Middle section Mr & Mrs M Gilligan Finglas, Vel 1494, Flying 177 miles, winning £103

5th South section goes to Mick Gilligan and his wife Teresa from the Finglas club in Dublin. Mick has been a stalwart of the Finglas club for many years and was a hard working member of the Irish National Flying Club committee. The pigeon timed here is a blue hen sent to this race flying to the perch. This pigeon was a gift from Danny Dalton & Sons from the Finglas club. Breeding is Soontjens from Jimmy McGann, Belfast and Paul Stobbs, West Durham. This young blue hen flew both sets of programmes with the Irish South Road Federation and she was first to the loft a couple of times just missing out on club prizes. Training is with Herbie Thorpe in the mornings to Rathangan (30 miles) and then in the afternoons Mick and Liam Donnelly head off to Kilcock in Co Kildare for a 20 mile toss. This was a great result for Mick and Teresa who started off the season with only eleven first round young birds that raced the first part of the programme. They completed this race with three other birds in the result at 15th, 22nd and 23rd Middle section.

1st North Section, J Douglas & Son Lurgan Social, Vel 1451, Flying 236 miles, winning £542

The winners of the North section are Martin and Kevin Douglas from the Lurgan Social club, flying as J Douglas & Son. The 'J' in the partnership name is Martin's late father James but Martin like lots of other fanciers wanted to retain the name. Martin and Kevin are extremely well known and respected in pigeon circles. The pigeon timed here is a blue cheq hen sent to this race flying to the perch. The dam is Heremans-Ceusters from Doonan & McGuinness Dromore and was one of four birds gifted to Martin and Kevin in 2013 (Doonan and McGuinness were 5th North section in this race). The sire is a Louis Thijs pigeon bought at a Frank Sheader sale organized by Ronnie Johnston. This young hen had most inland races and was a consistent racer, really hitting peak form at the end of the year. She was 12th Section E, 71st Open NIPA the week before from Rosscarbery, in a race that saw them take 3rd, 7th, 12th, 13th and 23rd Section E, 23rd, 43rd, 71st, 72nd and 145th Open. The pigeon at 3rd section, 23rd Open then is the same way bred as the bird timed to win the North section here. Martin and Kevin had an extremely good young bird season and finished up winning section 'E' Young Bird Fanciers of the Year against some very stiff competition. A few days before the National a non fancier from Lurgan reported a pigeon to me and a phone call to Martin saw the pigeon collected that day so I would like to thank Martin for his help with that.

2nd North section, Gregg Bros & McCandless Titanic, Vel 1424, Flying 252 miles, winning £525

We move to the newly formed Titanic club in Belfast to the lofts of Gregg Bros and McCandless for our 2nd North section pigeon. This partnership is brothers Paul and Stephen Gregg and their late grandfather Robert

McCandless. They had a superb race here with birds at 2nd, 8th, 26th, 48th, 67th, 68th, 105th, 124th, 150th and 182nd North section (2223 birds competing). This again was a loft in form having been 2nd and 3rd Section C and 4th and 5th Open NIPA from Fermoy on 21st August and 1st and 2nd section C from Gowran Park on 27th August. The pigeon timed to take 2nd North section in the National was a blue cock sent sitting 14 days on eggs. His sire is a full brother to Champion Sagan, the National Sprint Champion KBDB for Patrick Boeckx. This cock was purchased along with his nest mate from Patrick the same year that Sagan was the Sprint Champion (they were the first pigeons to leave Patrick's lofts this way bred). The sire of 2nd North section is already sire of many different winners with different hens in UK and Ireland. The dam is direct Stefaan Lambrechts direct from 'Donker Bart' which was one of the top breeders in Stefaan's loft before it escaped, so this breeding can not be repeated. This hen was purchased in 2013 and has turned into a goldmine at stock with different cocks. Paul and Stephen would like to thank their good friend Stuart Fawcett, Darlington for sourcing the parents of the 2nd North section pigeon, also their father for all his support throughout the year and their good friend Jackie Scates for his help and kindness over the years.

3rd North section, I Gibb & Sons Derriaghey, Vel 1418, Flying 246 miles, winning £630

Ian Gibb & Sons Derriaghey just outside Lisburn are 3rd North section here to complete what has been an excellent years racing for them. They have just been announced as the NIPA's section 'D' Overall Fanciers of The Year, in what is regarded as a highly competitive section which takes in the powerful Dromore club among others. Ian and Peter timed a blue cheq hen here that was sent to this race sitting on overdue eggs. The breeding of this one is Stefaan Lambrect and what a racing hen she is. She has had only four races and her results are as follows, 1st club, 19th section (1,207 birds), 34th Open (7740 birds) Fermoy on 2nd September, 4th club, 31st section (489 birds), 95th Open (3499 birds) Rosscarbery on 10th September and now 3rd section (2223 birds) on 16th September. Ian and Peter like to start some birds later so that they peak for the more prestigious races at the end of the season. They were particularly pleased with this result as they had been having some bad luck in training in the week prior to the National and lost seven pigeons in two training tosses that had been in Rosscarbery the previous weekend.

4th North section R Williamson Newry & Dist, Vel 1414, Flying 219 miles, winning £150

Ron Williamson Newry & District is 4th North section. Ron has won almost every major pigeon honour there is to be won racing in Ireland. He won the King's Cup in 2013 and was twice winner of the Friendship National. He was 1st Open NIPA from St Malo this year as well, leaving him with around 60 first prizes in the NIPA. Ron was lucky to have any pigeons in the Skibbereen National as the night before basketing a squirrel had got into the loft and caused mayhem. Many of his race candidates were still flying at basketing time, but the blue cheq hen timed here was one of those that were sitting on eggs at the time and was unaware of the squirrel's visit. The blue hen was a gift bird from Martin and Rosemary Mulholland, Millvale and is from the best of their sprint pigeons. An early reared young bird it was one of the first youngsters in Ron's loft this year. She had all the inland races and was coming steady. The birds are trained every Monday to Thursday from Balbriggan (40 miles). Ron asked me to thank Martin and Rosemary for the gift of the pigeon timed here.

5th North section Doonan & McGuinness Dromore, Vel 1412, Flying 236 miles, winning £275

5th North section goes to the Dromore lofts of Rowan Doonan, his son Wayne and the late John McGuinness. Again these guys are household names, which just goes to show the quality of the pigeons in this race. The pigeon timed here is a dark cheq hen sent flying to the perch. The sire is Ceusters x Marijke Vink and was bred by Syndicate Lofts. He is a full brother to 'Creilman' 1st National NPO (7415 birds). The dam is a direct daughter of 'Di Caprio' from Leo Heremans. The young hen timed here has been in exceptional form and was 9th section D, 29th Open Rosscarbery the week before with the NIPA (3,499 birds), having previously been 38th section, 82nd Open Fermoy (7,740 birds). This was only her fifth race this year as they like to concentrate on the last three races so like to bring their birds to peak form at this stage. Rowan and Wayne started off with only 30 youngsters on the dark as they try to work on quality not quantity. Training is Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday to Dundalk (25 miles) and Wayne asked me to thank his mum and dad for training the pigeons. They are also flown around the house for 40 minutes in the evenings.

The committee of the Irish National Flying Club would like to thank all those who helped at the marking station and all who helped at the clock centres. Thanks to all who helped with photographs for this report and throughout the year.

Brendan McLoughlin
INFC Press Officer