

▶ Van Gent

What do champions do after a great racing year during the winter months?

I often wonder what the real champions do during the winter after a great year of racing with their pigeons. Do they change anything, did they purchase some addi-

30th etc (first three pigeons in five minutes). Dax: 9th, 10th, 97th, 103rd etc (first two came together). Bergerac: 69th, 118 etc. High price percentages and on the National



IJsbrand Kaptein.

tions, what do they prefer to race, how to race etc.

Introduction

So we asked three racers which had a magnificent year in 2017. I will introduce all three of them and then we will go through the questions.

IJsbrand Kaptein from Akersloot. IJs (short for IJsbrand) had a year he will never forget. On the morning releases, the ZLU races het did against the whole of the Netherlands on one of the longest distances: 10th National Marathon, 1st Keizer Grote Fond, 2nd ZLU Fondkampioen, 4th Pyreneeën Cup, 1st Super Prestige, 25th Pau. In the whole of Western Europe: 6th Western European Marathon.

Above the River Rhine is a competition Fondunie 2000 and there IJs also was Keizer kampioen. On the National races mid day release. St Vincent: 23rd, 26th,



Jaap Mazee.

paces only a small team basketed. Try to find Akersloot on google-maps and you will see how remarkable this is.

Jaap Mazee, Ens. Jaap won two big races in two weeks with the same pigeon! First Semi National Limoges and two weeks later National St Vincent. A man with a special system which is simple. Jaap lives



Ben & Ronald van Holland.

in the Noordoostpolder. Land that was conquered from the IJsselmeer in the 1940-50s. Due to his work he needs to plan and choose his battles. And he did. Each year he has his highs.

Ben van Holland, Ede. The man who we introduced at the latter part of last year. He was first on two podiums in one ceremony. He won the 1st championship Midday release with Marathon Noord and the 3rd morning release in the Marathon Noord. Never done before. Ben lives in Ede, just above the River Rhine. He does it all. Midday, morning releases. He won a car, bikes and other stuff with his pigeons. Three champions with one thing in common. Down to earth, but with a system and focussed on winning.

The Q&A...

Can you remember a spectacular arrival in 2017, which and why?

IJs: We had two really spectacular races this year. First was St Vincent. At 14.00.57 we got our first, the second at 14.02.33 and the third we timed at 14.05.00. Three very early ones on the National level; 11 pigeons in the race and nine in the result list. The second top race was Dax. We were waiting very relaxed and then the first at 12.12.38 and second right behind the first; 9th and 10th on the National level. Ten pigeons in the race and six in the result list with all pigeons home the same day.

Jaap: This was of course St Vincent. He basketed the winner of Limoges, two weeks earlier, on youngsters of almost 18 days. He had doubts in the weeks before, but he decided he should do St Vincent as well. Expecting arrivals around 12, he was on the phone with a co-fancier. Then he saw the cock coming from the west. Blue band with white tips. I thought: "It is him again." The emotional part is that he got this cock from a friend who died of cancer, Ernst Verheijen. They bought together

youngsters from Jos Pepping and Ernst was breeding youngsters from these against his own birds. And one of the last youngsters he got was this cock, now called Ernst.

Ben: I must say Marseille. It was already getting dark when I saw my first arrive. I had to turn on the light to get it in the loft and feed it. This was very special. So late in the evening, in one day home from Marseille on my distance.

Did you made any changes to your loft during this winter and if so why?

IJs: No we did not make any changes to the loft. We are very happy with them. Last changes were made a few years back and after that we did not made any changes. We only swapped an aviary, because the old one was too far gone.

Jaap: Before the 2016 season we changed the airflow in the loft after advice from a specialist on this matter. Now I will not change a thing anymore.

Ben: Are you crazy? After such a year you must not change a thing!

Did you do some purchases to strengthen your strain?

IJs: I only swapped a few youngsters with Cees van der Laan from Castricum. I have a very solid strain of Brugemann and Mullers. I added birds from the Betiwe Koppel lines a few years back.

Jaap: I have a new goal; Barcelona. So I bought a half-brother of the 4th Barcelona of this year from Coen van Haarlem, a cock of the Gerrit Veerman strain and a hen from the Frans Bungeneers strain.

Ben: I bought a voucher from a good fancier called Henri Visser. I hope I can get some nice youngsters on that one.

Are you going to do your preparation for the Marathon season the same as last year?

IJs: Yes. We try to train the racers as much as possible. So basketing and

basketing. We try to give them almost 2,000 km preparation.

Jaap: Yes, everything on the Natural system and every week a race.

Ben: Yes the same as last year. Consistency is key!

When are the pigeons being mated?

IJs: The breeders in January and the Marathon racers halfway March.

Jaap: Breeders were mated on the 28th January. The racers are together until February. Then they are separated from each other and in the beginning of March mated again.

Ben: As every year we mate the pigeons in March.

What system do you race the pigeons?

IJs: All Natural. We like to test cocks and hens. Also due to the amount of pigeons it is easier with training.

Jaap: Natural all the way!

Ben: Widowhood with cocks and hens and Natural.

Closing statement

All three have their system and stick to it. Once the loft gets results, they keep it like that. When one of their lofts do not bring the results, they keep changing things to it. All three race Natural, but Ben also has a loft for the widowers. The three of them do not by a lot of pigeons from other lofts, but when they do, they do it with a reason. They keep on searching to try to uplift their own strain. And all three basket their pigeons every week. They keep them active. Distances do not matter, but a pigeon must make at least 1,500 training kilometres to be basketed for the big races.

When this article is published, the racers will already be on their first training tosses. Please also enjoy these! There is no other thing better than seeing pigeons returning to their loft!

Van Gent



SUBSCRIBE TO THE RACING PIGEON

PHONE 01206 242121

with your credit card details or go to the website

www.racingpigeon.co.uk

and you can subscribe to the digital online edition or printed edition