

# Van Gent

## We know a lot more now!

Finally we can start planning our season. It took a while, but we started racing. We were allowed to start on the 23rd May. Our province started with three times Roosendaal, only 117km for me. Then came the weekend that we were waiting for...we were allowed to go into France and Belgium. So we now added 284 and 246km to the flyers training programme.

## What will be the schedule

For the international morning release races we have:

Pau basketing 13th July and liberation at 17th July.  
Agen basketing 20th July and liberation at 24th July.  
Barcelona basketing 26th July and liberation at 31st July.  
Perpignan basketing 3rd August and liberation at 7th August.  
Narbonne basketing 10th August and liberation at 14th August.

For the midday releases and National races:

St Vincent basketing 14th July and liberation at 17th July.  
Bordeaux basketing 21st July and liberation at 24th July.  
Dax basketing 4th August and liberation at 7th August.  
Bergerac basketing 11th August and liberation at 14th August.

So busy days. We also need to take care of the programme of the youngsters and the yearlings need to do their training as well. So we have five weeks of fun. And there are of course some obstacles on the way. But we have to be very happy with what we got in these circumstances.

## What will be the obstacles?

First and the most important. How do we keep the moult as slow as possible? The races will continue for two weeks more than normal and Bergerac (first weekend of August normally or end July) was already a challenge. So we need to try to keep the birds in their feathers.

Secondly the way we race the pigeons. Normally it was possible to race them three times on the midday releases and two times on the morning releases. How are we going to plan this?

Thirdly, time planning. We need to be at the club a lot and we have to divide the work there as well. And we have to do more in view of the Corona rules of engagement.

## Possible Solutions

For the first problem some have applied the darkening system in

the beginning and extended that until late May. They hope that their birds keep their wings complete longer. They combine this with extend lights on the times of the longest day after the 21st June. So they have lights on from 0500 till 2300 until the end of the season. When you race them on the Natural system you can let them have a complete nest. So eggs, one youngster etc. In view of the fact that each cycle takes one feather from the wing, you can estimate that it will take longer for them to drop these. When you will let them breed only on eggs, the feathers will go faster.

Fortunately, there are also strains that are slow with the moult, and that could be an advantage.

In view of planning we have to do more. Divide the racers more or make choices in our programme. I make an Excel spreadsheet each year with the planning. My planning is now until the Barcelona weekend. So I made plans for St Vincent, Agen, Bordeaux and Barcelona. Then all my two year and older birds have been basketed. When I know the severity of the race, the state of the molt and the condition, I can determine which will do another one and which don't. There are fanciers who race all races that have dedicated birds for each race, but my racing squad is too small for that.

In our club we basket all races ourselves. So we need to make a planning for this as well. We like to keep our families happy as well. So we will divide the work during these weeks into shifts. I hope we can make five teams, so each team has to do the work for two races.

We have also simplified our notification system. Here we need to notify the organisers of the race within 10 minutes of arrival that you timed a pigeon. So in each club there was one person who you should call or text. Now we have a system that does this automatically on arrival of the pigeon. The ECS just sends an email to a centralised system and the notification of the arrival is done. Everyone can see the arrivals on a list, so we also know the flow of the race.

## We finally race again Yippie!

That is the bottom line. We race again and we can relax and enjoy the home coming of our birds. In these times of isolation it is nice to have an occupancy at home, and that you can also relax at home with your birds. I had a daily routine maintaining them and training them that kept me in a more daily routine than others. I praise that I have my pigeons. It seems to be that I even like it more to watch them come home from a race or training. More intense.

So enjoy the birds, enjoy racing, and when we are allowed to see fellow fanciers, enjoy each other's company and share the love. Give each other some youngsters and help others for the better.

Again enjoy!

**Arjan van Gent**  
[www.van-gent.com](http://www.van-gent.com)

