

Racing Pigeon Post

The Flanders Cup

A type of competition common in Belgium but unheard of and unthinkable over here is the Flanders Cup. This cup targets the Barcelona International and is about the art of forecasting your team in arrival order to confirm your ability to know your pigeons. Not only forecasting but also clocking the pigeons in the first 25 percent of the entry or in the full result. (The full result is the first 25 percent clocked) is also measured. This confirms the overall quality of the family.

As most people know when you enter a race in Belgium or The Netherlands you have to write down your entries in the order you expect them to arrive at your loft. The first pigeon at the top is number one and so on down the list until the 10th pigeon you enter is the tenth pigeon on your list. Nobody gets it absolutely right but the closer you are and the more pigeons you time the better your chances of winning the Flanders Cup. This year 5034 fanciers entered the International Barcelona, but only three fanciers timed in all of their first selected 10 pigeons. That is 3 out of 5034 fanciers achieved the forecasting target maximum of 10 out of 10. It's a pretty tall order.

The three fanciers who achieved this near impossible forecasting feat were:

First: Christ Musters a fancier from Hoogerheide in the Netherlands.

Second: Toon Janssen of Helenaveen also in the Netherlands

Third: Hagens Brothers of Achthuizen again in the Netherlands - in fact the first five in the list were all from the Netherlands.

As an example Christ Musters sent 10 pigeons, all ten were timed in the first 25%. They are shown below in the order in which they finished with their full International position, from 25,716 entrants, against which is their nomination order and velocity:-

<u>International Position</u>	<u>Nomination</u>	<u>Velocity</u>
893	6	986.77
1335	1	967.16
1813	2	951.15
2297	3	934.98
2597	9	925.71
2734	4	921.38
2826	10	917.65
3430	7	898.34
4461	8	863.96
4570	5	860.40



The Musters with an impressive trophy cabinet



"BARCA" a great Barcelona performer for Toon Janssen and Sire of "LUCA" who was on this occasion 146th International Barcelona.

A fancier who is known to the UK is our very own Patrick Brothers. They were 129th in the list timing in five of their first ten nominated pigeons. Those British fanciers who are inclined to raise their eyebrows at such a position and the number timed should realise that they were 129th out of 5034 fanciers taking part and even though not all of these sent ten pigeons to the race I would say at least half of them did. So its not so bad after all to time five our of the ten nominated pigeons.

If a similar scheme were adopted in for instance the National Flying club they would probably not have even one fancier to time in ten out of ten pigeons in a race of similar distance. The beauty of the Barcelona International is that it affords a big sample so that competitions such as the "Flanders Cup" can take place. The first German loft was Heinz Seegmuller in 6th place timing in 9 of his ten pigeons, missing out with his 3rd pigeon. The first Belgian loft was Ferdy Schuermans who also timed 9 out of 10 missing out with his 9th pigeon. The first French loft was Eric Vitel of

Grungies in Northern France. He timed eight of his selected 10 pigeons missing out with his 9th and 10th selections.

Other notable fanciers were Nouwen Paesen 9th timing 9 out of 10, Gerard Van Tuyl 10th, Chris Van der Velden 43rd, Willy Clerebaut 27th, Frenken Brothers 39th, Mevr Deweerdt and son 45th, Robert Ben of Calais 26th timing 7 from 10, Menne and dtr the winners of the race in 46th, Wijnands and son from Maastricht in 69th, Lothar Lessmeister the German fancier in 63rd and Herman Brinkman the long flying fancier from Tuk in the Netherlands was 59th timing 6 out of 10. The wind was not good for French fanciers but Roger Senicourt of Gravelinnes on the French channel coast was 64th he timed 5 out of his 10 pigeons.

John Clements