

British International Championship Club

Agen International Provisional Race Report

Agen in Southern France, can be found approximately halfway between the two big cities of Bordeaux and Toulouse. Rugby Union is played in all three cities but it is extremely popular in Agen. The local team, SU Agen, is enthusiastically supported and they play in the top division of the French league - the Top 14. That may account for why one of its twin towns is Llanelli, in South Wales, which is equally, if not more enthusiastic, about its rugby.

At 6.00am BST, on Friday 24th July, a massive 30,120 international birds were liberated. Of those, 112 BICC members sent 496 birds to make up the UK entry. This proved to be a tough race with only 52 birds recorded home by 10.22 am on Sunday 26th July. Following the liberation and at the end of the first day, Steve Appleby the BICC weather advisor, had this to say, "The heavy rain that blocked the Channel would have undoubtedly stopped pigeons from reaching the south coast from France this afternoon. The flight path through France yesterday was very good. No extreme heat to contend with and the light WSW winds were favourable. The 3rd bird home flying 600 miles supports this. So, overall it's a mystery. The Poitiers race was much tougher one against a NE wind over France but returns were excellent."

This report is based on member's verifications, the final result may differ.

The Provisional Top Ten Open Positions

1st Kelvin Sharman of Syleham, 2nd Mark Gilbert of Windsor, 3rd A&T Wright of Norwich, 4th Mick Parish of Great Burstea, 5th & 6th Mark Gilbert, 7th Dave Watson & Son of Ashford Common, 8th, 9th & 10th Mark Gilbert.

The Provisional Open Winner

1st North East Section, 1st Open, was Kelvin Sharman of Syleham, on 1208yppm. Kelvin didn't think that he was going to get a bird home on the day and was going to take his young birds to his local club on Friday evening. However, he changed his mind and thought he'd wait a bit longer for his bird. He made the right decision, because at 8.11pm he saw his 3 year old chequer cock arrive home from 584 miles, in a very tough race. Kelvin was delighted with this win, the biggest for him in the 35 years he has kept pigeons. Kelvin doesn't keep a big team and says he is now thinking of keeping more to compete at this level. That is not to say he hasn't had some big wins, having won the Section with the BICC and NFC previously, but this tops the lot. Kelvin said, "This could be a once in a lifetime race and I'm not sure if I'll put him to stock or race him. Everyone I've talked to tells me to put him to stock, but I'm still thinking." Having got over the excitement of the win, Kelvin explained more, "The sire of the pigeon was bred by Bob Besant & Son with Cooper Deweerdt and Euro Diamond breeding. His dam is a great grandchild of Southfield Supreme from Mark Gilbert lofts. He had two inland races then Poitiers and St. Philbert, with the BICC, in preparation for Agen. I race on the widowhood system." Kelvin now plans to race Pau with the NFC and Bordeaux with the BICC in the next week or so. Kelvin also wanted to pass his congratulations onto Alan and Tommy Wright from Norwich, on their 2nd Open position from Agen and their fantastic position from Marseille, with a yearling, flying 670 miles.



Kevin Sharman 1st Open



Agen winner

Provisional North East Section Winners

2nd, 3rd & 4th Section, 3rd, 15th & 27th Open, were A & T Wright of Norwich on 1187,713 & 638ypm. The 2016 1st Open Marseille winners, Allan and Tom Wright had a very good weekend of international racing. At 8.49pm, on Friday 24th July, they timed their 4 year old blue cock, flying 600 miles on the day. They followed that up by clocking a yearling hen on Saturday 25th from Marseille flying 670 miles. What a performance by both birds. They also timed two other pigeons to take 3rd and 4th Section. Allan, the son, in this father and son partnership said, "The blue cock was bred from Jelle Jellema pigeons, we went over to see him in 2011 and bought three youngsters from him. We have been following his consistency from Barcelona ever since. We also timed a chequer cock to take 15th Open, 3rd Section with a cross of Jellema , Freialdenhofen and Buyl Ruffin & Luc. Our 27th Open, 4th Section winner was a chequer hen from Freialdenhofen and Buyl Ruffin & Luc. All our cocks raced on widowhood, the hens are paired." What an impressive performance by the partnership over the weekend.

Provisional North Centre Section Winners

1st Section, 20th Open was John Black of Hitchin, on 681ypm. John clocked a very lucky bird to win the section. He had this to say, "I clocked a two year old blue widowhood cock, having his third race of the season. He was a bit unlucky at the start of the season as he got hawked on a training spin. He returned with a hole in the back of his neck and some feathers missing on his back. Then, in his first race from Falaise with the BICC he got done again! This time, losing some of his secondary feathers, so Catherine said, 'call him Cat as he must have nine lives.' I bought his sire in the NFC auction from Justin Bernard, of Portsmouth from his Tarbes Section winner and his dam was bought from Terry Robinson ,of Cuffley from his, Brian Denny X Motivater lines. Last year he was 7th Section Fougères and 5th Section Sigogne. Well done to all the Section winners and the gallant birds that made it on the day."

2nd Section, 53rd Open were Mr & Mrs Errington of Rusden, on 371ypm. Mel and Julie said this about the race, "The cock bird we timed is five year old and has flown the Channel many times, usually on the widowhood system. However, this year because of the late start all of our birds have been raced natural. His sire was 15th Open, 1st NC Section from Agen in 2016, and his breeding is our own family, which is a mixture of stock birds and performance pigeons from middle and long distance blood lines. We like the long races. Congratulations to the race winner and to John Black for winning the NC Section from this race point again. Our thanks also to Carol and the BICC committee for all their effort and hard work, and especially Clare and Russell Bradford for running the Northampton Marking Station and for taking our birds to Sunbury this year as Irchester was closed due to Covid 19 restrictions."



John Black 1st Section



Mel & Julie Errington 2 Section

Provisional South Centre Section Winners

1st, 2nd & 3rd Section, 2nd, 5th & 6th Open was Mark Gilbert of Windsor on 1196, 1136 & 1119ypm. Mark said this of the three birds he timed, "First was a two-year-old hen, she is a direct daughter of Goldern Barcelona, who was 2nd International Ace from Barcelona, 6th National Barcelona, 8,764 birds, 23rd National, 11,590 birds, and 175th National 10,542 birds. He is the sire of Southfield Hugo, 1st National Barcelona and 1st National Perpignan. The dam is a daughter of Jella Jellema's, Kleine Jade who was, 1st International Barcelona, 22,000 birds. The second bird is a three year old cock, who is the grandson of, Goldern Barcelona and, Kanibaal Barcelona who was 4th International Barcelona. And, the third bird, another cock, is 100% Jella Jellema, being a grandson of Sophie and Silvie, who was 3rd International Barcelona." Mark also took, 8th, 9th and 10th Open.

4th Section, 7th Open, was Dave Watson & Son of Ashford Common, on 1106ypm. Dave timed a six year old blue cock that has an impressive race record: In 2016, Falaise - 129th Open, 71st Section, Alencon - 117th Open, 90th Section, Le Mans - 694th Open, 250th Section. In 2017, he took 33rd Open, 10th Section, St Vincent. In 2018 - Falaise 216th Open, 123rd Section, Alencon - 216th Open, 129th Section and Agen, 15th Open, 8th Section. In 2019, he flew Cholet twice, taking 50th Open, 19th Section and 230th Open, 96th Section. Dave said of this race, "The blue cock is the same blood lines as all my Agen pigeons that go back generations. He has done very well for me in club racing as well, and his favourite food is peanuts that he had a few of before going to France."



Mark Gilbert 1st, 2nd & 3rd Section



Dave Watson 4th Section

Provisional South East Section Winners

1st & 2nd Section, 4th & 17th Open was Mick Parish of Great Burstea, on 1140 & 694ypm. Mick put up an impressive performance taking the first two section positions and he said this of his win, "I am one of the, 'old school', set in my ways a bit, you could say. I start the season off with the intention of trying some of these new racing methods but seem to fall back into my old ways, to make life easier for myself. My birds can't live with these sprint pigeons nowadays but they do sometimes turn up when the going gets tough. My first bird to clock, on the day, was a 2 year old blue hen having her first test at 500 plus miles. She had a couple of coastal tosses and then went with the BICC to the St Philbert National. She was then left alone to create a quiet nesting cycle and was sent sitting eggs. My second bird was another 2 year old, prepared the same way as the first. These birds are bred down from my old tried and tested Palamos and Barcelona birds."

3rd Section, 18th Open was G Townsend of Orpington, on 692ypm. Graham explained his bird was a grizzle hen of Fear Bros blood lines with a little bit of Kirkpatrick, whose dam was 5th Agen Open in 2019. Graham mainly houses Fear Bros bloodlines.



Mick Parish 1st & 2nd Section



Graham Townsend 3rd Section

Provisional South West Section Winners

1st Section, 12th Open, were Ray Strawbridge & J Williams of Newport, on 794yppm. Ray races on the Roundabout system and had this to say of his section winner and the race, "Well Mike, another hard race for us in the South West Section, with rain, south west winds, low cloud and bad visibility for most of Friday and Saturday. No chance of day birds and fingers crossed for Saturday morning. I clocked a blue pied cock, (GB.18.P.218122) who has been a consistent bird, winning 1st Messac as a yearling and 1st Falaise this year in the G.G.D.C. He has now added 1st South West Section 12th Open. His sire was bred by my close friend Gareth Watkins (GB.15.S.62135) out of a son of the Padfield's, Iron Lady when she was paired to a son of Matt Rakes, Indy and the chequer hen (GB.12.R.12445) a daughter of my Tom Thumb, who was 1st South West Sec, 25th Open BICC Barcelona and, Marie, who was 9th East Sec. 17th Open Bergerac. W.S.R.N., 2nd West Sec. 23rd Open BICC Perpignan, 1 West Sec. 20th Open BICC Perpignan.

His dam, a chequer pied (GB.15.S.62094) is out of (GB.08.N.75524) a son of the Padfield's Barcelona winner, Mr Impossible and blue pied (GB.14.N.81929), out of a son of Matt Rake's Champion, Indy and the Padfield's blue hen, Iron Lady. All the best bloodlines coming through again for sure", Ray concluded.

2nd Section, 13th Open, were GG Cooper & CJ Cooper of Peasedown St John, on 747yppm. Geoff and Catherine explained, "We were pleased to clock this two year old widowhood cock to be 2nd Section, 13th National, flying 537 miles, 860km. His wattles were pink where he had flown through so much rain. This race was very hard for all the birds flying to the west of the UK. We have named him, Farm Jelle 71 as he is mainly Jellema bloodlines. Last year, as a yearling he was 3rd Section, 10th National, in the same race from Agen."

3rd Section, 40th Open, were D & J Staddon of Ditcheat, on 545yppm. They also took, 4th and 5th Section. Dave offered these comments on the race, "Firstly we'd like to offer our congratulations to Kelvin Sharman on winning the race, absolutely fantastic, A & T Wright for a 600 mile day pigeon, Mark Gilbert on a great team performance and last but not least Ray Strawbridge on a fantastic pigeon into South Wales to win the South West Section. This was the hardest Agen race in the last three years into the South West Section and the previous two were very hard! So far only 6 birds have been recorded after 3 days flying. Our first bird was a yearling cock flown on our Chaos Widowhood system. He is bred from our race team. His sire was bred down from the Southfield Pau and Southfield Supreme lines. The dam is a granddaughter of, Freelands Gem. Our second bird and 4th Section winner is also a yearling cock flown on the Chaos Widowhood method. He was a good young bird winning 1st Club, 1st West of England South Road Combine, Yelverton 2,884birds. He is a full brother to our 1st Open CSCFC Guernsey young bird from 2019. His sire was bred for our stock, a son of Mark Bulled's, Legacy, and 1st NFC Tarbes when paired to a daughter of, Freeland's Gem. The mother is from a son of, Freeland's Gem when paired to a daughter of Legacy. And our 3rd bird, also a yearling cock flown as above, is from our race team. The sire is an Andy Parsons x Geoff Cooper and the dam is a daughter of, Champion Evie, our NFC Ace Pigeon 2018."



Ray Strawbridge 1st Section



Geoff Cooper 2nd Section



Dave & Archie Staddon
3rd Section

Overall International Winner

The Overall International winner from Agen in the category 'Old Birds' is Preud'homme Olivier from Gesves, Belgium. The pigeon was clocked at 13:32 CEST after a race of 787.402 km, achieving an average velocity of 1211.14 m/min.



1st International Preud'homme Olivier

Mike Jackson
BICC Press Officer