

British International Championship Club

Barcelona International Provisional Race Report

For the 2020, Barcelona International, 14,589 pigeons were basketed from across Europe, for the biggest race in the European calendar. This was down on the 16,051 birds that were sent last year but it was still an impressive total, considering all that has happened over the last 5 months. The numbers were made up of 6,179 from Belgium, 4,480 from The Netherlands, 2,580 from France, 1,026 from Germany, 43 from Luxembourg and 281 were flying the flag for the UK. Of the 281 UK birds, 229 were sent by 78 BICC members.

They were liberated at 7.50am BST, on Friday 31st July, but not before controversy on route. As was reported in the Guardian newspaper on Saturday, eleven French birds were found dead on the eve of the competition after a suspected poisoning. An investigation proved that the birds had been poisoned accidentally and they eventually made their way to the starting line.

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

By Monday morning, day three, 9 birds had been clocked but not all members were able to provide information, so another report will follow.

1st Open was Mark Gilbert of Windsor on 748ypm. Mark timed a 3 year old chequer hen, Southfield Gold Lady, at 7.04pm on Saturday evening to take 1st South Central Section, 1st Open and 128th International. She was the only bird to be clocked on day two of the race. Mark explained that this bird contains all of his classic marathon bloodlines. She is a direct daughter of Golden Barcelona and grand-daughter of, Romee. Two world class racing and breeding birds from the lofts of the great Dutch flyer, Jelle Jellema. Southfield Gold Lady has previously won 1st Section, 5th Open Marseille, 23rd Section, 30th Open Pau in 2019 and 34th Open Agen in 2018.



In fact, the national winner from The Netherlands was Jelle Jellema of Nijverdal, who timed his pigeon on Saturday at 4:08pm BST after a race of 803 miles, on 937ypm.

2nd Open was Duncan Goodchild, racing as D Hales, of Hockley, on 554ypm. Duncan timed, Grannie P, a 4 year old blue hen at 12.24pm after her 721 mile trip. Duncan said, "We are currently, 1st South East Section, being six hours clear of the 2nd Section, and also 2nd Open. It's no disgrace to be 2nd to the winner, Mark Gilbert, who is one of the best around. She was sent sitting a chipping egg on the day of basketing and she was happy to see her babies on return. She has previously flown well, being 60th Bordeaux (460 miles) as a yearling and 15th Open BICC Narbonne (595 miles) last year. Her sire is an inbred son of, 80, who was 1st and 4th Open, BICC Perpignan and this line has proved to be very good for us and others this year. This 'Blue line' has scored from Agen to Barcelona in International racing, being 5th St Philberts' with 7000 plus birds. Her dam was bred by Dickie and

Steve Pearmain and she is a half sister to two Meritorious Performance Award winners - one of them being Mary - an outstanding racing hen in BICC International racing."



3rd & 4th Open, were RJ Goddard & Son, or Dave Godard as we know him. Dave's birds were on 501 & 491ypm. A delighted Dave said, "First of all I would like to congratulate Mark Gilbert on his outstanding performance once again. It makes it slightly easier being beaten by a champion. I also have to say, what an amazing performance by Duncan Godchild. "Dave timed two hens, a 4 year old named Lilly and a 3 year old named Little Darcy, who flew the 720 mile journey to Reading. Lilly flew Barcelona last year, taking 6th Section, 13th Open. Little Darcy, took the 4th Open spot in only the seventh race of her life. Lily is bred from Dave's old family crossed with Timmy Ellis' of Bristol, Palomos pigeons. Little Darcy was bred by Dave's great friend, Mick Parish of Great Bursted, from his Barcelona/Palomos family crossed with, their friend John Wills', (his outstanding distance family), his 2nd Barcelona pigeon. Dave says he thanks them both. Back to the race, and Dave continues, "I wait all year for this one race and when I saw Lilly drop, it made it all worthwhile. The feeling was incredible and before they could pick me up off the floor, Little Darcy was on the loft. These memories will live with me forever, among one or two of the best performances I have achieved over 30 years. This year's racing was very difficult and I had no system as such. I paired early, breed my young birds feeding on the hopper, and I had no intention of sending to Barcelona. My birds are always lightly worked, so in that part it made no difference, but forget about that because it is easy when you have top, top pigeons with a bit of luck as well. Can I again thank, Carol, the Club Secretary for doing an amazing job and Colin and Sheila King, for all the work they do. This race follows a great season for me with my chequer cock, Harry, winning 2nd Section, 2nd Open Pau. Maybe next year I will try and get the top spot!"



5th Open was Mark Gilbert again, timing his second bird on 482ypm.

6th Open were Luke & Les Cross of Gosport on 477ypm. Luke and Les said this about the race and timing their 5 year old chequer w/f hen. "We would like to congratulate Mark and Nigel on a fantastic weekend; they have certainly set the bar high. We timed our single entry, Dawn's Faith, from Barcelona after her 678 miles fly home. This bird has been super consistent for us, flying over 400 plus miles over six times. Her most notable performances have been 5th Section, 80th Open BBC Bordeaux and 5th Section, 10th Open Narbonne with the BICC from 566miles. She is from a father and daughter pairing, being ¾ Matt Rakes, Indy blood, and a ¼ of dad's original Del Bar birds - Shoefayre. This cock has been the foundation to our lofts from G.Mathews of Titchfield. Her dam is from Mick Bradley (Country View Lofts) who is also from Titchfield."

Luke and Les continued, "This was our first attempt from Barcelona and we are over the moon. It is a real family affair when it comes to racing, with credit to mother and wife 'Dawn' who has been so supportive and 'Faithful' over the years. It was made extra special as we were all waiting our bird to arrive together and we all shared the moment. This included Luke's partner Rosy who was waiting all weekend with us. We have a lot to look forward to over the next few seasons, as Luke and Rosy have just brought their first home on the same street as us and next season we will be racing as L&L Cross Loft 1 and L&L Cross Loft 2. We are hoping this will enable us to further our international 500 mile ambitions, with one loft concentrating on the distance and the second concentrating on middle distance. We love the thrill of the distance but also enjoy the shorter races as we know that the results from the distance can be few and far between. Our next race will be from Narbonne and we are hoping to have another slice of luck! "



7th Open were L&K Buddle of Dover on 456ypm. Lee and Kevin said this of the bird they clocked. "Our timer from Barcelona is a 6 year old cock we call "Ronald", named after my late grandfather, dad's father. After being paired in early February and raising a pair of babies, his hen was taken away from him after sitting between 5-8 days on their second round. He was then flown all season on our Widowhood/Roundabout type of system, where the cocks and hens only get to see each other to run freely for an hour or two on return from the training races with the BICC and our local club. They are only put together before race marking when it comes to the International races. We keep feeding very simple with every pigeon getting the same mix at every feed for seven days a week. It is made up of 75% Versele-Laga, Superstar Plus mixed with 25% Versele-Laga, Best Allrounder and a few fatty seeds given the last five days before marking. In preparation for Barcelona he flew: BICC Falaise, BICC St Philbert and BICC Poitiers. He has been a super racing bird for us having previously won: 1st Open BICC Marseille (573m) and 75th Pau (544m) in 2019, 6th BICC Marseille 573m in 2018, 13th BICC Perpignan 593m in 2017, 29th BICC Pau (544m) in 2018, 35th BICC St Vincent (531m) and 50th BICC Mont De Marsan (530m) in 2017 and 39th BICC Perpignan (593m) in 2016. And a BICC Merit Award Winner, no surprise!

The Sire of "Ronald" is a grandson of G & C Coopers, PD & JW, which we brought from F Birch & Sons. The dam of is a granddaughter of Mark Gilbert's, Southfield Supreme. We would like to congratulate Mark on timing the winner and all that have timed from a very hard Barcelona, in the UK and Europe."



8th Open, was Mark Gilbert again, with his third bird on day three with a velocity of 430ypm.

9th Open, was Mick Parish of Great Burstea, with a 2 year old on 425ypm on the third day. A reflective Mick had this to say, "A strange race, I thought, what with birds being poisoned then an International winner an hour in front. It was always very difficult for the birds and a well done to Mark and all who timed in. I have to give a special mention to Dave Goddard. He must be the best conditioner of 700 mile pigeons in the country, doing so well every year with such a small team – what a top flyer. The bird I clocked was a 2 year old late-bred cock flying to a couple of youngsters. He is a half- brother to my five times Barcelona cock, basically bred down from my old Eric Cannon/ Des Coulter/ Dave Delea stock on the sire's side and the dam was bred from a pair of Mick Tuck's, Eric Cannon family."



10th Open, was Adrian Ghetes of Edgware, on 373.7 and 373.5ypm. Adrian's birds timed at 2.22pm and 2.24pm on Monday, day four of the race. Adrian said, "My pigeon is a 2018 late-bred, she scored as yearling from Agen (536m) and Perpignan (640m) but was out of race time. This year she scored from Pau (572m) and was then basketed for Barcelona 724miles just 6 days later. She homed to a four day old baby from Pau and was send to Barcelona showing to her cock who was chasing her on basketing day. In preparation for Pau, she flew Falaise twice, the second time with my local club two days before basketing for Pau"



13th, 14th 15th & 19th Open was F Knowles & Son, of Wingham with a great team performance. Simon said that he couldn't believe his eyes when his first 3 birds landed. They timed at 8.11.26, 8.12.18 and 8.14.46 on the 5th day. Each bird came separately and weren't sitting on the loft waiting to go in, as some think. His 4th bird timed at 10.36 and he has called his first bird, Sloppy, for good measure. Simon timed five birds in total.



1st South West Section & 27th Open was Stuart Wilcox of Bristol, on 250ypm, with a Belgian rung pigeon, Stuart explains the story, "Our timer from Barcelona is a 6 year old cock called Mario. This cock came in as a young bird and as it had a Belgian ring on it, I reported and it belonged to Mario Marten's of Belgium. I am not one to keep strappers and did done everything to try lose him. He went to Swansea one day and London the next, but he still came home. Then I sent him to Lambelle with the BBC and he homed in good time, so from then I learned to have a bit of respect for him. Since then, he has crossed the Channel 32 times and is never far behind. Last year he flew Tarbes and Bordeaux and was fresh when he landed from both, so the decision was made to prepare him for his first race from Barcelona. In preparation, he flew Falaise, St Philbert and Poitiers all in good time and was sent to Barcelona on widowhood and fed on Koopman All-round and Verkerk Sport from Beyers.

This was supplemented by energy corns from Countrywide. His breeding is Marcel Aelbrecht x Chris Hebberecht and I was pleased as punch to see him return.”



2st South West Section & 31st Open were D&J Staddon of Ditchheat, on 243ypm. They only sent one bird and these were Dave's thoughts on the race, "As we only sent one pigeon, we were pleased to time him even if it was on the 6th morning. This was probably the hardest Barcelona race in the UK for some years, in our opinion. We timed a 3 year old Chaos Widowhood cock bred from an Andy Parson's sire when paired to a daughter of Geoff Cooper's, George - 1st NFC Tarbes Grand National. He has been a steady performer up until now, scoring 40th National Falaise 7441b earlier this year. We hope this experience won't be lost on him for 2021. Well done to Mark Gilbert on an outstanding winner and Stuart Wilcox on winning our section."



1st North Centre Section, 26th Open was Gavin Duggan on 356ypm who clocked a 5 year old hen on the 6th day, to cover the 767 miles. Gavin explained, "She is a chequer hen of small to medium size and she flew Agen last year to finish 3rd Section, so I thought I would chance her at Barcelona which is only my second attempt. It was a bit of a long wait but worth it to see her back in the loft. She is bred down from my Seaview line of pigeons which I hope to build upon and have another attempt in 2021. Finally, a big thank you to all who have made racing possible for us this year."



2nd North Centre Section, 41st Open was Pieter Oberholster. Pieter said, my 5 year old bird flew Barcelona last year but was recorded out of race time. She is an inbred bird to my old base cock whose progeny are responsible for several section winners for Domonic Gruzelier over the past 2 seasons.



Jim Emerton Trophies

At the close of the race, 47 out of the 229 birds sent had made it home. The main trophy sponsor for Barcelona is of course, Jim Emerton. As things stand, three of the four trophies seem to have been won. Provisionally, The Jim Emerton Trophy for the highest 2 bird mean average will go to Mark Gilbert. The Jim Emerton Barcelona Dream Trophy for the highest velocity over 750 miles will go to Gavin Duggan and, The Jim Emerton Trophy for the longest flying pigeon in race time, will go to Pieter Oberholster, with his bird flying 770 miles.

Overall International Winner

The overall international winner was Karscu Alin of Rastatt, Germany. Karscu clocked his pigeon on Saturday at 6:10am BST after a race of 624 miles, achieving an average velocity of 1207yph.

Mike Jackson
BICC Press Officer
Email:mike.jackson026@hotmail.com
Tel:07964448291