

"CARSON CITY CLYDE"
AU 14 NYKAMP 2289
BLUE CHECK, COCK
2014 WESTERN OPEN-CARSON CITY WINNER
Flown on 6/14/14
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Another old bird season has come and gone. It is hard to believe it is over! We thank all those involved with the Western Open. A lot of time and effort goes into pulling off such an event. We also thank Gene at the Digest for promoting the event, it is a shot in the arm for a sport that really needs it. The Western open series of races are our favorite races of the year. We make it a priority to send out our best prospects and try to make sure they are physically prepared, in peak form and motivated so they are willing and able to fly a great race.

For whatever reason I was born with a passion for pigeons. My interest for pigeon racing started as a teenager when I first learned about the sport, and since that day it has been one of my goals to race pigeons at a high level. We really enjoy all aspects of the sport. The people we meet, as well as breeding and racing the birds.

We don't necessarily have a favorite strain, we want pigeons that perform at a high level consistently. Our goal is to keep improving the ratio of top prize winners and champion flyers from the families we breed from. We try to be proactive, constantly trying to improve our gene pool. Our policy is that any pigeon that does not produce the goods after 2 years is eliminated from our program, regardless of origin. Most pigeons are not going to make the grade, even if you get them from the biggest names in the world. Once you find that they are less than great you may as well accept the facts and move forward. We like to see pigeons perform as young birds and yearlings, we do not agree with the old adage of waiting for pigeons to reach two or three years of age to start paying dividends at 400 and 500 miles. There are too many families that are able to take care of business as yearlings.

We enjoy following the results in Belgium and Holland. We have found when you check the pedigrees of most of the Provincial and National winners in Europe that the Champion racing lofts are breeding their best pigeons to best pigeons of other champions. The vast majority of the top flyers don't seem too concerned about "pure" blooded anything, they are concerned with performance and performance only and it seems like the top pigeons are maturing at an earlier age and getting faster. Inbreeding to the "Super Champion" and then out-crossing for high bred vigor is also an effective method. It is easy to get left behind if we don't stay abreast of what is transpiring in the sport at the highest levels of competition and adjusting our breeding programs accordingly.

Our feeding program has not changed much over the past few years. Returning race birds are fed a mixture of Wheatlands race mix with probiotics, extra safflower, Purina Lay pellets, Purina Flock Raiser pellets extra whole corn and barley. Whatever heavy mix is left in the feeder from the Friday build up mixture is also left for them to eat if they so choose. They get all they want to eat until Monday morning when they are fed barley and safflower. That does not change until Wednesday night when they are fed Wheatlands race mix with probiotics. Thursday morning on a race under 300 we will feed the Wheatland mix with extra safflower. Thursday night is the same but we generally add a song bird mix we get at SAMS which has some small seeds and sunflower seeds etc. We also add a small seed mix that is fed to Canaries. We go easy on the Song Bird and Canary seed mix early in the year to try and keep them out of top form until we get out to 300 miles. A good vitamin/mineral mixture is used once a week, year round in the water. We fly double widowhood for the first 8 or 9

weeks, then to give them a little extra spark we set them up on 10-12 eggs for the grand finale from Carson City, which is 510 miles to our location. By the end of May the birds are more than ready to nest, especially the hens and it gets nearly impossible to keep the hens from mating to each other and laying eggs. The pigeons seem to get burnt out on the double widowhood system after a long season and they are really happy and motivated to be able to go down on eggs. We like to have the hens physically ready to race on week one of the race season and once they reach form we attempt to keep them there as long as possible. The Cocks we try to peak out for the last half of the season. We try to accomplish this through diet and conditioning. After the races reach 350 miles we feed them all of the heavy feed they desire a couple of days before shipping, they know what they need and we let them eat what they want, when they want. Excess weight on the birds does not seem to be a problem as they are racing every weekend and exercising around the loft 5 days per week. Our club race schedule is set up so that once we reach 300 miles or farther we have a 100 or 200 mile race available every weekend which helps catch up late hatches, pigeons that we are setting up for a particular race, or pigeons that have been hurt, sick, late etc. The 200 mile race is available because of Jack Schiess of Taylorsville, Utah who is willing to get out of bed in the wee hours of the morning to unload the race birds into his shop. He then gets up again at 7:00am to release the birds for us. Jack is such an asset to the sport and the world would be a better place if there were more guys willing to help his fellow man! We never, ever use feed as the motivation for the birds to come home. We rest the birds on Sunday and exercise them daily Monday through Thursday. Shipping day they do not exercise, the sexes are mixed Friday afternoon and then separated as we basket. The team is generally left together all day after the race and the sexes separated Saturday night. The double widowhood system is excellent, as both hens and cocks are raced. On this system most of the birds are motivated and fly hard. Trapping is almost never an issue. We try not to over medicate. We treat with five in one and a separate respiratory treatment before or during early training. Then we watch the birds closely and wait as long as we dare without treating again. The ideal for the birds is to keep all medicating at a minimum, but if a health problem arises treat it before it effects the performance of the birds. Sometimes that is easier said than done. We are constantly reading about and conversing with other top flyers about better methods because we know we have a lot to learn. If we think we can improve in any area we are willing to do so.

The Carson City winner, "Clyde" is a Van Loon/Janssen cross. His sire is "Derek Jr." who was a son of "Derek" an AU Registered Champion. Derek's nest brother was "Campbell" also an AU champ, National Ace long distance etc. These pigeon originated from Campbell Strange's Van Loon/Hekkenklak family and from our friend Ken Christopher. This line has been excellent for us. Clyde's dam was a Digest Ace pigeon and flew very well as a late hatch yearling. She is a Janssen/ Van Loon. Her Van Loon line goes back to "Avenger".

This year after our club schedule was finished we sent the Western Open birds to Winnemucca, Nevada a distance of 352 miles and then left the sexes together and let them go down on eggs. We rested them for one week. Then the following week before the Carson City race we trained them 100 miles on Saturday then took them 80 miles on Wednesday before shipping them Friday morning to Carson City. The birds were released at 7:00 am and shortly after 5 o'clock "Clyde" was on the landing board. We were a bit surprised! He arrived earlier than we had expected. He was in very good shape on return and felt like he could have been raced the following week. Even after participating in many 500 mile races it is always thrilling to see a race pigeon turn in an excellent performance and fly so many miles in ten hours! The weather conditions were favorable and "Clyde" did his part. Congratulations to all section winners and thanks again to all who make this great event happen.