

Fred Di Mella - Booororban Open Winner - SA04 30786 BCH  
SAHPA Aggregate Points Winner 2006

Fred has been racing Pigeons for some 20 years and feels that Pigeon performances today, are on average better than when he started in 1986. For example, he notes that Booororban is now essentially an 'on the day' Race, when it used to be a two day Race. This improvement is in his view due in no small part to the management of the birds day to day - along the lines of any modern day athletes - be they Animal or Human.

Fred has experimented over the years and has a basic program that he follows, but also varies to suit the Race (he checks the Weather closely), the line (North or East), what work have the Pigeons done during the previous week etc. He thinks about how he as a person would be feeling at that time and what management would be required to get the result he wants.



He had excellent Teachers in Keith Wickham and Stan Ferguson, and has used their advice to come up with the program that suits himself and his pigeons. He notes that although he became a consistent flyer leading up to the year 2000, he has become a better flyer (manager of pigeons) since, and now gets results which he expects to get (given the conditions of the race, and the quality of the birds sent). This change has come about because of the use of selected outcrosses within his basic Wickham Family, and the addition of some small numbers of Imported birds - Van Loons and DeWerdts. These he chooses by pedigree and an 'eye' for the bird he believes will best suit his loft and methods.

In all things Pigeons, patience is the key. He cites as an example how he chooses his team for racing. After checking the Weather, and knowing the Race, he reviews the birds on a Wednesday (for a Thursday Race), then reviews those selected again on the Thursday. Any bird not measuring up for a Race by the end of the Club Racing doesn't get a Guernsey for the S.A.H.P.A. Races! In and around the loft training, any birds consistently returning early are also culled. Fred breeds from 36 pairs, rears only hens in the first two nests, and aims for around 130 young plus around 50 from the previous year for Racing. His last weanlings are moved to the Race Cage by mid February so that by the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, all birds are ready to fly, and by late April, he culls any that are 'holding' the team from performing to his expectations.

He generally flies his 'old' birds in the initial Races, and has no hesitation in sending birds to Hawker or Ouyen for their first Race.

Fred's Booororban win in 2006 was a great thrill - initially 5 birds (one a stray) landed from the Race and he was able to trap the first two, but had to wait for the other two to return after the stray took them up again. The birds had finished an exceptional week of training (on one morning spiraling up so high they could hardly be seen), and then performing so well in the Race. Fred picked two of the four birds clocked as likely to succeed - a great result.

Fred's 2006 results were again excellent. He gained points in 6 of the 8 Races, and was top 10 or better in 4 of the 6 Races.