

Alex Hlebnikoff

1st SAHPA Morundah 2004

Pigeon racing is not an exact science. You can have a good season out of the blue without knowing why. Alternatively, you can do everything right and they still do not necessarily perform.

Russian-born Alex Hlebnikoff had a ripper year in 2003 winning the SAHPA points. Any suggestion that he was a one-trick pony was quickly silenced when he finished a close 2nd to Ross Chapman in 2004.

The Craigmere flyer breaks some of the traditional rules of pigeon racing proving there is more than one way of getting the best from the feathered marvels.

Being some distance from suburbia, Alex has his birds out almost all day. His breeders hatch youngsters all year round and there is plenty of motivation for his

long distance birds to come home when the city birds are feeling tired and jaded.

He has developed the old Eitzen family into one that suits his circumstances and you know he'll be there when the going gets tough. When the big storm hit Morundah 1 turning it into a smash, Alex's blue bar hen came through when many lofts hardly saw a feather for the first two days.

Alex was in a position to win the points again in 2004 but Ross Chapman's 1st and 2nd Morundah 2 put paid to that.

Indicators are that Alex is going to be a major player in SAHPA events, especially at the distance for many years to come.

Ken Waters

1st SAHPA Temora

It could easily be argued that Gawler River flyer Ken Water put the writing on the wall by winning the cock's special in 2003 but the events surrounding the prestige 500 miler from Temora in 2004 certainly made it a win he'll never forget.

The Gawler River Club is one of the fringe clubs in the SAHPA being situated in the North-West corner, a position generally thought of as being a severe disadvantage. But there have been some good flyers to race in the club in the past including the late Jack Woollatt and Allan Brown.

Ken Waters' performance since shifting to the old Arunga Park trotting stud at Two Wells have been most promising and now that he has developed a family of Grant Peterson Goodgers to complement his Irish Busschaerts and Logans he looks set to win plenty more.

After a disastrous Morundah in which the birds appeared to meet an unexpected storm resulting in a smash for most, the SAHPA committee decided to race Temora and Morundah 2 on the same weekend.

Whilst it resulted in a favourite money-saving exercise, it also caused a major problem when Para group birds for Morundah 2 were accidentally loaded onto the Temora race. Fortunately the mistake was quickly noticed and all birds were unloaded and redistributed, or at least that's what was thought.

As is always the way, one bird was missed. From a field of 800 plus, imagine the surprise when this single bird was the first clocked in Gawler at 8:05 am Sunday. Peter Anthony showed his integrity by immediately reporting the situation. He could have remained silent and made a certainty of winning

Morundah.

Meanwhile, some 20 kms away, Ken Waters was having a less than satisfactory end to his Temora race. His blue pied hen had arrived home at 8:13 am, early enough to win clearly, but she had no intention of going in the loft. Over she went to the stock loft before being chased back again. Eventually she was clocked at 6:19 am.

The committee was locked in discussion over Peter Anthony's bird as a potential winner or disqualification. Eventually in a split vote it was accepted as an entry. But when the velocities were calculated, Ken Water's hen won anyway.

The blue pied hen had earlier been second bird to the loft from the Marla 600 miler, landing with Ken's clock bird.

She is sired by a Grant Paterson cock who finished 12th SAHPA Willcania Sires Produce for Grant before being transferred to Ken. Wayne Pepper had bred him for Grant from Goodger/Dangerfield blood.

The dam is a blue pied Goodger who finished 22nd SAHPA from Kulgera. The previous year this pair bred a Murrayville club winner plus an 18th SAHPA Farina. She has bred clock birds to other cocks.

Ken now has a nice collection of Grant Paterson blood to compliment his team. He says he has had success in the faster races with his Irish Busschaerts crossed with Soontjens from Frank Sheader of Scarborough, England.

A bachelor, Ken is a like-able man who is always seeking to be more competitive. He is now reaping the rewards.