

Frank Magro & Neil Odgers - Emmdale Open Winner - SA07 13052 BCPH

Frank and Neil began racing pigeons together in 2003. Both have been racing pigeons for many years. Frank started with Hyde Park Juniors in 1967 in the days of Terry Castles. He remembers winning Junior points twice. Neil started in TTG in 1976 and remembers Don Swartz providing him with advice and assistance. Both started in pigeons with 'paddockers' and were given 'proper' race birds for breeding by Don Swartz (to Neil) and by Dave Buxton's Granddad (to Frank).



Frank remembers winning 4th Marla at the Para club, and when he was with Salisbury club, homing a bird from Bathurst on the third day to win the club.

Neil remembers winning 4th Canberra with a bird bred by Les Todd. Together at the Para club they have won 3rd SAHPA Booroorban 3BS in 2003, and won the Para club aggregate points in 2007 (short,

middle and long distances). In 2008 they have won 1st SAHPA Emmdale, 3rd SAHPA Glendambo Open and won the club aggregate points again. The winning bird has Goodger on the Sire side and Jan Arden/Soffle/Jurion on the Dam side. A brother to SA07 13052 gained 3rd SAHPA little Topar YBC, and a sister gained 5th SAHPA Little Topar 10BS.

About 20 Stock cocks and 10 stock hens are used with birds from the race cage to make up about 35 pairs for breeding. Some birds are bred for stock, the rest for racing. Varieties kept include Goodger (about half the loft), then Jan Arden, Van WanRoy, Janssen and Soffle/Jurion. They are hand fed 3-4 times a day on peas (x3), wheat(x1) plus a trapping mix. The feed is not varied throughout the week or the season. Golden boost is used about twice a week. Young birds are mixed with last years birds after breeding has finished around February. Generally 30-40 birds are retained from the previous years racing. Two year old cocks are raced again. The partnership generally gets best results with old birds pre YBC/SAD races, and with young birds post YBC/SAD races.

Loft training starts about 8 weeks before the first race, and tossing about 4 weeks before first race. Frank likes to toss twice a week and pre Derby tosses to 160 kms, and after the Derbies to 240kms. Birds are tossed twice a week. In addition birds a loft trained daily for 1-1.5 hrs (always out before first light).

Medication is generally avoided but the duo admits to using Turbosole once in 2008. PVM powder is provided in the breeding loft. Hopper feeding for peas and wheat is provided for breeders. Generally young hens are mated to stock cocks, and young cocks are mated to stock hens. The Goodger birds are mated for performance and stock purposes, and the rest of the loft is mated for performance and crossed with the Goodgers.

The team finds that the greatest difficulty to racing pigeons is financial - the partnership can share cost (as well as rewards), and the other difficulty is the proliferation of overhead wires which cause death and injury to the birds. The partners would like to see the SAHPA race for points for the whole race programme (they liked the idea of the SDC series in 2008), and feel that a modern pigeon transporter of smaller size needs to be considered for the SAHPA.

