

Geoff Johnson

Wendouree City Club – Ballarat - Victoria

Loft report by
Barry Trewin

Geoff has been racing pigeons for the past five years. He was at the park near Lake Wendouree Ballarat with his daughter and a gentleman by the name of Rex Carland saw him watching a kit of pigeons working and asked him if he was interested, two weeks later he had a loft.

He originally obtained some birds from an advert in the local paper and in his first year he had 1 win, so he then decided to obtain some better quality stock. He went to Ross Grivell's sale in Maryborough, where he purchased some birds and they have proved to be the foundation birds of his loft. Geoff contacted Tim Fawcett (Ross's Grandson) to advise how well the birds had performed and they became good friends. Further introductions to his stock loft have come from Tim Fawcett (Goodgers) and Brian Fretter (Janssens).

Geoff is a member of the Wendouree City Club, which is affiliated with the Central Highlands Combine of Ballarat. He has 13 members in his club and there are approx. 60 members in the Combine.

Geoff's goals in racing are to try and win the club aggregate and the 600 mile (960 Klm's) & 700 mile (1120 Klm's) races. He said he loves the 2-day races! His best racing high was when he won his first 700-mile event in 1998, which he did with a cock bird. His past performances have seen him win the club aggregate twice and also two thirds in the past five years. He breeds approx. 110 young birds each year and he likes to fly about 10 two year olds. The fanciers he classes as his main competitors to try and beat are Herman Beckers and Bill Paten, both these are strong fanciers in the Combine.

He purchase's his grain from Ian McKay in Burwood and uses the sprint mix early up to 300 miles and then he uses the racing mix and high carb mix for longer races. I went to Geoff's lofts a few weeks before the end of the season and his birds were in excellent condition. He trains his birds with a club toss on Sunday's approx. 120 Klm's and 2 times during the week from 38 Klm's by himself. He doesn't separate hens and cocks and rates his cock birds very highly. He gives the birds supplements such as PVM, grit and garlic regularly.

Geoff is a fancier who believes in the promotion of the sport of pigeon racing. Each year he attends a local school and talks to 300 children about pigeons, his ideas for development of the sport include juniors flying for free and starting any beginners with quality birds. If they are given poor quality they will get dishearten early and leave the sport. Geoff has introduced 2 members to the Wendouree Club since he started racing and he always encourages non pigeon fanciers to become involved through special ring races, this way they have an introduced to the sport.

Geoff is interested in anything to promote pigeon racing and feels with all the politics we have forgotten to have fun, we race our pigeons because we love them and it's a passion. Geoff mentioned Reg Eden, he was like a mentor and had given him good advice. Barry Wright was also another fancier who Geoff thanked for assistance. "It is good to get genuine advice and these guys are happy that you do well".

Some of Geoff's results in 2001

1st Club Aggregate
6th Combine Aggregate

1st Club, 1st Combine 600 Mile
1st Club, 2nd Combine 700 Mile
1st Club, 1st Combine 3 bird Special
Club bird of the year.

Geoff's 600-Mile Combine bird won by 45 minutes
In the 700 Mile event there was only 3 bird's home on the 2nd day.

Geoff also has a 2-year-old hen, which has flown 700 Miles 3 times in 2 seasons. She flew 700 Miles once in the first year 2000 and twice the second year 2001 (one was the Victorian Open 700). Her sister was the bird which was 2nd in the 700 Mile event this year.

I thank Geoff for his time, it was an enjoyable day visiting his lofts and discussing pigeons. His pigeons are a credit to him and Geoff is a good ambassador the sport of pigeon racing in Australia.

