

English version:**Burkhard HELLER****1st International Barcelona 25.878 p.**

Eschweiler - That Saturday, the tension was big in Eschweiler, which is about 15 km from the centre of Aken. May be it was because they were in the running of the international victory from Barcelona 2010 or did they were a bit afraid of the bearded devil that listens to the name of Maradonna?

To both of them this Saturday afternoon was the moment of truth for both of them! The big screen on the market place was the sign that it would be hot in both caps!



It soon was clear that Burkhard Heller (36), employee with the public service was going to win international Barcelona 2010. There were two Belgians very close to him but with his 954,96 m/m, they were just not fast enough to beat him. This is the most beautiful victory a fancier can get.

Burkhard Heller is not a fancier because of his father but he got in contact with the sport by his uncle Jakob Slutter. This uncle was a very good program racer but because he got some problems with his health, Burkhard started all by himself in 2002.

He started with some youngsters of the Hagens Brothers from Achthuizen, who soon became the base of the colony. Hereby he also got some pigeons of the family Freialdenhoven and Son (Aldenhoven) and of Maria Kaelen-Boers from La Calamine with whom he became friends.

Burkhard Heller gets a lot of help of his mother and he started the season with 50 pairs of old and yearling birds which are played on total widowhood. The races he prefers are Pau (2), Perpignan (10), Bordeaux (30), Narbonne (30) and most certainly Barcelona (12).

Perpignan is the last race of the season, each pair gets to raise another youngsters and at the end of November the cocks and the hens are separated. After the first pairing at the end of February, the birds get to breed for about 6 days, the nests are broken off and the racing team gets trained. By 8 training-flights (40, 80, 120, 190, 280, 360, 2 x 440 km), the long distance racers are prepared for the hard work. After this, the pigeons get full rest for 3 weeks before they have to start the long distance races.

He put in 9 hens and 3 cocks for the race of Barcelona, most of these are played on total widowhood but he also put in some hens (3) which left on youngsters of 5 days. And it was just one of these hens (Viktoria II) which won the international victory.

At the beginning of the season, he gives light food but once they have to do the 400 km-races, the birds get a sports-mixture. The racers for Barcelona left well fed and when they disappeared into the basket, they seemed to be in a very good condition. Besides the classical sports-mixture, they also get candy-seeds and grains of sun-flowers. Further also some vitamins and natural products like oils, beer yeast, etc...

After the end of the season, the box of medications, gets closed down so the birds can relax of a hard season and to get through the moulting period easily. Before the first pairing, he gives them ¼ Flasyi (against cancer) and this is repeated once more before the start of the season. Also a cure against cancer, four weeks before Barcelona and one last time in between Barcelona and Perpignan. Three weeks before the basketing for Barcelona, the birds were treated against the infections of the bronchial tubes with a product of the vet.

The winning hen from Barcelona was baptised as "Viktoria II" DV 0151-08-283, a chequered hen of two years old, which found the perfect motivation in her youngster of 5 days old. Her fabulous condition before basketing, was a good sign for Burkhard and on Saturday, at 11h01, she had a date with history. Like a bullet she dived out of the sky to get her international victory from Barcelona 2010 against 25.878 pigeons.

Burkhard immediately knew that she was early because when he contacted the man to announce her, he still had to find some paper to write it all down and that was a good sign. In the club he had 1st, 3rd and 4th announcement and on Saturday afternoon, at 17h30, Burkhard already had clocked 4 pigeons.

This colony is going up to the top the last few years and this can be proved by: 1st Nat. Narbonne '09 hens, 2nd Nat. Bordeaux '10 old birds and last but not least 1st IntNat. Barcelona 2010.

At the moment of our visit and while we were talking to Burkhard, we regularly noticed a lot of noise in the streets and when we said goodbye it seemed that the Germans had beaten Argentina. Throughout Eschweiler we met a lot crazy Germans with flags and screaming which may be also a bit for our friend Burkhard Heller!