

# THAMES NORTH & EASTERN COUNTIES FC

by John Gladwin

I have decided to put an article together as the world is going through uncharted waters with all but key workers remaining at home, including myself though I am one of the lucky ones that can still work from home during this terrible time.

One good thing with working from home is I save four hours a day in traveling, mind you I am working more as the Oil markets in which I work are also in uncharted waters with major over supply and very little demand, with very limited travel and many big industry's shut down. Which means supply is very high yet demand is very low.

Another good thing with saving traveling time each day being at home I can get the pigeons out and in a good routine each day, which is normally a struggle for me. I have also managed to get the first round of YB's out. Again this is unheard of for me. These are the good points of this lockdown.

Of course from a pigeon point of view there are many bad points and I am not talking about the much wider aspects of this virus, so please don't think I am being insensitive to the people that have sadly lost their lives so far and going forward during this horrible period in our life's and the many families which have been affected. But as I think there is more than enough talk of this in the media, I just want to write about it from a pigeon fanciers point of view.

Of course racing has been suspended at least until we can travel again on non

essential journeys, at the time of writing we have no idea when this will be, some experts are saying May, others June and others say it could be November. Looking at how other countries are doing and reading between the lines of what the government have done and said, my feeling is it will be sometime in late May or June that restrictions could be lifted for us to possibly think about racing. The reasons I think this is from the start the most vulnerable were told to lockdown for 12 week, schools were shut and exams which take place in June were cancelled, Mortgage payments were set as a three month break etc. All these facts kind of point towards the government right from the start having June in mind. Of course if we are still having lots of new cases this could be extended or if we see a big change for the good beforehand then it could be reduced and we could get back to normal beforehand. I also think if we go much past mid May without getting the economy working again then I am afraid I would start to agree with Donald Trump that we have to be careful we do not end up losing more people in the long run by the damage to the economy than the virus might cause. This is also true about mental and physical health. How long can people be on lockdown before both their mental and physical health starts to suffer?

For me this is a reason why pigeons are more important than ever and I would urge everyone to stay positive and prepare the pigeons in the same way you

would normally three to four weeks before the first race, as I firmly believe this will help to keep us all focused and something extra to keep us thinking and focused on better times to come. Especially while we are separated from many of our family and friends.

What happens when the restrictions are lifted? If we presume the lockdown ends at the start of June, at least a week will be needed for training and then it will be a scramble to put race programmes together, will we be able to go to France or Belgium or will it just be inland racing only? Again lots of questions and at this point not any answers. All I will say is everyone will need to be flexible and accept last minute changes and updates but if we want to race then we will all have to expect and accept it this season I guess. And maybe we can use some of this in a positive manner and if we only get inland racing we should look to amalgamate up and have some longer inland races with joint libs. For example in my area the South East of England we have organisations from Essex, Kent, London, Surrey, Sussex who will all be all heading to very similar race points. If we don't have National racing would it not be great to have an Amal race or two?

One other point I have noticed and speaking to some friends and also seeing on social media a lot of people are saying that the pigeons are flying better than normal and are buzzing more than normal, this made me wonder is this due to the fact there is much less pollution



Three of my 2020 race team, hoping they get a chance to shine this season.

around compared to normal due to the lack of flying, driving and industry working at the moment. Or maybe it is a coincidence, and it is more related to the fact the weather has been better than normal and the fact the pigeons are not being stressed out so much by being hit by Hawks each time they go in a basket.

Whilst we are not racing I have also been thinking about ways we could make racing a little more exciting and maybe a little fairier for the small team fanciers and also to try and get away a bit from the winner being the be all and end all, like it is in the UK.

Thinking back to my Banger racing days. One thing which always got everyone interested was team racing. When a team of six from one track would

go head to head with a team of six from another track and the team with most points on average would be the winner. Or even teams within the same track.

How could we look to add this kind of element to pigeon racing? Could we do say six members of one club versus six members of another club in the same Fed. Or I did think about taking a fancier first and last bird and working an average speed for the two and the winner being the one with lowest average but that could get hard as if one gets lost then there is no time.

So after some thought how about an average between the first and your halfway pigeon or actually the first pigeon after halfway. So if a fancier sends 10 birds it would be the average of his 1st

and 6th pigeon times. If another fancier sends 56 birds it would be the average between the 1st and 29th pigeon.

Maybe this sort of idea helps to even things a little between big and small team fanciers and also helps highlight who has the best team race each week.

Just some food for thought.

Please keep safe and stick to the guidelines, I as much as anyone wants to race my pigeons but taking unnecessary risks is not worth it and pigeon racing really does not need any negative publicity.

As always it is great to see the pigeon world coming together and raising money for the NHS.

**Any News and views to  
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