

## Learning to decipher Boloney

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Ken Easley – November 2017

During my lifetime with pigeons I have noticed there are a few voices that rise to the top due to the sheer logic and experience displayed. Usually found in their writings published in the various pigeon journals. Most are knowledgeable men writing to assist others or because they love pigeons and sharing your thoughts is another way to enjoy them.

I have noticed every once in a while there is a writer looking to hold onto a reputation by craftily belittling others. He will walk the edge in his accusations and innuendo, never saying what he really means but leaving you with the impression he seeks including his own elevation to soothsayer advocate of the hard working new guy that is getting stripped from his cash on a daily basis. Maybe they should call him for birds, he surely wouldn't hurt them after that fine article pointing out the bad boys. Of course there are some characters out there selling pedigrees from birds off birds who were off champions from somewhere passing the same famous name when in reality these birds don't even resemble what they once were in the hands of a master breeder. This is ashamed and bad for the sport.

However, lumping everyone together or calling out anyone can be foolish as well. There are exceptions to every rule and rules to every exception.

If you read between the lines a person will tell you what they really want to say if we listen closely.

I have read several articles written by well respected fanciers of our time with some disappointment and trepidation. A talented fellow no doubt and shows a high level of intellect. However, he seems to want to chisel away at anyone who may be making a buck selling pigeons. I'm not sure if its because they are cutting into his sales or position as the lead dog. Most of it is welcomed and even admired in the start but as time rolls on it is like beating a dead horse and the insinuation has turned to outright smack talking. No doubt his followers have written him letters of support to embolden such outright lack of discipline. I believe anything too far one way or another is likely pushing the boundaries of truth. These guys who started out trying to help with sound logic begin to believe their adoring fans and ever craving attention, it's not long before we find them wearing little tin foil hats to keep the aliens from reading their minds.

I began to ask myself, why the need to do this? What is the motivation? This person has won lots of big club races setting himself apart as an expert and almost legend in his field of knowledge. Then I thought of something I hadn't before.

Pigeon racing has taken a different direction in the last few years. A new era of pigeon racing and a new set of super stars are rising to the top. It is one thing to be a great handler in your own loft flying against other club members, combine, nationals, while quite another thing to fly in the ever popular one loft races. In a one loft race you have no control except in the breeding and health of the

birds sent. The little things you do to take the birds to another level in club racing are no longer effective.

In a club race a man with good knowledge of how to motivate pigeons and use seeds, vitamins & minerals to their advantage on the big races and pools can appear to be unbeatable. I personally have seen the secrets of success these men use. I too am adept at using seeds, vitamins, minerals, and training. Very little escapes me when traveling around Europe and visiting with different lofts. Pigeons don't come out front very often without the above mentioned "extra care". These guys have learned all the little fine tuning that will make the birds more than what they really are. Make no mistake they are good birds but every ounce is squeezed out including some talent that wasn't present in the genetics package. I have not seen a race I couldn't win if I wanted to bad enough in club racing.

Managing a team of racers for club racing is a chore but not so much when your good at it and find the recipe to win. Im not bragging here, it's not something that I admire nearly as much as I used to. Smarts become a valuable tool. Then it becomes easier and these guys can win on a fairly regular basis.

We all have seen them. They are usually the ones preaching the loudest about there being no magic potion. Uh huh, ride around with them on the lapel camera pin for week and see if they win. I have shared some of my techniques and have flyers that have won as many as 12 races in a season (old and young) where they had won no more than 3 before. That comment came from a phone call last week of a guy I am helping. If you think there are not big advantages in club racing to be had you are dead wrong.

Guys that feed and train will get their pants beat off by a smart guy who knows how to set them up with feed, motivation, the molt, dark and light systems used properly, young bird widowhood techniques, water treatments, smart training and old fashioned hard work. These guys will train the bird to the 300 mile station if that's what it takes to win a ribbon.

Now here is the part where it gets interesting, one loft racing is a matter of pure breeding skill only. That's why I admire it so much. There is no prep, motivation, extra training over your competitors, special minerals and vitamins for "your" birds, darkening, light system, etc....No monkey business of any kind. It is pure and unadulterated racing at it's finest form. Only the skill of the breeder is on display for all to see. Only the best bred pigeons have a chance. On a 350 mile young bird race with light headwinds - only the best of the best walk through the trap in the first 10 minutes. That takes great knowledge and breeding skill to be consistent. Yes, luck plays a role but consistency comes from a master breeder at the wheel.

You will notice these old school article writing bully's rarely fly in one loft racing. Because they are smart enough to know the secrets that made them famous in club racing do not apply to one loft racing and they will fail miserably for all to see and birds sales will plummet like the stock market crash. Some of the guys they have called out will beat their pants off leaving them as the thing they claim to hate the most, paper tigers.

You want to see who is a master breeder and who has a good family of birds? Look no further than the results of the one loft

races. The wider the range of top competitors entered in the race the better the breeder ability. I can think of no better task of breeding ability than what is displayed in South Africa or Portugal Golden Algarve. These races have big numbers competing and from the biggest lofts in the world. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent on the finest breeding stock. Years are spent studying pairings, winners pedigrees with common ancestry, size, structure, wings, etc...At the end of the day it is the pairing of two excellent pigeons that compliment each other in many ways which will excel.

My goal from day one was to win the HSCR Ace winner in the million dollar race because it is the average speed winner for races only. No training races are included. I finally won it in 2016. A long road but well worth it to me.

You see a pigeon come in up front out of 3500 to 4500 pigeons in one of these races, it's no accident. Especially on the 350-400 mile final can one see a true thoroughbred at his finest hour. These pigeons are superior racers and bred for just that. It is true that some pigeons are hybrid one shot wonders that may never produce their likeness. Nonetheless, they are superior racers to the others and a testament to the man who orchestrated their birth. It is also true that a top winner may be a great producer especially if you have the right mate for it. Case in point was Hooyman's bird at 3rd this year out of a previous year winner.

I would take a winner from the million dollar race over a 1st prize 10,000 birds in a national race any day of the week. I know what the bird in the big club race had leading up to race day. I also know what the one loft bird didn't have. (any help)

The guys who want to talk about how old so in so got a name for himself doing nothing but selling paper pedigrees while the underdog little loft is a master because he was unknown and won the big club or national race from two pair of pigeons. Let me tell you something, the guy with two pair of pigeons and flying a team of 3 better do well because the 3 pigeons get all his attention. While admirable the truth is If he can't get them to win with all his attention then he is a very poor handler or a very poor selector with stock pigeons.

Don't tell me how brilliant you are with pigeons, show me by entering the big dogs race. If you beat everyone you get true respect and my congratulations.