

# PLAN YOUR TOSSING CAREFULLY

Tossing is something that novices find most confusing generally. They send their birds to Club tosses and then realising that the old hands toss their birds mid-week in preparation for the races on the weekend, they immediately assume that this is one of the real secrets of racing pigeons, and as such is something that they will take years to work out.

This is far from the truth, because the location of the Club tosses give some indication as to the accepted line of flight and it is along this line that pre-race tosses may be given. Overseas publications tell us of the preparation that leading fliers put into their birds for such famous events as Barcelona, Nantes and the rest, but give no lead to the Australian novice unless he has a certain intuitive mind that can discern that birds are birds and that they are creatures of habit no matter whether resident in England, Ireland or Australia. It is from this viewpoint that our leading fliers decide as to the length and direction of their toss points for certain events.

Take a weekend off from racing your own birds and leave your home and travel some twenty miles in the direction from which the birds will be coming to your suburb. You'll know the approximate time that they will be coming or expected so you will know when to scan the sky once you have taken up your station point. If flying North then get out towards Palm Beach or Narrabeen and just watch the line of flight of the homers. If flying the South then Brighton-le-Sands or down towards Wollongong

will be your station point. If the West then you'll be heading towards Kurrajong. A pair of field glasses will assist greatly and from then on you'll know the usual "line of flight" Granted it will vary according to prevailing winds, storms, etc., but in the main the route will be much the same. It is then up to you to pattern your plan for tossing at intermediate points between where you saw the birds and your home in a direct line. I realise, as we all do, that birds belonging to a small Club may be "dragged" by the birds of a big Club where there may be a number of so called mob fliers, but the idea is to get your birds accustomed to one

## FOR THE BEGINNER

(By GRADUATE)

direct route home so that they will "bust" out of the mob early if there is any chance of them being "dragged". This is where the old hands have it slightly over the novices. They toss their birds in small bunches there being in each bunch a seasoned bird or two that is slightly hungry and anxious to get to its loft in the smartest possible time which naturally means the direct route.

They are too cunning to toss a complete mob of green birds without any escorts to pilot them home as they know that these youngsters being green and fresh may fly the entire sky and then arrive home

thoroughly beaten out. Novices unfortunately haven't any experienced birds and it is a case of first season flying being one of disadvantages in most things, so this is no exception. However, once you have observed the line of flight and decided upon your toss points you can in small jumps toss your birds so that they don't suffer any confusion. Two or three miles is enough for a start and then progress to five or six. Toss at that point several times and at any later stage in your progress when you find that the birds are taking too long to home drop back to the intermediate six or seven mile point, to refresh their memory. If basketing on a Friday a toss on Monday and another on Wednesday or even Thursday isn't too much, provided basketing, transportation, liberating and trapping in, and the distance covered isn't done with any fuss and bother. Liberate in late afternoon for short tosses is the rule. If you liberate young birds only a few miles from home in early morning they may be fitter than you think, and knowing they are near home and having their bearings they may decide to go for a spin and you'll find that instead of homing in a direction fashion as you require they are flying everywhere except towards home.

Trapping is the thing that needs care with tosses. Frequently you are the person to take the birds to the liberation point for your toss. You actually should be the one at home to welcome them and trap them in. Before you get home they are and have been sitting on the top of the loft, or going in and out and flap-

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## HEC. M<sup>C</sup>NEILL

5 Lever Street, W. Coburg, Victoria.

ping about the loft, if the open door variety is used. Of if the birds cannot get back out of the loft because of its construction they have arrived and trapped themselves in to find either no food or if you have left food in a container or scattered on the floor for them, the first home have had too much to eat and the latecomers have received nothing. In both cases it is bad training. What is required is that you have a partner in the toss who will toss your birds while you remain at home or get the partner to do the feeding and trapping in. The feeding of pigeons in training should be an exact and precise thing, especially a day or so before they go to be basketed for a race. Tosses are excellent for topping off a bird's condition and homing performance and also serve a useful adjunct to your trapping training, but tosses given without any preparatory thought are often more harm than good. Let us face it, a toss gives less flying than the usual three quarters of an hour or so morning or night training that you give your birds, so tosses don't condition birds but only serve as a means of training a bird to home in a straight line, get out of a basket smartly and trap rapidly which are all essential if a bird is to win a race. But tosses without planning and without a success-

ful conclusion can lead to bad habits. Be sure that your tosses are as near bad habit-free as you can make them.

If you anticipate long tosses in preparation for long distance events then programme to have the birds liberated in sufficient time for them to arrive home at the time you intend them to be fed. Feeding on arrival is a must, and feeding at indiscriminate times is upsetting to a bird's system so you must arrange all things even your tosses by the clock. It may mean in some instances, basketing overnight and leaving home before dawn with the birds if you want them to make an early morning flight. If so then get up by the alarm clock and work yourself to a schedule. When birds are on long distance flights in races they often camp out overnight and it is the bird who leaves its perch earliest in the morning that has the big advantage. This wants to be YOUR bird. How can you manage this one? Easy. By dawn tosses from points where there is no chance of your birds hitting wires or buildings. You can get your birds aloft at the first false dawn light and they will do the rest. It is the same with your training around the loft. It is the early riser that trains the best birds. Birds fly harder and further

in half light than in bright sunshine and by releasing your birds at dawn or just before dawn you'll find that even if you have to "kick" them out of the loft into the air, their efforts once in the air will astound you. Also if you want your birds to fly on in the night, or to get off their perch at dawn then they must be accustomed to it long before the contingency arises in a race.

Yes, pigeon training and racing is hard sport as far as some people are concerned, so if you prefer the blankets these winter mornings then don't expect to win the races. You can't have everything and if a man sacrifices his sleep or the comfort of his bed every morning he is entitled to something and in the case of pigeon fliers it is often that their name heads the list at the Club on Saturday night. So life even for pigeon fliers does have its compensations.

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## COPY DEADLINE

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