



Team Jozsef Kovacs Hungary Crowned

“The Derby Arona Champion 2023”

Its mid-March and for many fanciers around the world it means the 2023 Derby Arona race is rapidly approaching, and whilst the Arona team complete the final reparations at the loft, a large number of fanciers were on route from many countries around the world to the sunny island of Tenerife

Following a more intense training programme this year with on times three flights a week, 185 pigeons had overcome everything that was put in front of them to get the recognition and respect to be present for such a highly profiled double island flight from the island of Fuerteventura a distance of approx. 230 to 250 klm, that will result in a direct line will include approx. 200 klm of the Atlantic ocean



Basketing underway Gladys checking the ring numbers as each pigeon is presented and stamped

With fanciers arriving within the early part of the week the first activity was the live basketing, which took place on Thursday 23rd, a number of fanciers had gathered to witness this event, each pigeon was ring marked checked, wing stamped and if participants were present they had the opportunity of handling their entries before going into the race basket, for those unable to attend then as always each pigeon was presented to the livestream camera, so viewers could see their pigeons condition, prior to the race, with the final pigeon, which had to be mine at 185th going through the procedure basketing was completed and the official entry list was signed off by those present and the unique 2023 arona stamp cut up and destroyed, with all the baskets sealed in preparation for their journey, as added transparency throughout the basketing everything was witnessed by an independent security company who would from now on accompany the birds on their final journey to the race point and take on the responsibility of checking and removing the seals prior to the liberation, with all todays procedures completed Prior to loading and departure the pigeons were offered a fresh supply of water ahead of their journey to the north of Tenerife port of Santa Cruz

Some memories of basketing day





Under the watchful eye, 24 hour security and guard

The journey to Fuerteventura takes the pigeons by road to the north of Tenerife where they met with the early evening Fred Olsen ferry for the first of two Atlantic crossings to Gran Canaria, upon disembarking on the western coast of the island they would take the journey from west to east boarding a second ferry bound for Fuerteventura, where on arrival they would make the final leg of the journey to the liberation site, on arrival Abel reported back that all was fine the birds travelled with no issues, and were watered and left to settle in preparation for the liberation the following morning



For the final time Abel & Goyo arrived on site birds safe and well



Imna Ledesma waiting the arrival of fanciers for the welcome evening

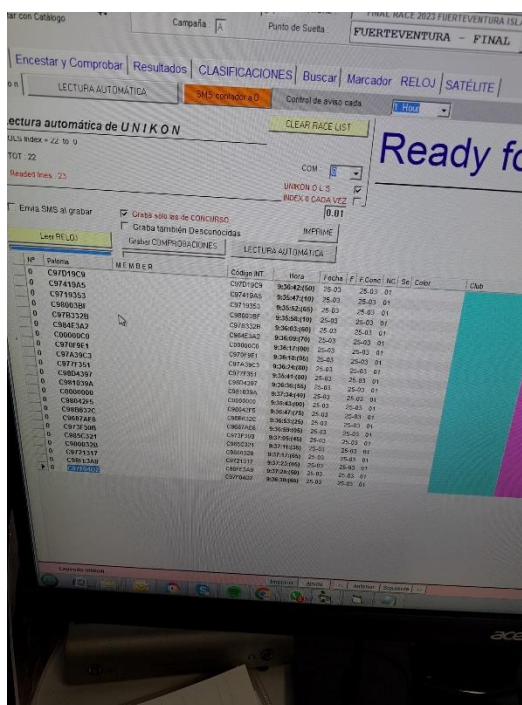
With the birds at the race point, back in Tenerife the Ledesma family and Arona team were preparing to welcome the many guests for the traditional welcome evening at a top Canarian restaurant, with return coach travel to and from a number of pick up points around the tourist resort of Playa de las Americas, the team were present to welcome everyone on their arrival, the evening consisted of a menu of traditional canarian cuisine along with wines and local beers to accompany such, it also gave Jose and the team a chance to relax knowing the birds were safely on site being cared for overnight and they can do no more it was now down to the birds the following day





08.30 liberation all batch together orientating the lib site in Fuerteventura

Final race day, and without doubt there was a lot excitement brewing, for those fanciers with pigeons in the race as the liberation time was confirmed as 08.30 with light winds and temperature's expect to rise above 30 degrees as the day went on we expected a good test for the final event, for Team GB fanciers following a final race day breakfast we met at the usual taxi rank, as a convoy of taxies made the journey to the loft in the small residential village of Guasa, where on arrival we were met by the team, with a marquee up to take some shade out of the hot Canarian sunshine and the complimentary paella and drinks starting to flow everyone settled down for the day ahead



Jairo testing each of the pads and a record all is ok

prior to the expected arrivals of the pigeons the team offered myself and the Belgium agent Jelle Cremmers to accompany them to oversee testing of the ETS pads to reassure participant's that all was working well following the issue in the semi-final race, each pad received a test ring of which all was checked against the clock and computer system which was a good and reassuring moment to be a part of.

With everything checked and double checked it was time to run the guess the time of the first arrival this once again attracted a lot of interest as fanciers predicted the for winning time for five euro per guess and with the book closing at 11am 420 euro cash prize was up for grabs to the closest guess by someone present as the wait began

as the minutes ticked by we didn't have to wait too long as the shout of "pigeons" was soon to be heard in surprise of both those fanciers present and the Arona Team, a batch of nineteen pigeons were seen heading in our direction and following a swift turn all hit the landing board together and made their way in, with the team and all fanciers eyes focused on the digital readout, we awaited the result of the first arrivals to be announced and congratulate the arrivals of the first 2023 derby arona finalists



First arrivals on the trapping board

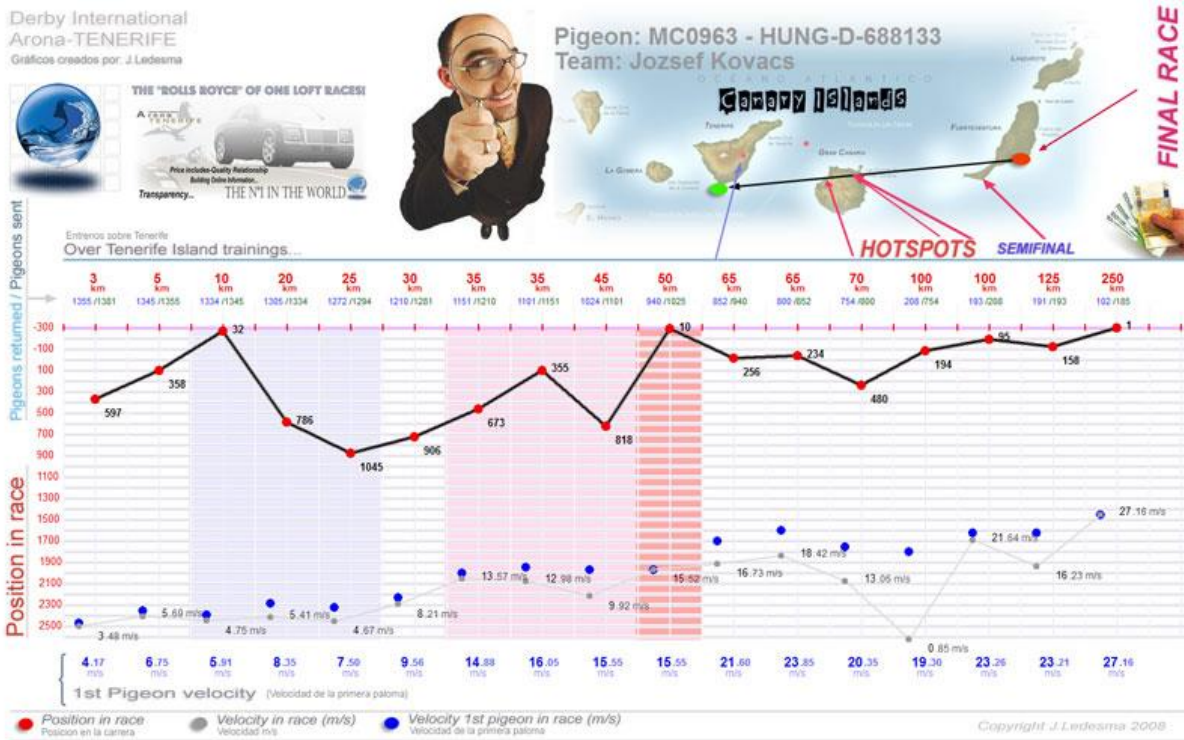
taking the top honours of 1st international Derby Arona and 2023 champion we see Team Hungary and syndicate Jozsef Kovacs without delighted to see the name of his pigeon Joco 13, a pigeon that has held a mid-table position throughout but on the day that matters has come to the front with a time of 11.22.17.35. Winning the Derby Arona final the 25,000 prize along with the winners trophy and gold ring, which is awarded to the top ten finalists, Jozsef is now collecting an array of trophies as he was previously crowned the King of the Atlantic winner in 2022



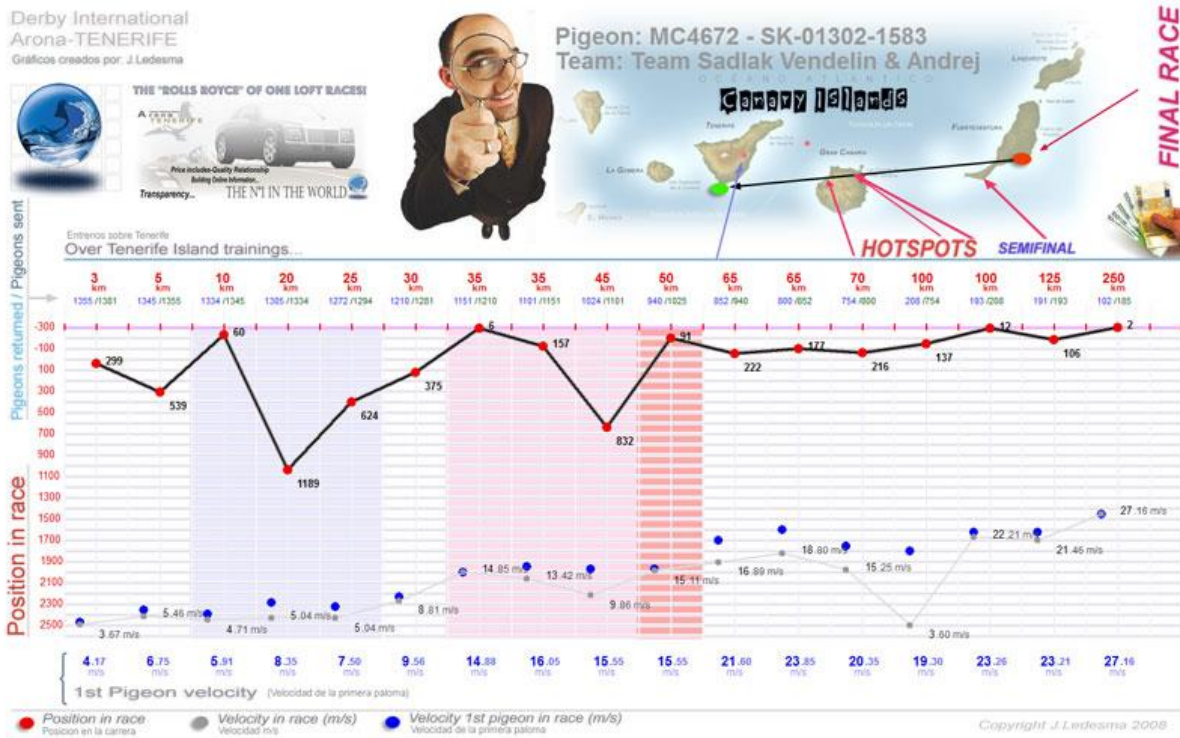
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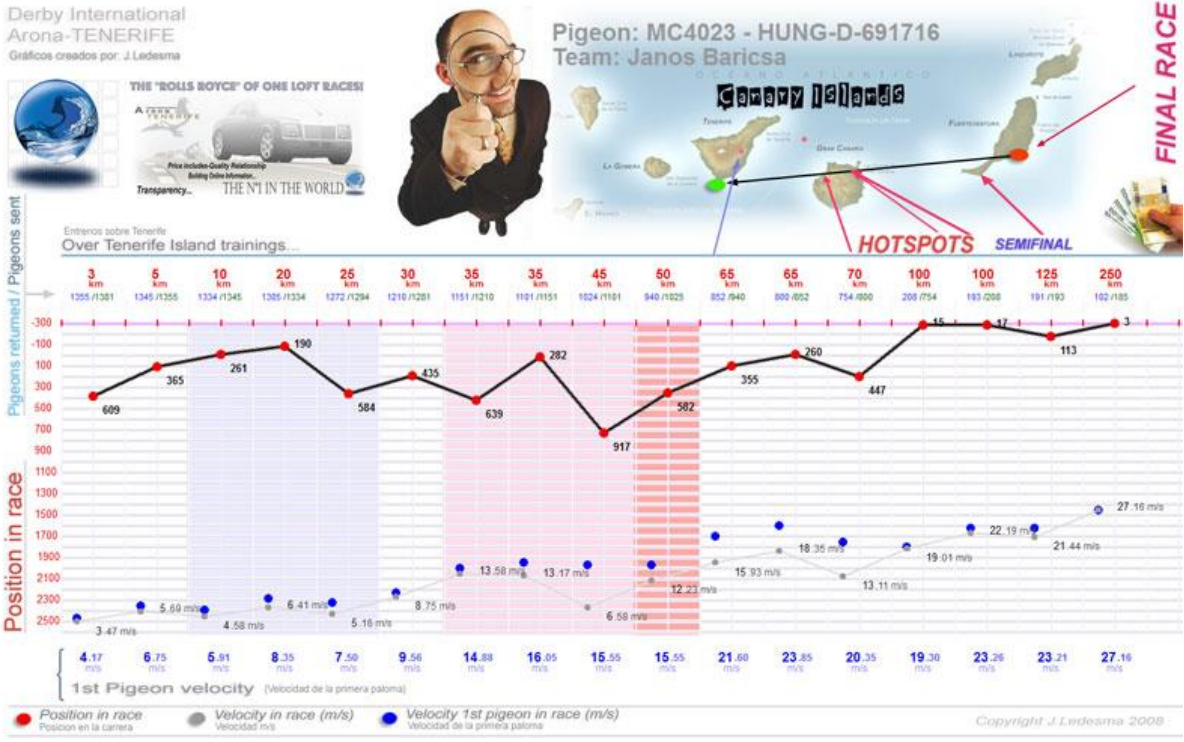
For 2nd international Derby Arona final we see the Slovakian syndicate of Sadlak Vendelin & Andrej. Seen this year's entry Arona 23 crossing the line with a time of 11.22.27.50 claiming 5,000 in prize money along with the runners up trophy against another previous trophy winner as they were also 2nd place in the 2019 final race.



Team Sadlak Vendelin & Andrej(Slovakia)

2nd Derby Arona international final race 2023 with pigeon Arona 83

For 3rd international final race 2023 we return to the nation of Hungary as team Janos Barisa who was present at the loft to see his pigeon Gerseli cross the line with a time of 11.22.19.55 to receive the 2nd runners up trophy and 4,000 euro prize, this pigeon has peaked during the closing stages of this year's campaign and will appear further in the report as the King of the Atlantic average winners where averages are calculated for all flights from across the neighbouring islands of Gran Canaria and the final race



Team Janos Baricsa Hungary 3rd international Derby Arona final 2023 with pigeon Gersli

For 4th international we also make a return to Slovakia who between the two nations along with Hungary dominated the top four positions as Team Evlin Peter & Noemi receive the 4th arrival trophy along with 3,000 euro with pigeon KA841 timing in on 11.22.19.95,



Team Evlin Peter & Noemi Slovakia 4th international Derby Arona final with pigeon KA.841
 for 5th international we head to the United Kingdom as representing England we have the new
 syndicate of Liverpool Broadway all-stars seeing the first of their two entries Stemno timing to
 receive the 5th place trophy and 2000 euro



Team Liverpool Broadway all-stars syndicate 5th International Derby Arona final 2023
 For 6th international we go to Belgium for their first arrival an entry by the Team of P.E.C. and
 Batenburg as pigeon P.E.C.2 recorded its return with a time of 11.22.20.60, once again indicating the
 final is such a unique event on its own as this pigeon has kept a mid-table position throughout but
 on the day that mattered came in the leading batch winning the 1,000 euro prize



Team P.E.C.& Batenberg Belgium with pigeon P.E.C.2 6th international Derby Arona final

For 7th position we remain with the Belgium Team as the syndicate of Schrijver and Brandtegem seen the arrival of pigeon named Hello timing in on 11.22.20.61 and receives 900 euro for its efforts



Pigeon "Hello" 7th international Derby Arona final 2023

Team Turkey takes the 8th international position with pigeon Aras 912 coming in for Team Turkish Power Syndicate on 11.22.21.50 and takes 800 euro in prize money



Team Germany takes the 9th international position as Team Dersch and Gnittika and Linne seen their entry Woolfgang 213 recording its arrival on 11.22.22.50 to receive the prize of 800 euro



Leaving the 10th and final profiled position to Team Belgium with Team Houbrechts Gino and pigeon Jelle timing in on 11.22.22.51 and with 700 euro prize and a bonus of winning the knockout competition with an added prize of 1000 euro rounding off a good day for them

With the top ten pigeons highlighted there was also a number of other pigeons whom were just as worthy as the leaders as they all came as a batch and it all came down to the trapping whilst some made a swift entry other paused for a few seconds these also take a share of the prize funds as follows with pigeons from 10th to 15th each receiving 300 euro each

The moment of achievement for some fanciers when pigeons and entrants are reunited shortly after returning



The Derby Arona champion 2023 verified and confirmed





In 11th position we see the Romanian entry of Ionut 71 for Team Radu Ionut & Tatal on 11.22.22.55. 12th we see Team Cuba and Syndicate Yosvany Manuel & Yasmani with pigeon Figaro on 11.22.22.90, 13th Team Austria and Team Kutlesa with pigeon Guadalupe on 11.22.23.75, Team England and Millys Loft Syn takes 14th with pigeon Tip Top Milly on 11.22.25.80, whilst 15th goes to Team Krajcik Daniel and Adnrea with pigeon ADK 85 on 11.22.26.00

For positions 15 to 20th each arrival will collect a 250euro to their credit per arrival in 16th Evin Peter and Noemi seen their second arrival with pigeon S840 timing in on 11.22.27.40, Team Tot Buzi Lofts from England claims 17th position with pigeon Lepiste on 11.22.29.25, 18th is another English entrant as Team Young Guernsey Boys syndicate timed in pigeon Chris 1 on 11.22.29.35, 19th we head across to Team Denmark and the Team of Andersen & Gravesen as pigeon Sara 2-622 timed in on 11.22.30.45 therefore holding the Syn of Jons & Charlies Angels from England in 20th with pigeon Lucy on 11.23.13.25

With the leading pigeons in the clock and the crowds continuing to congratulate each pigeon as it timed in the food and drink continued throughout the afternoon and with the pressure now off and the nerves a little more relaxed a party atmosphere was felt amongst those still present

By late afternoon many happy and relieved fanciers had made their way back to their hotels whilst the clock continued to record pigeons on their return as night fell on day one 81 pigeons were safely perched

Day two and as the Arona Team were busy making plans for the evenings gala evening at the Mare Nostrum resort in Playa de las Americas the clock continued to record an additional fourteen pigeons after a night out had completed the task increasing the numbers to 95 and with a further 7 gallant pigeons on day three the final numbers finished on 102 as what can only be described as champions of the sky



King of Sprint average winners 2023

With the final race flown its time to take a look at the final averages board firstly the King of Sprint averages, holding onto a commanding lead we see the Slovakian Syndicate of Team Danial, Andrea Krajcik who pigeon ADK 85 which has held pole position for a few races and with securing 15th in the final race was duly crowned King of Sprint average winners for 2023 with 56278pts they will receive the title trophy and 1000 euro cash prize

Runner up average winners are Team Denmark with pigeon Jackson 606 on 55663 pts for Team Andersen and Gravesen who will receive the runner up trophy and 500 euro and in 3rd representing England we see the syndicate of Three Men and the now with pigeon Justin on 55592pts who also receive a trophy and 250 euro



King of the Atlantic winner 2023

Also finishing is the King of the Atlantic averages where we see Team Hungary pigeon Gersli for Team Janos Baricsa crowned champion with 44,270 pts, in the runner up spot its Team Maes and van Wijk from Belgium receiving the runners up trophy and 500 euro and in third its Team Millys Loft with pigeon Tip Top Milly on 44,165 250 euro and the second runner up award

With all the winners and leaders mentioned it was time to award them all at the prestigious event of the gala evening at the Mare Nostrum Resort in Playa de las Americas a five star establishment worthy of such an event



With the Ledesma family welcoming the gathering as they arrived the women attending were again treated to a red rose on entry, as everyone took to their seats for the start of the evening which started with a buffet style menu to suit every taste and nationality, with the tables cleared Jose welcomed everyone to the evening and proceeded with the presentation



the presentations got underway, each winner from the hotspot races were recognised first in reverse order from hotspot 1 Team Jaap Koehoorn from the Netherlands took 3rd position and received the trophy to accompany such performance, in 2nd place it was Martin Jacobs from the Netherlands who received the runner up trophy and the race winner was Krystof Bury from Norway whose pigeon Dona Princess claimed top spot and the race winners awards

from hotspot two in 3rd Team Janos Varga from Hungary took the 3rd position, Team Guernsey Young Boys Syn from England claimed the runner up award and Team Recep-apo from Turkey won the overall race winners trophy with pigeon Abian

from there it was the average winners listed above who came forward to collect their awards, this then left the final race awards, each fancier who was present for the evening and had seen their entries home were called forward to receive a diploma of merit, an informal one as a more established copy with the pigeons photo will be sent out once completed

the top ten winners in the final were then called forward to receive the arona unique gold ring





followed by the top five trophy winners from the final then approached the stage to receive their trophies, to mark their achievements, in 5th we see the UK Syndicate of Team Liverpool Broadway Syn representing Team England come forward to receive their trophy and medal, in 4th it was the Syndicate of Evlin Perter, Neomi, in 3rd the Hungarian Team of Janos Barisca were welcomed to the stage to receive their awards whilst in the runner up position it was the Team of Sadlak Vendelin and Andrej from Slovakia, with all top positions awards claimed and with the sound of the Hungarian national anthem playing the Team of Josef Kavocs from Hungary were awarded the final race winners trophy and crowned "Derby Arona Champion 2023", with the worldwide co-ordinators thanked by the Arona Team, the evening was filled with a variety of music and entertainment which brought the Derby Arona 2022/23 series to a close in the early hours

looking forward to 2023/24



the doors will open towards the end of April for entries into the next campaign and with such the team are pleased to announce following a two year delay the pigeons will be housed in the new location purchased prior to the covid pandemic, the loft will sit high above and overlooking the resorts of Los Christianos and Playa de las Americas with uninterrupted views out over the Atlantic ocean, the plot covers some 30,000 sq metres of land fenced and secured with the initial build seeing the first phase of the build which is now underway, being some 50m in length with ample room to extend in the coming years



Re-introduced to Jose, Lee & Carly Fribbins, from the racing pigeon magazine & squills uk giving us their support at the arona final 2023

more memories and faces from Derby Arona 2023







well that's another year over in Arona, once again on a personal note it's been a pleasure to report on behalf of the Derby Arona one loft race on such memorable moments throughout the last few months, both good and bad I must add, congratulations to this year's winners throughout the series and achievers from the final race, on behalf of myself the Ledesma Family and the Derby Arona Team we hope to catch up once again in 2023/24

for the interest this race has gathered and the new loft location for 2024 being a major boost for the organisation, the Derby Arona OLR is one of the hardest one loft races in the world due to its geographical position sitting just off the African coast, the route the pigeons fly is a testing line through valleys and mountains of volcanic rock which has evolved over many years on times intense heat of 30+ degrees, before heading out to neighbouring islands for cross Atlantic flying a true test of courage and bravery, if you believe in your pigeons and are prepared to take on the toughest test against some of the best flyers in the world from many countries, shippers details can be found on the website at www.derbyatlantic.com

Tom Harris