

# **INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE.**

## **FINAL RACE.**



**"THE GRAND SLAM IN PIGEON RACING"**

**WEBSITE:- [www.afrikapro.com](http://www.afrikapro.com)**

**On Tuesday 13th September 2022 I met up with Tad Truszkowski at Stansted Airport and we departed on a National Express Coach to London**

**Heathrow Airport. Once we passed through Check-In, Customs and Passport Control we met up with John Murray and Colin Oxley who were also travelling out with us on our Virgin Atlantic flight to South Africa.**

**We arrived safely on Wednesday morning at OR Tambo International Airport and were promptly picked up by our shuttle service which would take us all up to Phala Phala Wildlife Farm for our "Trip Of A Lifetime". After a journey of about two hours we arrived at our destination and what a fantastic place this is to hold an International Pigeon Race.**

**We were greeted by Hendrik von Wielligh (Race Director), Ruan Louw (Loft Manager), Lara Kruger (Administration), Edward Labuschagne (Technical/Marketing Manager), Salome Msiska (Finance Manager) and staff from Phala Phala and were immediately checked in and shown to our accommodation which we all admitted was first class. A nice gesture was an AFRIKAPRO linen bag with a bottle of South African wine, Jar of Phala Phala honey, tin of Mandela tea bags, some packets of dried fruit AFRIKAPRO mug and key ring and with a nice card signed by Cyril Ramaphosa (President of South Africa) welcoming us all to Phala Phala. They told us to unpack and meet for a light lunch at 13.00 in the restaurant which overlooked the Race Loft.**

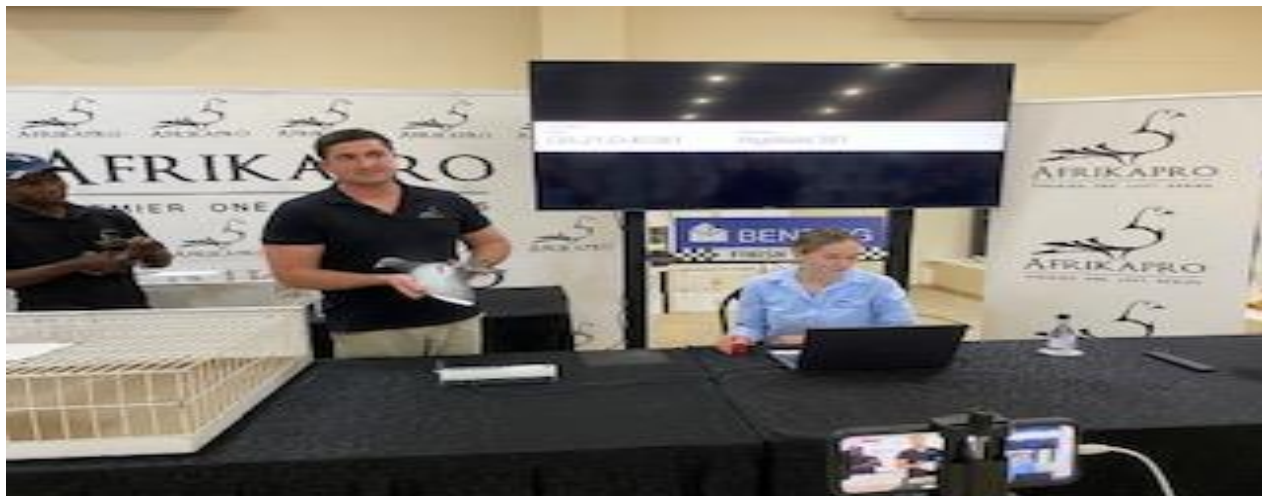
**What made this event even better was the cost of the rooms included all our shuttles, breakfast, lunches, dinners, welcome dinner, gala dinner, functions, bush braais, plus free drinks and a few outside activities which included Adventure with Elephants, Predator Experience, Rhino Repro with Dr De La Rey Hartebeespoort Craft Market and Game Drives.**

**After a wonderful lunch and a couple of drinks we walked around the beautiful gardens and got to know where everything was so we knew where to go for all the events that were taking place over the next few days. We then went back to our rooms for a short nap and a shower before getting ready to go for dinner at the Phala Phala Look-Out Point, which was once again first class meal and evening. What a fantastic first day in paradise.**

**Thursday dawned and after superb breakfast more guests started to arrive from all over the world. We all just wandered around in the glorious sunshine and surroundings. One of the first to arrive was Mike & Debbie Ganus from USA, along with Jesse Seguna and family from Canada and another lovely couple from Mexico. Then Jurie & Darelene Erwee from South Africa, also Joe Gomes from South Africa, Thomas Zimmermann from Benzing in Austria, Eric Brown & Charles Swanepoel from Benzing in South Africa, Alan Jordaan from South Africa, Lex Webster from South Africa, Steven Fang from South Africa, Thomas Gyselbrecht from PIPA in Belgium and many more other fanciers that I did not know.**

**Thursday afternoon the Live Basketing took place in the Auction Rooms and Ruan Louw (Loft Manager) scanned every pigeon before putting them**

into the race baskets with Lara Kruger (Administration) checking all the details on the laptop. All the pigeons details showed up on a big screen and if you saw yours you were allowed to take photographs of it. The whole process ran very smoothly and took about three hours. The pigeons looked in top class conditions and ready for what was in front of them. Back to the room for a shower and a change of clothes.



Thursday evening was time for our first South African Braai and was in a beautiful setting with a massive log fire in the middle of the tables. We all duly arrived and got a drink and sat down and then went up and got our food from the wonderful selection on offer. Not good news for me however because I ate a piece of chicken and it got stuck in my throat and it would not move, I was sick numerous times but it still did manage not move it. So I went back to my room early not feeling at all well and went to bed hoping that it would move during my sleep.



Friday morning dawned and I was really not feeling much better as I went down for breakfast and some of the staff noticed I was not myself and said

they thought I should see a doctor. They booked me an immediate appointment with the Phala Phala doctor in Bela Bela which was the closest town. Ben who worked at Phala Phala drove me there and John Murray and Colin Oxley came along for some moral support. We arrived at the surgery and I told the doctor what had happened and after a short look at me she said I would need to go to Mantana Hospital in Pretoria for an emergency operation. We got there OK and after paying for the operation they took me in and operated immediately and removed the piece of chicken which had three small bones sticking out which had jammed into my throat. About an hour and a half later I was back with Ben, John and Colin on our way back to Phala Phala, still not feeling too good and quite sore.

The good thing was I was alive and ready to go to the Welcome Gala Dinner on the Friday night and The Master of Ceremony was no other than my friend Alan Jordaan from South Africa. but of course because of the scarring in my throat Ben had very kindly told the catering staff to make soup for me (not chicken thank heavens). Lots of fanciers showed their concern and asked what happened and if I was OK. Everybody present then watched about a ten minute recorded video from Cyril Ramaphosa (President of South Africa) and he explained how he got involved with this pigeon race, wished everybody a great few days and apologised because he was in USA at the G8 Conference. This video was met with rapturous applause. This evening was brilliant with a very touching and emotional speech from Hendrik von Wielligh (Race Director) and the atmosphere before the big day could be seen and felt by everybody present. We had the privilege of sitting with Ebraheem Mohamed and his wife from South Africa, who was leading the BLACK JACKET (FANCIER OF THE YEAR) and the BLUE JACKET (ACE PIGEON) after the 9 races that had taken place so far. A great night was had by all present. All good things must come to an end and we said our goodbyes and wished everybody good luck for tomorrow.



Saturday 17th September 2022 dawned to a stunning sunrise, the weather forecast was perfect and after numerous months of training and 9 weekly races up to the FINAL RACE would take place from EDENBURG 601km (374 miles). A total of 510 pigeons were officially basketed (there were 12 pigeons were not fit and were left in the Recovery Bay). The convoy were liberated at 07.02 in ideal conditions and the winning pigeons were expected to do around 1500mpm. Hundreds of fanciers and friends had arrived during the morning and were either sitting in the air conditioned hall to watch the arrival of the pigeons whilst enjoying a light lunch, others were at the Look-Out Point overlooking the spectacular Race Loft. As the time of arrival got nearer the atmosphere was really building and everything that moved was thought to be a pigeon. Then all of a sudden about 2 minutes earlier than anticipated a gang of 4 pigeons came bang on line and trapped like rockets, closely followed 3 minutes later by gang of 3, then another gang 6 and they continued to come in small groups and by darkness a total of 301 had returned to the lofts by 18.22, with 435 being officially clocked by Sunday night the end of day two, leaving only 75 were still missing. A further 23 pigeons returned over the next few days so the actual race returns were excellent from a race of this distance and these extreme temperatures.

**CONGRATULATIONS** and 1st OPEN go to THE BIG 5 from South Africa with a great performance doing 1501.215mpm, closely followed to take 2nd OPEN by TEAM VISION from South Africa and then 3rd OPEN went to KOEKEMOER & JOE GOMES from South Africa and 4th OPEN went to DOUW STEYN RACING PIGEONS from South Africa. There were 30 cash prizes in the FINAL RACE and these amounted to US\$451,500 AMERICAN DOLLARS with a fantastic 1st PRIZE of US\$170,000 AMERICAN DOLLARS. All the official results can be seen by logging onto the Benzing Live Website [www.oneloftrace.live](http://www.oneloftrace.live) CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THESE WINNERS.

## 2022 FINAL RACE WINNER - 601km



### The Big 5

#### Final Race Winning Pigeon

Country:  
South Africa

Pigeon:  
"Julia"  
ZA-21-CRU-1955

Winning velocity:  
1501.214 m/min



All the official results can be seen by logging onto the Benzing Live Website [www.oneloftrace.live](http://www.oneloftrace.live) CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THESE WINNERS.

Taking 1st, 2nd & 3rd UK, 75th, 104th & 227th OPEN went to MURRAY & MILLS, 4th UK, 276th OPEN went to the HIGHFIELD LOFTS (Dave & Emma Armstrong), this was the first GB bred pigeon, then 5th UK, 292nd OPEN went to the THREE MUSKETEERS UK, 6th UK, 299th OPEN also to MURRAY & MILLS, 7th UK, 330th OPEN MILLYS LOFT (Michael Mellor), with 8th UK, 388th OPEN another for MURRAY & MILLS and 9th UK, 422nd OPEN another for the THREE MUSKETEERS UK. A total of 10 UK pigeons were sent to the FINAL RACE and 9 were clocked. CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THESE FANCIERS.

The "BLACK JACKET" the CHAMPION FANCIER COMPETITION offered a staggering US\$1.133,750 MILLION AMERICAN DOLLARS IN PRIZE MONEY with a fantastic 1st PRIZE of US\$500,000 with a total of 85 cash prizes to be won. CONGRATULATIONS to all the winners. United Kingdom winners were MURRAY & MILLS winning 58th and they won US\$1,750, with the THREE MUSKETEERS UK winning 78th and they won US\$1,500. CONGRATULATIONS to all the winners, all the winners can be seen by logging onto the AFRIKAPRO Website.

The "BLUE JACKET" CHAMPION ACE PIGEON COMPETITION offered US\$367,000 AMERICAN DOLLARS IN PRIZE MONEY with a fantastic US\$150,000 FIRST PRIZE and a total of 20 cash prizes to be won. United Kingdom showed no cash winners but MURRAY & MILLS won 155th position. CONGRATULATIONS to all the winners, all the winners can be seen by logging onto the AFRIKAPRO Website.

## 2022 AFRIKAPRO WINNERS



### Blue Jacket Ace Pigeon of 2022

Ebraheem Mohamed

Pigeon:  
"Karayel"  
ZA-21-SSPO-18003

Total flying time:  
40:47:12.940

Average velocity:  
1405.679 m/min

Country:  
South Africa



### Black Jacket Fancier of 2022

Derick Streak

Shortest combined flying time of  
first 2 pigeons:  
81:56:59.260

Average velocity:  
1399.231 m/min

Country:  
South Africa



The Saturday evening was something very special as it was the “BOMA BRAAI”, we were picked up near the Reception Area and driven about 5 minutes away to a spectacular venue for an extra special South African Braai, the setting took everybody’s breath away. It was in the bush and was surrounded by a massive brick wall, over 20 feet tall, it actually looked like a fort or castle and the entrance area were lit by fires and in the middle there was a massive fire pit. The bar area was massive and the cooking of the food was something exceptional and something I have never ever seen before, it was just outstanding. We were all treated to a group of South African dancers that performed under a fantastic South African sunset. A superb evening enjoyed by all that were present. If you would like to see the video go onto YouTube and look for “Dancing With The Fire”.



Sunday morning soon dawned and you could view the winning pigeons at the Convention Centre and then go for breakfast in the restaurant overlooking the Race Loft. The excitement was still in the air and everybody was talking about the race that had just taken place and more pigeons were still arriving as we were eating our breakfasts. Quite a few fanciers were going out on activities and others just stayed around the Look-Out Point watching the later pigeons arriving home. Lunch was between 13.00/14.00 so many fanciers met back in the restaurant and enjoyed a light lunch.

Sunday evening was for the Prize Presentation and this started at 17.30, the venue was stunning with the stage all set up with the trophies, prizes and diplomas, also big video screens set up all round the hall so everybody could see what was happening. The place was buzzing as Hendrik von Wielligh (Race Director) got up to make his opening speech, once again it was quite an emotional speech as he congratulated the winners and gave a few facts about the Final Race. Mike Ganus (USA) was then asked to the stage to say a few words on behalf of all the guests. Then Ruan Louw (Loft Manager) said a few words about the whole season and the Final Race, this was also quite an emotional speech. All these three speeches were greeted with great applause. It was now time to start the Award Ceremony and everybody that went to the stage were cheered and applauded. Lara Kruger

(Administration) was also on stage to assist with the Prize Presentation. All the 9 earlier Race Winners and Fanciers of the Week were called to the stage to receive their awards. "THE BLACK JACKET", "THE BLUE JACKET" "FANCIER OF THE WEEK", "THE FINAL RACE WINNERS" and "THE COUNTRY CUP WINNERS" were all called up to the stage individually and all were greeted with tumultuous applaud. Hendrik then told everybody that the Prize Ceremony was over and hoped everybody had a wonderful time and looked forward to seeing them all again next year. He then stated that the food was ready to be served and once again the food was exceptional to say the least. A closing event never to be forgotten by those present and the wonderful evening carried on until about midnight. "THE BLACK JACKET, "THE BLUE JACKET" and "THE FINAL RACE WINNERS" names and photographs can be seen by the looking above in the article. GUARANTEED PRIZE MONEY FOR THIS FIRST RACE WAS A STAGGERING US\$2.003,000 MILLION AMERICAN DOLLARS (APPROX. £1.74 MILLION POUNDS STERLING). (See [www.afrikapro.com](http://www.afrikapro.com) for full list of all the Prizes & Awards).



The "TEAM" at AFRIKAPRO PREMIER ONE LOFT SERIES have already published many informative short videos on Facebook, YouTube and other social media channels and continued to do so right through the race series and all are available to view on YouTube for all to see, plus all the competing fanciers/entrants that are on WhatsApp get regular training and race updates regarding what is happening at the AFRIKAPRO Race Loft.

**\*\*\*A WONDERFUL GESTURE BY THE RACE ORGANISERS\*\*\*** Any fanciers that entered a full team of 15 pigeons and had 3 or less pigeons basketed for Race 5 will be entitled to a US\$5,000 discount for the 2023 AFRIKAPRO Series. I have never known any One Loft Race in the world make such an offer, this just goes to show that these people that run the AFRIKAPRO want to give everybody the same opportunity.

**PRIZE MONEY FOR THE 2023 AFRIKAPRO WILL BE A STAGGERING US\$2.050,250 MILLION AMERICAN DOLLARS (APPROX. £1.708 MILLION**

**POUNDS STERLING) WITH OVER 500 DIFFERENT CASH PRIZES WHICH INCLUDES BLUE JACKET (ACE PIGEON) HAS 150 CASH PRIZES, BLACK JACKET (CHAMPION FANCIER) HAS 81 CASH PRIZES & 50 FREE ONE BIRD ENTRY, FANCIER OF THE WEEK PRIZES FOR THE 14 RACES, SPRINT SERIES (RACES 1 TO 6) HAS 10 CASH PRIZES AND THE FINAL RACE HAS 150 CASH PRIZES & 50 FREE ONE BIRD ENTRY.**

**ALL OVERSEAS FANCIERS CAN ENTER ANYTHING FROM 1 PIGEON FOR US\$750 TO 20 PIGEONS FOR US\$15,000, SOUTH AFRICAN FANCIERS CAN ALSO ENTER FROM 1 PIGEON TO A MAXIMUM OF 15 PIGEONS. THIS OF COURSE GIVES MANY MORE FANCIERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMPETE IN THIS OUTSTANDING INTERNATIONAL ONE LOFT RACE. SEE THE 2023 COMPETITIONS & RULES & REGULATIONS FOR ALL THE FULL DETAILS.**

**ALL QUARANTINE IN SOUTH AFRICA WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE RACE LOFT AT PHALA PHALA.**

**ALL SOUTH AFRICAN PIGEONS WILL ALSO DO THE FULL QUARANTINE PERIOD AT THE RACE LOFT AT PHALA PHALA.**

**AFRIKAPRO'S MISSION WILL REMAIN TO FIND THE BEST POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO CREATE A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD FOR ALL ITS PARTICIPANTS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD TO ENABLE US AT AFRIKAPRO TO CROWN THE TRUE CHAMPIONS.**

**A few other photographs for everybody to see.**



**A few of the special trophies that were won in the 1st AFRIKAPRO FINAL.**



**Some of the winning pigeons after they had homed from the Final Race.**



**Paul Smith attending the spectacular "BOMA BRAAI".**



**Paul Smith, Mike & Debbie Ganus, Tad Truszkowski, John Murray, Colin Oxley and Jesse Seguna & Family at the Elephant Park.**



**The Likely Lads, (L to R), Tad Truszkowski, John Murray & Colin Oxley at the Prize Presentation Gala Evening.**



**Ruan Louw (Loft Manager) outside and inside the AFRIKAPRO Transporter.**

**The day before we left we were asked if we would like to see the stock pigeons of Cyril Ramaphosa (President of South Africa) and Ruan Louw (Loft Manager) took us to a beautiful stock loft and let us handle most of the pigeons in the loft. The quality and condition of these pigeons were top class and we felt very privileged to of been allowed to handle so many fantastic pigeons.**

**Ruan Louw (Loft Manager) then took us both out of a Game Drive around the Phala Phala Wildlife Estate, we saw lots of wild animals during our hour trip. A nice way to round off a fantastic trip to Phala Phala.**

**I will be regularly compiling and writing my International Press Releases as I usually do and these will be published to the world's pigeon publications and pigeon related websites on a regular basis. If you would like to receive**

a regular copy, then please just email at [reglofts@aol.com](mailto:reglofts@aol.com) and I will add you to my email database.

After spending a few wonderful days at Phala Phala Wildlife Estate and visiting the Race Loft quite a few times I can honestly say that everything about it has been seriously considered before coming up with the final plan. I really is the best One Loft Race Loft I have ever seen in my 40 plus years of travelling the world to One Loft Races. This One Loft Race can only go from strength to strength because they have a fantastic top team of pigeon fanciers who believe in trying to give all the pigeons the same chance wherever they come from. If you would like any more information on next year's race then please call me on my Home Telephone (+44) 01279-812005 or Mobile (+44) 07860-568216 or email me at [reglofts@aol.com](mailto:reglofts@aol.com) and I will be only too pleased to answer any questions or queries you might have.

Hopefully, I will be shipping the first United Kingdom pigeons out the first week in November 2022, a later shipping date will probably be in January 2023. I have the Import/Export Permits so if you are genuinely interested in entering pigeons this classic race, then please get in touch with me ASAP to book your space on either of these shipment. All interested fanciers will be officially notified once I receive confirmed shipping dates.

Best regards, keep safe and I hope you decide to enter some pigeons into the next race and then join us all and have some Fun in The Sun in South Africa in September 2023.

Paul Smith,  
United Kingdom Race Co-ordinator/Agent & Shipper for the AFRIKAPRO PREMIER ONE LOFT SERIES which was held in Phala Phala Wildlife, Thabazimbi, Limpopo, Transvaal, South Africa. Final Race which was held on Saturday 17th September 2022. Website Address:- [www.afrikapro.com](http://www.afrikapro.com)  
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