

Stadtwerkstatt

bugrace99 • insect cash–race against racism



ordinary bugs

Cockroaches are considered to be slimy, disgusting; nobody wants anything to do with 'em. Nevertheless, these insects have succeeded in surviving attempts to wipe them out over thousands of years. Cockroaches are the beneficiaries of civilization; they dwell in warm, damp places where adequate nutrition is available. In the absence of external constraints, a couple of German cockroaches can multiply to over two million within a year. Cockroaches love dirt and darkness, and have developed into an indicator of impoverished and unhygienic living conditions. Cockroaches carry and transmit disease germs, viruses and bacteria, and they cause allergic reactions. In short, cockroaches are regarded as the very epitome of parasites, the most loathsome life form that currently exists on our planet. But centuries of experience has shown that not even an army of exterminators can get the upper hand in the battle against them.

What, then, could be more obvious from the point of view of humanity than to try to get a little closer to these creatures?

fine bugs

We are pronouncing the cockroach to be an object of research. What is more, we are making these parasites into bearers of hope—providing a chance to team up with the creatures that have been making a mess out of your kitchen and to make big bucks in the process. We're turning things around—roaches are becoming the stars of the menagerie. Observed by countless cameras, their every twitch followed with tension. As high-profile media celebrities, every move they make is studied by commentators. A sporting event! Just like beauty contests for house pets, the gateway to a new field of research is being opened wide: to breed the fastest, the most elegant, the most intelligent cockroach for the good of civilization. Mankind places its hopes—and its money as well—on cockroaches.

fast bugs

In a darkened hall, people are gathered around a brightly-lit shrine covered by transparent tubes. The staccato cries of fan rooting on their favorites and the ebullient commentary of a play-by-play announcer. The competition takes place in an overheated atmosphere comparable to that of a horse race or a cock fight. A single heat pits five roaches against one another. Equipped with a joy-console, the jockey can employ a few different forms of stimulation to urge his animal onward:

- **The Jockey's "Crop":** mechanical-electrical stimulation by means of a device mounted on the roach's back,

- **Toad Attack:** precisely aimed puffs of air (600mm/s²) which simulate the cockroaches' natural enemies and thus trigger a flight response, and

- **Light & Darkness** as supporting elements.

Each movement and sound made by the roaches is captured by a media interface and mixed in a Live-TV studio, which provides audio and video feeds to the audience's monitors and speakers.

bucks for bugs

The betting parlor is located behind a window secured by metal bars. The race can also be followed via Live-Stream on the Web. Here, fans have the opportunity to lose their shirts using their choice of either cash or credit card.

Six legs to victory. The track: transparent tubes. The finish line: .03976 furlongs (8 meters) from the starting gate. Nerves are on edge. It's time to bet

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