



PRESS RELEASE - AJAX DOWNS

BUSINESS IS BRISK ON FINAL DAY OF AJAX DOWNS SEASON

OCTOBER 25, 2016 - The final card of Quarter Horseracing at Ajax Downs for 2016 featured brisk betting, brisk temperatures and a successful and exciting 12-race card on Monday Oct. 24.

A record \$131,601 for 2016 was wagered on the 29th day of racing, topping the year's previous high mark of \$131,387, set on Picov Derby day, Sept. 19.

The cold and rainy weather didn't keep all the fans away as the track had record merchandise sales and registered dozens of new wagering accounts.

"The handle picked up in the last half of the card in which we had eight to ten-horse fields," said Emilio Trotta, chief executive officer at Ajax Downs. "Today, that was the difference; good size fields with competitive races."

The 29th day of racing drew 96 entries in a variety of races and fans were treated to some impressive performances by top horses from the season.

Horse of the Year contender First Down the Track flaunted her class and speed with a flawless, 1 ¼ length score in the \$19,000 open allowance race, the fifth win for the 6-year-old mare in 2016. First Down the Track, owned by Richard Wincikaby, was one of three winners on the afternoon for her trainer Don Reid of Bowmanville, ON.

Reid also sent out the Ontario bred filly Ifwisheswerefishes, which he co-owns with Wincikaby, to win a \$13,000 Ontario sired allowance race while another filly, Hope Rambles On won the popular Gridiron Gallop, a 110-yard sprint for Reid and Wincikaby.

Leading rider Brian Bell not only rode all three of the Reid winners but won two other races for a five-pack.

Don Reid's trainer son Scott, also from Bowmanville, won a pair of races for owner John Wilson. The victory by the gritty 3-year-old Panther Hero in the featured \$22,000 allowance race at 350-yards was a popular one with fans. The Ontario-bred gelding was last year's Champion Two-Year-Old Male at Ajax and had tackled the top 3-year-olds

throughout the year. This victory, his second in six races in 2016, was a convincing 1 ¼ length romp over older horses into the 11 km/hr headwind in :18.130 for an 84 speed index.

One of the most exciting clashes of the day was the virtual match race to the finish by 2-year-olds Home to Vegas and Zoxtobeyou in race 5. Home to Vegas, who was unbeaten going into the \$108,000 Alex Picov Memorial Championship on Oct. 10 only to lose his rider, fended off Zoxtobeyou and won by a head under Bell.

Owned by Marie Broadstock of Nestleton, ON and Brian Samis of Port Perry, Home to Vegas is trained by Bob Broadstock and he sped 250-yards in :18.190 for an 82 speed index.

Horsepeople and fans alike praised the solid season at Ajax and hope for continued growth. “I thought it was a great season,’ said owner and trainer Lynn Farrell. “The work done by Emilio [Trotta] and Walter Lowe [trackman] was amazing; they were great to deal with and did everything to meet our expectations and bring everyone in the industry together.” Woodbine racetrack’s track announcer Robert Geller, who has called Quarter Horse races at Sunland Park in New Mexico, was making his second visit to Ajax on the final day. “Ajax is a charming facility and from my years of calling Quarter Horses, wanted to reconnect before heading back [to Sunland] for the winter,” said Geller. “And I want to support the track. I feel delighted that I went to what was a very strong day. I was pleasantly surprised with my handicapping also. I will not leave it as long for my next visit.”

Ontarioracing.com will have a recap of the season later this week, continue with coverage of the Bank of America Challenge races coming up on Oct. 29 and regularly feature the horses and humans of the sport through the winter.

(Photos of First Down the Track/Home to Vegas by Laurie Overton)