



## **PRESS RELEASE - AJAX DOWNS**

### **He's Back! Ajax Horse Of The Year 'Country Boy' Returns In Picov Maturity Trials**

**AJAX DOWNS, THURSDAY MAY 18, 2017** – Ajax Downs' reigning Horse of the Year, Country Boy 123, returns from a winter vacation Sunday May 21 to compete in one of two, very exciting trial races for the upcoming Picov Maturity worth \$50,000.

There are two trials, with a total of 16 Quarter Horses, for the June 4 Maturity, The fastest 10 horses advance to the final.

Country Boy 123 is one of a remarkable four Horses of the Year competing in the two 300-yard trial races.

Now a 4-year-old, the giant Country Boy 123, owned by Ruth Barbour, was a popular runner in 2016, winning six of his seven races at Ajax including the Picov Derby and the Adequan Ajax Derby Challenge. The gelding got a chance to race against the best in North America in the \$200,000 at Los Alamitos racetrack in Orange County, California and he finished a close fourth, just one length behind American star Jess Good Reason.

"Last year he looked like a big kid," said Barbour of Hillsburgh, ON. "He feels so different his year. He's a man, he's massive."

It won't be an easy task for Country Boy and his rider Cory Spataro in his trial, which goes as race seven on Sunday. The gelding drew post position one and there are seven tough rivals to his outside including the very dangerous Alakazaam from Full Circle Racing of Greg and Sue Watson of Bethany, ON and Brian Cummings of Pickering.

The first trial for the Picov Maturity is race six and has lured three previous Horses of the Year including fan favourite One Kool Wave, who has won 21 races in his career.

Post time for the first of eight races at Ajax on Sunday is 12:55 p.m.