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**PRESS RELEASE - AJAX DOWNS**

**Country Boy 123 breaks 8-year-old Track Record**

**AJAX DOWNS, AUGUST 5, 2018** - Reigning Horse of the Year **COUNTRY BOY 123** needed a track record performance to defeat the previously unbeaten Had to Be Ivory in Sunday's QROOI Distance Series Overnight Stake on a steamy August afternoon.

In the first meeting of the hotshot sophomore Had to Be Ivory and 5-year-old Country Boy 123, the pair bounced off each other soon after the start of the 400-yard race and hooked up for an early duel.

Under Ajax Downs' leading rider Cory Spataro, Country Boy 123 then kicked it into high gear and took off to win in the **scorching time of :19.640, bettering an eight-year-old mark of :19.660 set by champion One Kool Wave**. The time translated into a hefty 108 speed index for Country Boy 123.

"I tried not to let the bumping faze me, it kind of caught me off guard a bit,' said Spataro who is from Innisfil, Ontario. "For about 100 yards the two horses separated a bit and Country Boy started taking it easy so I brought him next to Had to Be Ivory and he took off again and set a track record."

Country Boy 123 has won all five of his races this season and 16 of his 24 career starts with earnings of over \$280,000.

The flashy bay gelding is owned by Ruth Barbour and trained by Bryn Robertson, who also trains Had to be Ivory. Country Boy 123 was the Ajax Downs Horse of the Year in 2016 and 2017 and is better than ever this season.

Also on the strong racing card which yielded an increase in wagering of 44 percent over the same day last year were two trials for the Ontario Sires Stakes Futurity. Carlos the second, owned by Heste Sport, Inc. of King, ON and trained by Pontypool's Jason Pascoe, won the first trial under jockey Ed Walton.

Top trainer Joe Tavares, who won three races on the nine-race card, sent out first time starter Perryfunnysteven to win the second trial for his wife Christine Tavares. Brian Bell was the winning rider.

Ajax celebrated Sports Day at the track with ticket giveaways to upcoming games for major Toronto teams.

Upcoming events at Ajax Downs include the Ontario Sires Stakes Derby Trails on August 12 and the popular Family Day on August 19.

For more information please visit [www.ajaxdowns.com](http://www.ajaxdowns.com).

*(Photo below of COUNTRY BOY 123 winning the Aug. 5 Distance Series Overnight Stake by New Image Media)*

