



PRESS RELEASE - AJAX DOWNS

Countryfried Chicken takes Ontario Bred Derby; champion Had to Be Ivory Sets Track Record in Distance Series



Countryfried Chicken gets a hug from jockey Helen Vanek in the winner's circle with trainer Jason Pascoe (far left) and owner/breeder Milena Kwiecien (third from left); Clive Cohen/New Image Media

AJAX DOWNS, AUGUST 11, 2021 - Milena Kwiecien's homebred 3-year-old **COUNTRYFRIED CHICKEN** won a thrilling 10th running of the Ontario Bred Derby on a steamy August 11 afternoon of Quarter Horse racing at Ajax Downs. The feisty bay gelding used his brilliant speed from the gate under jockey Helen Vanek to take the early lead in the 300-yard race, worth \$57,060, and held off late bids by Twixt of Fate and Bogie Wheels to win by a head. Trained by Jason Pascoe of Pontypool, Ontario, Countryfried Chicken sizzled the distance in 15.317 for a career-best 97 speed index. As the 8 to 5 second favourite, he paid \$5.20 to win and completed a hefty Pick 4 payoff of \$1,107.34.

Twixt of Fate, owned by Rickard Wincikaby of New Liskeard, grabbed second by a head over Bogie Wheels, owned by James Bogar of Cameron.

Countryfried Chicken, a son of Country Chicks Man from La Wanda by Fdd Dynasty, had won the fastest of two Trials for the Ontario Bred Derby on July 28. The Derby final was his fourth career win in 15 races and he boosted his earnings to over \$67,000.

"Everybody has done such a good job with this guy," said Vanek, who now has nine wins for the season. "He can be a little temperamental, but he stood patiently and we were able to get him away from that gate beautifully," said Vanek. "Once we get out of the gate, he is a wonderful little racehorse."

Pascoe, the meet's leading trainer with 19 victories, said the key to Countryfried Chicken's success has been his maturity. "He didn't really focus that much as a 2-year-old and even this spring in Oklahoma. But his last four races here have been really good."



Kwiecien, who races and breeds horses and is based in Burlington, is currently the leading owner with 11 victories.

*There was plenty of excitement earlier in the day when 2019 Horse of the Year **HAD TO BE IVORY**, with jockey **Cory Spataro**, set a track record for 400 yards while winning the **QROOI Distance series, Leg 2**, winning by an easy 2 1/2 lengths in a time of 19.443, beating his own record of 19.60 set in 2019. His speed index of 111 was one of the highest posted by a horse at Ajax Downs in a decade.

"As soon as those gates opened, he just flew out of there," said Spataro. "I've never really experienced too many like that."

The Ontario bred 6-year-old by Ivory James, owned and bred by Carol and Jaime Robertson and trained by Bryn Robertson, defeated Countrys Comin Bac, Spy for the Senate and Country Boy 123 for his second win in 2021 and 15th win in 20 career starts.

Trainer Tom Dunlap and jockey Ramiro Castillo won three races on the day, two for owner Rick Crispi of Guelph. Castillo now moves into a tie for second for leading rider with Spataro with 11 wins, two behind Ismael Mosquera.

*Quarter Horse racing resumes **Wednesday August 18 with the running of the Ontario Sires Stakes Maturity** and a t-shirt giveaway with each program purchase. Fans must pre-register to attend the races at www.ajaxdowns.com and registration opens Monday, August 16. Follow Ajax Downs on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook @AjaxDowns.com and catch all the racing action on our [Youtube channel](#).

August 11 live stream of races and interviews - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITQU4Pb3JC4>

Photo - Had to Be Ivory sizzled to a track record win in the QROOI Distance Series, Leg 2 (Clive Cohen photo)

