



PRESS RELEASE - AJAX DOWNS

Sunshine and Smiles on Opening Day at Ajax Downs



Ontario bred One Fabulous Wave scored a 12 to 1 upset in one of two Trials for the Open Derby on Ajax Downs' opening day (Clive Cohen photo)

AJAX DOWNS, WEDNESDAY, MAY 10, 2023 - A warm and sunny May afternoon greeted the Ontario Quarter Horses and their fans as Ajax Downs opened its 2023 season on Wednesday. A big crowd and an exciting seven-race card led to a **record day of wagering for an opening day**, up nearly 10 percent from a previous record set in 2013.

The afternoon began with a tribute to the late **Norman Picov**, builder of the new Ajax Downs, horse owner and breeder, and philanthropist, who passed away on February 18.



It was the grey filly Power Oak who took the first race of the new season, streaking to victory in the 220-yard dash for last year's leading owner and trainer combination Milena Kwiecien of Burlington, ON and Jason Pascoe of Pontypool. Power Oak was ridden by JB Botello.

"It's exciting winning on opening day," said Botello, who also won the last race of the afternoon on Pascoe's own filly Aquatica.

The new season started with a bang with two Trial dashes for the inaugural running of the **Quarter Racing Owners of Ontario Open Derby** for 3-year-olds. And if the results of the Trials are any indication, the May 24 final of the Open Derby should be a thriller.

ONE FABULOUS WAVE, a 12 to 1 longshot, won the first Trial by a neck under jockey Josh Scott for owners Carol and Jaime Robertson and trainer Bryn Robertson. The Ontario-bred gelding by One Fabulous Eagle broke sharply at the outset of the 300-yard race and powered to a narrow win over Snow Moose, winner of last year's Alex Picov Futurity. The top five finishers in the first Trial were separated by just over half a length.

"Last year he was a big, green 2-year-old, " said Scott. "As a 3-year-old he's started to come into himself." It was the first victory in six races for One Fabulous Wave whose time of 15.494, a 93 speed index, was the fastest of the two Trials.

The second Trial was won by Richard Wincikaby's **SOUR CANDY**, an Ontario bred by Jess Good Candy, who remained unbeaten with his win by a neck over Dam I'm Relentless. Ridden by 2022's leading jockey Tony 'TP' Phillips, who won two races on the day, Sour Candy is trained by Michelle Woodley. His time of 15.539 was good for a 91 speed index.

The top 10 times from the two trials advance to the final.

The **25-day Ajax Downs meeting** takes place on Wednesdays through October 25 with a 1:30 first race post time. There will also be Ajax Downs' popular Special Event Sundays, one per month, beginning with a Father's Day celebration on June 18 and a Special Event Monday card, United Way Day, on October 9. First race post time on the Special Event days is 12:55 p.m.

Admission to Ajax Downs is always free and the trackside picnic tables allow fans to see the horses and racing action up close. Fans can also watch and wager on Ajax Downs racing on the www.HPIBet.com platform. Keep up to date on news and events at the track by following us on social media @AjaxDowns and at www.ajaxdowns.com.



It was a sweet win by Sour Candy in the second Trial for the Open Derby (Clive Cohen photo)