



PRESS RELEASE - AJAX DOWNS

Jockey Race Heats Up at Ajax Downs!



Jockey **RAMIRO CASTILLO** (winning aboard **Fly Belle Cartel** last month) is in a tight race for Ajax Downs' **Champion Rider of 2023**. New Image Media/Clive Cohen photo

AJAX DOWNS, SEPTEMBER 19, 2023 - With only six dates left in the 2023 Ajax Downs Quarter Horse calendar, much of the remaining racing has championship implications. In particular, the jockey's race for the most Quarter Racing Owners of Ontario, Inc. points is a doozy with three riders battling it out for the year-end trophy.

Ajax Downs' 20th day of the season is this **Wednesday, September 20** with a first race post time of 12:55. The seven-race card includes the QROOI Overnight Distance Series which has lured **FIRST COLD WAVE**, who won the Ontario Sires Stakes Maturity on Sept. 3 and is one of the top older horses of the year. The Distance Series will be First Cold Wave's first attempt at 440-yards. Helen Vanek rides.

Also in the Distance Series field is long-distance specialist **JESS A DEAL**, who will be ridden by Ramiro Castillo, the very fast 3-year-old **DARK N STORMY**, with Castillo's son Alexis Sanchez on board, **HANOVER HILL THERESA**, with Carly Furlonger riding and **JESS CAROLINAS AWARD** with Tony Phillips up.

The race for the jockey championship in 2023 is currently a three-way battle. **JB BOTELLO**, who does double-duty riding in Alberta and Ontario, has 189 points, including 16 wins this season at Ajax Downs.



Botello, who is in his ninth year of riding Quarter Horses, has 31 wins in Canada and is currently in the midst of a career year.

BRIAN BELL, one of Ajax Downs' all-time leading riders who is nearing 800 career wins, has 188 points and leads all riders this year at Ajax with 20 victories. And **RAMIRO CASTILLO**, originally from Mexico and a previous champion jockey at Ajax, also has 188 points which includes 19 wins at the meeting.

Will it be the jock from the West continuing to hold his Eastern rivals at bay or will Castillo and Bell get the upper hand in the final days of the season? Come on out to Ajax Downs to find out!

*A reminder that there is a special **Thanksgiving Monday card of racing at Ajax Downs, October 9**, with a pumpkin giveaway and decorating event for kids.

*For more information about racing dates and events please visit www.ajaxdowns.com. To get involved as a Quarter Horse owner, contact the QROOI at www.qrooi.com.

A promotional banner for Ajax Downs Race Track. The background shows a horse race in progress. The text "Live Like The Gates Just Opened" is written in a large, bold, red, italicized font at the top. Below it, in black text, is "Live Quarter Horse Racing May to October Wednesdays & One Sunday a Month & Thanksgiving Monday". At the bottom, it says "Watch our website for all this seasons events www.ajaxdowns.com" followed by social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. On the left side of the banner is a circular logo for Ajax Downs Race Track, established in 1969, with the text "AJAX DOWNS RACETRACK" and stars.