

# **PRESS RELEASE**

**Days of Firsts: Trainer McInerney's First Winner Takes Auction Futurity;  
jockey Benitez wins his first two stakes**



***FATE ZOOMIN, a 2-year-old filly, wins the \$35,650 Stallion Auction Futurity;  
first win for trainer John McInerney, first stakes win for  
jockey Christian Benitez  
New Image Media photo***

**AJAX DOWNS, JUNE 26, 2024** - It was an afternoon of firsts at Ajax Downs on June 26 as trainer **JOHN MCINERNEY** won his first race sending out Richard Wincikaby's **FATE ZOOMIN** to win the \$35,650 Stallion Auction Futurity. The 2-year-old filly was also the first stakes winner for 21-year-old jockey **Christian Benitez** who doubled up when he won the **\$34,020 Unclassified Stakes** aboard **James Bogar's LADY ALICE**.

Fate Zoomin, making her second career start for owner and breeder Wincikaby of Alliston, ON, broke sharply from her rail post position, cleared her rivals and then held off a fast closing Last Cold Bud to win the 250-yard Futurity by a neck in a time of 13.740, good for a 76 speed index. The filly is from the first Ontario crop of Wincikaby's stallion Peightnt Your Fate. Fate Zoomin was well regarded by the betting public at 4 to 5 and she paid \$3.60 to win.

McInerney, one of Picov and Ajax Downs' all-time top jockeys, began training the small Wincikaby stable this year at his training farm with his wife Michelle Woodley, also a top trainer. "I'm speechless, this is my first win ever," said McInerney.

Fate Zoomin finished second in the QROOI Bonus Futurity on June 12, her first career race.

"I honestly thought this filly would be ready early," said McInerney. "I was a little worried about her coming back in two weeks from her first race but she overcame it."

Young rider Benitez, who is from Mexico, followed his older brother Diego to Canada last year and rode one winner from 24 mounts in Alberta. Since moving to Ajax Downs this year, he has eight winners to lead all riders.

***(Photo below: Trainer John McInerney (second from left) saddled his first winner, Fate Zoomin, in the Stallion Auction Futurity for owner and breeder Richard Wincikaby (third from right) - New Image Media photo)***



\*Benitez swept the stakes races on Wednesday when he guided **James Bogar's homebred LADY ALICE** to victory in the Unclassified Stakes in a rainstorm at 330 yards. The daughter of Fdd Dynasty - Leanintoit had finished a troubled fifth in one of the two Trials for the Unclassified Stakes but broke smartly from post two in the final and at 8 to 1, drew off to win by 1 1/4 lengths. Tcb Stormy Episode finished second for Jennifer Zurowski and Heste Sport's Sugar Boy Perry was third. Lady Alice paid \$18.00 to win and keyed a **huge superfecta (top four finishers) payoff of \$2,055.00.**

"Alice seemed super focused right from the time the jockey jumped up on her," said Ashley Bogar. "We all love the racing and this was super exciting."

Lady Alice was one of two winners on the day for Bogar, who trains his own horses on his farm in Cameron, ON. Bogar has 10 winners after eight racing days to lead all owners and trainers.

*(Photo below - LADY ALICE (Christian Benitez up) flies to victory in the Unclassified Stakes for owner, trainer and breeder James Bogar)*



\*Racing resumes at Ajax Downs on **Wednesday July 3** with the final of the popular **Ontario Bred Derby for 3-year-olds**. Do you have a group or company event? Call ahead to reserve the trackside VIP room to enjoy food, drink and mutuels. Parking and admission are always free at Ajax Downs. You can watch and wager on the races trackside or from the expansive simulcast room. Wagering is also available through [www.HPIBET.com](http://www.HPIBET.com). Want to get involved in **Quarter Horse ownership**? Contact the QROOI at 905 - 426-7050 for details. Follow Ajax Downs on social media @AjaxDowns and visit our website, [www.AjaxDowns.com](http://www.AjaxDowns.com) for news, track programs and more information.

#### **STALLION AUCTION FUTURITY REPLAY**

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kkro-EWbck4>

#### **UNCLASSIFIED STAKES REPLAY**

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mP5h5IIOu7E&t=462s>