



## PRESS RELEASE

### Great Day for the Return of Quarter Horse Racing at Ajax Downs



***Ramiro Castillo aboard Double Dashin Corona gives a thumbs up after winning the first race of the 2025 Ajax Downs Quarter Horse season on May 7 for trainer Bob Broadstock.***

***New Image Media photo***

**AJAX DOWNS, MAY 8, 2025** - Ajax Downs' 56th racing season had a fabulous beginning on May 7 with warm, sunny weather and a big crowd that was thrilled to see Quarter Horse racing return. The horse people were excited to be back too, filling the entry box with their prized horses in seven races including two Trials for the \$30,000 QROOI Open Derby for 3-year-olds.

It was a great day for owner **John Wilson** of New Liskeard, trainer Scott Reid and jockey Christian Benitez who combined for two wins, a second and a third on the afternoon including a win by **SASSIES BEST** in the fastest of the two Open Derby Trials.

Purchased in January at the Heritage Winter Mixed Sale in Oklahoma for \$23,000, Sassies Best had the best start of her six rivals and led all the way, posting a mild upset at 6 to 1, a \$14.10 return for a \$2 bet. A Texas bred by top sire Kiss My Hocks, Sassies Best posted a time of 15.809 and she was winning for the first time in her sixth career start.

The winner avoided a lot of bumping behind her which resulted in the runner-up Nadir being disqualified from second and placed seventh. Paint the Meun, bought through the Quarter Racing Owners of Ontario horse-loan program, was moved up to second with Kissin Ella placed third.

It was a different story in the second Trial as heavily favoured **HAD TO BE FABULOUS**, last year's High Point 2-year-old filly, coasted to a very easy win in the second Trial for Carol and Jaime Robertson and trainer Bryn Robertson. Had to Be Fabulous was ridden by **Ismael Mosquiera** who was riding for the first time since July 2024 when he was injured at Fort Erie racetrack. This was the sixth win in seven races for Ontario bred Had to Be Fabulous who raced 300 yards in 15.863. John Wilson's Flyin Lady, at 24 to 1, was second and Jason Pascoe's Annies Best Card grabbed third at 12 to 1, setting up a \$569 superfecta payoff.

The final for the Open Derby is May 21 with the 10 fastest times advancing.

The Robertsons and Mosqueira were also two-time winners on the day as Had to Be Ivy was a big winner in the seventh race, her fourth victory in her last five races dating back to last fall. The 5-year-old mare is a half sister to Had to be Fabulous and multiple Horse of the Year Had to Be Ivory.

Racing continues at Ajax Downs next Wednesday, May 14 with a first race post time of 1:45 p.m. For information on how you can get involved in owning a Quarter Horse, contact the QROOI at [www.qrooi.com](http://www.qrooi.com).

You can reserve Ajax Downs' VIP room for your group or celebration by contacting [www.ajaxdowns.com](http://www.ajaxdowns.com).

Photos: Sassies Best (red silks) won the fastest of two Trials for the QROOI Open Derby.

Had to Be Fabulous won the second Trial in easy fashion.