

For Immediate Release

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BatalJ Launcher vaults to victory in Ricci Memorial

Scarborough, Maine (August 15, 2009) *BatalJ Launcher* trotted in near track record time on Saturday to claim victory in the eighth edition of the \$50,000 Joseph Ricci Memorial at Scarborough Downs with driver Shawn Gray calling the shots for trainer Joseph Nelson. The tandem navigated the southern Maine harness oval timed in 1:57.4 – The third fastest trotting mile ever recorded at the 59-year-old racing venue.

BatalJ Launcher benefited from the misfortune of others early on, gaining the lead as heavily-backed *Scorpion Moon* (Kevin Switzer, Jr.) made a misstep barreling into the first turn before quickly dissuading the opening volley fired by hometown favorite *Kerogen* (Kim Ireland). From that point forth the post-time favorite dictated the terms and despite persistent challenges was never in serious peril.

“He’s obviously a pretty nice horse,” said winning driver Shawn Gray. “And he felt pretty sturdy during the mile. Once *Scorpion Moon* was out of the picture I just let him go where he wanted. He still had plenty left.”

Bred in Sweden, the ten-year-old son of *Tap In* first came to prominence racing in Great Britton, winning the prestigious Roosevelt Cup at Tir Prince in Wales before being relocating to North America. He began his career on the left side of the Atlantic by winning five straight races in Canada and is now a mainstay in the Preferred-level trotting classes at Yonkers Raceway in New York. The well-travelled trotter was sent north to compete in the Ricci Memorial this month by co-owners Green Racing of Milford Delaware and the Meadowbranch Stables of Lynden, Ontario, Canada.

The 1:57.4 clocking was just 1/5th second off the Scarborough track standard that was established by *Friendly Face* (Esa Lahtinen) in the 1988 edition of the Legislator Trot and then equaled by *Dink Adoo* (Robert Sumner) in the elimination round of the 2008 Ricci Memorial.

The Joseph Ricci Memorial is Scarborough Downs’ marquee event, held annually to honor the memory of its longtime owner.

Scarborough Downs proudly features live harness racing every Thursday, Friday and Saturday evening at 4:15 pm (EDT). The popular Sunday matinees feature a 1:30 pm post time.

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