



## COMMUNIQUÉ

For Immediate Release

### The Countdown Continues, 42 Days Away from the 27<sup>th</sup> Edition

#### **THE TRADITION IS ALIVE: A RECOVERING JACQUES VILLENEUVE PROMISES TO BE PART OF THE UPCOMING GRAND PRIX SKI-DOO DE VALCOURT**

Valcourt, January 8, 2009 – Since 1986, there has been only a few Grand Prix Ski-Doo de Valcourt editions that Jacques Villeneuve, by far the most passionate and most courageous driver of Canada's motorsport history, has not entered. Comes February 20, 21 and 22, expect the St-Cuthbert (Québec) veteran to honour his annual rendez-vous with his fans. He intends to show up healthy, having fully recovered after an accident in the season's opener at Beausejour (Manitoba) left him with a broken leg. In fact, as he stated this week, he could have entered the Eagle River vintage weekend kicking off tomorrow, or the World Championship Snowmobile Derby next week. But wisdom has prevailed and Villeneuve will instead return to the track at Boonville (New York), January 31<sup>st</sup> and February 1<sup>st</sup>.

**"My tighbone has healed well. I don't still put all my weight on my wounded leg but I could have raced my friend Guy Montminy's vintage sled this weekend",** says Villeneuve who for a change, doesn't sound frustrated to be home and away from the iced ovals. He adds: **" I felt that I had to be a little more cautious and choose to return to the track only at the end of the month. This way, I have better chances to do all of the Eastern Pro Tour races including of course, going back to Valcourt where I couldn't race last year."**

For the legendary driver who turned fifty a few years ago and can claim a little less than forty winter seasons spent on the iced oval tracks, evidently the flame is still burning. Although, he admits that he is seeing some things differently now. **"There is stuff that I don't like or wish to do anymore. For example, I am no longer spending my nights working on my sleds. I let others play the mechanics. On the other hand, I still enjoy travelling and of course being the fastest on track. Here at home, not much beats a walk to the shop in my garage and the sound of an engine on my dyno. I am always willing to devote plenty of time for more power",** says a very serene Villeneuve.

As for the upcoming Grand Prix Ski-Doo de Valcourt, the Quebec driver intends to hold the handlebars of the 1979 440 Vintage Sled of his friend Montminy and of course, his Ski-Doo Champ 440 that hasn't suffered much from the Beausejour accident earlier this year. Jacques Villeneuve has three wins on the Circuit Yvon Duhamel iced oval. He succeeded in 1986, a few weeks after his return to snowmobile racing and his third World Championship crown earned at Eagle River and also claimed consecutive wins in 2005 and 2006 at Valcourt. The following year, a knee injury sent him back to his trailer on Friday and forced him to withdraw from the program. In 2008, a major accident at Eagle River in January ended his racing season prematurely. With his loyal Jean-Marc Huard at his side, enrolled in 1995 to get the maximum of the engines and the clutches and with Choko and Wasteco as main sponsors, Jacques intends to give good time to the Valcourt spectators on February 20, 21 and 22. Villeneuve is expected to face Eastern Pro Tour regulars Jeff de Jong (Pembroke, Ont), Tony Pettinelli (Rome, NY), Jason Smith (Evans Mills, NY). Larry Day (Lyman, ME) and many others, including defending 2008 Pro Champ winner, Dustin Wahl of Greenbush, Minnesota.

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The North-American snocross stars will meet again this weekend in Minneapolis (Minnesota) for the ISOC Series third round. Québec's Mathieu Morin (Val d'Or) and Dave Allard (Saint-Félicien), both on Ski-Doo, are expected to enter the event. The 29 years old Allard won the Quebec SCM snocross season's opener at Monts-Valin on December 20. The current *Pro Open* Amsoil Championship Snocross Series leaders are Tucker Hibbert, Ross Martin and Vermont's T.J. Gulla with respectively 74, 59 et 57 points. Mathieu Morin and David Allard are respectively 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> with 30 and 26 points. Brett Bender from Colden (New York) is 16<sup>th</sup> with 23 points. All of these drivers have been invited to enter the upcoming Winter X-Games snocross program, January 22-24, in Colorado. All those drivers expected in Valcourt later in the season will be featured on ESPN, January 23 for the first round, and January 24 for the medal race. Both times, shows will be airing at 9:00 pm, ET.

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Tickets for the 27th Grand Prix Ski-Doo de Valcourt are now on sale at discounted prices until February 1, 2009. Prices currently range from \$8.00 for general admission on Friday, to \$120.00 for a weekend access to a heated trackside suite. General admission tickets are at \$45.00 for the entire weekend and \$ 20.00 daily, for both Saturday and Sunday. All prices in Canadian currencies include taxes. One's can order now at the Grand Prix Ski-Doo de Valcourt ticket office opened from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday at 1 866 532-7543. Packages including accommodations are also offered. More details are available at [www.grandprixvalcourt.com](http://www.grandprixvalcourt.com)

Located a short 25 miles northwest of Sherbrooke, Québec, Valcourt is one and half hour away from Montréal and less than two and a half hours away from Plattsburg, New York, Burlington or Montpelier, Vermont and Laconia, New Hampshire.

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