

July 18, 2020

TALL DARK STRANGER REFUSES TO LOSE IN MEADOWLANDS PACE

Tall Dark Stranger is a danger, especially with his back to the wall.

Pushed to the max by old rival Papi Rob Hanover, Tall Dark Stranger battled back in deep stretch to win the \$636,650 Meadowlands Pace by a neck on Saturday night (July 18).

In a gutsy effort, Tall Dark Stranger, the 1-2 favorite, captured the first major stakes of the season for 3-year-old pacers. Normally, the Pace follows the North America Cup, but the ongoing pandemic shuffled the calendar. This time, the Pace was the division's leadoff event, and it was a dandy.

Tall Dark Stranger, last year's Dan Patch winner, took charge with a strong move down the backstretch. Papi Rob Hanover and driver David Miller ranged up to challenge on the turn and fought their way to a clear advantage in the stretch.

Even driver Yannick Gingras thought he and Tall Dark Stranger were finished.

"Honestly, at the top of the stretch, I thought he was beat," Gingras said. "This horse is just so gritty. He wants to fight them off. Papi was a half a length by me."

Tall Dark Stranger wasn't done in this shootout. He surged again, pushing back to secure the win and give Gingras his second Pace win.

It wrote another chapter in a rivalry that dates back to the 2019 Breeders Crown, where Tall Dark Stranger was elevated to victory when Papi Rob Hanover was disqualified for interference.

"I said after the Breeders Crown that he was coming back to win that race," Gingras said. "There are a lot of doubters out there, but tonight is the proof that my horse loves to fight."

Tall Dark Stranger improved his season mark to 3-for-3 with the 11th win of his 12-race career.

Nancy Takter, daughter of Hall of Famer Jimmy Takter, got her first Pace victory, following Linda Toscano as consecutive female training winners of The Meadowlands Racetrack's signature event.

It was also the second straight Pace win for sire Bettor's Delight following last year's 27-1 upset by Best In Show.

Tall Dark Stranger became the sport's latest millionaire for the ownership team of Crawford Farms, Marvin Katz, Caviart Farms and Howard Taylor.

The time for the mile was 1:47.2. Tall Dark Stranger paid \$3.00, \$2.10 and \$2.10.

Brett Pelling, all-time Pace training leader with four wins, settled for second and third, as Papi Rob Hanover returned \$3.60 and \$2.80 and Allywag Hanover paid \$2.40 to show.

ELIMINATION - 7/11/20 - 1:48.1

	Horse	Driver	Trainer
1	Tall Dark Stranger	Yannick Gingras	Nancy Takter
2	Captain Kirk	Joe Bongiorno	Tony Alagna
3	Papi Rob Hanover	David Miller	Brett Pelling
4	Captain Barbosa	Brian Sears	Tony Alagna
5	Manticore	Jordan Stratton	Bruce Saunders
6	Major Betts	Dexter Dunn	Mark Harder
7	Catch The Fire	Mike Wilder	John Ackley
8	Roll With JR	Tim Tetrick	Jeff Cullipher
9	Capt Midnight	Andrew McCarthy	Tony Alagna
10	Mocha On The Rocks	Scott Zeron	Jim Mulnix

\$636,650 FINAL - 7/18/20 - 1:47.2

	Horse	Driver	Trainer
1	Tall Dark Stranger	Yannick Gingras	Nancy Takter
2	Papi Rob Hanover	David Miller	Brett Pelling
3	Allywag Hanover	Tim Tetrick	Brett Pelling

2020

RACE 9 PACE	1 MILE	MEADOWLANDS PACE	\$636,650	Quarter times: 25.4, 53.2, 1:20.4, 1:47.2	TEMP. 84-0	TRACK: FAST	OFF: 10:16
5 Tall Dark Stranger	2 ^{01 1/4} 1 ^{1 1/4} 1 ^{HD} 2 ^{1/4} 1 ^{NK}	1:47.2 26.3	*0.50	Yannick Gingras	Nancy Takter		
9 Papi Rob Hanover	4 ⁰³ 4 ^{02 1/2} 2 ^{HD} 1 ^{1/4} 2 ^{NK}	1:47.2 26.3	5.00	David Miller	Brett Pelling		
4 Allywag Hanover	6 ^{04 3/4} 6 ^{03 3/4} 4 ^{01 1/4} 3 ^{1 3/4} 3 ¹	1:47.3 26.3	2.90	Tim Tetrick	Brett Pelling		
6 Manticore	8 ^{06 1/4} 8 ⁰⁵ 6 ^{02 1/4} 4 ^{3 1/4} 4 ^{2 1/2}	1:47.4 26.3	73.60	Jordan Stratton	Bruce Saunders		
3 Captain Barbosa	3 ^{1 1/2} 3 ^{2 1/2} 5 ^{2 1/4} 6 ^{5 1/4} 5 ⁵	1:48.2 27.1	23.30	Brian Sears	Tony Alagna		
2 Catch The Fire	2 ^{5 3/4} 5 ^{3 3/4} 7 ^{3 3/4} 17 ^{7 3/4} 6 ^{5 1/4}	1:48.3 27.1	36.00	Mike Wilder	John Ackley		
10 Captain Kirk	10 ^{1 1/4} 2 ^{1 1/4} 3 ¹ 5 ^{5 1/4} 7 ^{8 3/4}	1:49.1 28.1	50.20	Joe Bongiorno	Tony Alagna		
1 Roll With JR	1 ^{7⁵} 7 ^{4 3/4} 9 ⁵ 18 ^{9 1/4} 9P8 ^{9 3/4}	1:49.2 27.3	131.40	Corey Callahan	Jeff Cullipher		
7 Capt Midnight	7 ^{9^{0 7 3/4}} 9 ^{06 1/4} 8 ⁰⁴ 9 ^{9 3/4} 8P9 ^{9 1/2}	1:49.1 27.3	40.10	Andrew McCarthy	Tony Alagna		
8 Major Betts	8 ^{10^{10 3/4}} 10 ^{07 1/2} 10 ^{00 5 1/2} 10 ^{10 3/4} 10 ¹¹	1:49.3 27.4	62.00	Dexter Dunn	Mark Harder		

Winning Owners: Crawford Fms Rcg; M. Katz; Caviart Farms; H. Taylor

Winning Trainer: Nancy Takter

Exacta (5-9)	11.20
Trifecta (5-9-4)	26.00
10-cent Superfecta (5-9-4-6)	12.14