The 1977 Meadowlands Pace produced high drama and an unheard of $425,000 purse, the richest ever.

After BG’s Bunny set a world record of 1:54 in copping his elimination, he had to be scratched lame from the final and never raced again. Escort came into the Pace on a roll after a maiden two-year-old campaign. Carl LeCause piloted the three-year-old to the mild upset over Nat Lobell and Crash as the three betting favorites all hit the board.

The very first Meadowlands Pace was the first of only two that saw the eliminations and final in the same night. It also saw father and son in the same race, with Nat Lobell and driver Jack Kopas second while Jade Prince with John Kopas was seventh.

Big Towner, the only horse in the race who would go on to a million dollar career, was last for Del Insko. Del would later go on to capture racing’s first $2 million event with Land Grant three years later in the Wilson. Escort and BG’s Bunny went on to become prominent New Jersey sires, while the birth of the big money Meadowlands events was now officially underway.