The 1985 Meadowlands Pace turned into one of the most spectacular moments in harness racing history as heavily favored Nihilator rolled home to a stunning seven-and-a-quarter length victory over the best three-year-old pacing colts in the country.

The 1:50.3 final time equaled the world record for a race mile, but it was the explosive power with which Nihilator did it that had everyone gasping for breath.

In his Meadowlands Pace elimination a week earlier, Nihilator threw a bit of a scare into his admirers when longshot Anxious Robby actually passed him in mid-stretch before Nihilator fought back to win. Suddenly, a chink had appeared in the champion’s armor and several rivals, including Marauder and stablemate Pershing Square, were given strong consideration by the press and racing public.

Nihilator answered his critics with a performance that resembled Secretariat’s 31-length Belmont Stakes triumph in his Triple Crown season. Driver Bill O’Donnell put the rangy bay son of champion Niatross, a Pace winner in 1980, on the lead past the quarter and continued to pull away to the finish. His seven and a quarter victory stands as the biggest margin for a Meadowlands Pace winner.

Hall of Fame horseman Billy Haughton trained Nihilator for principal owner Lou Guida’s Wall Street Stable. Nihilator was coupled with four other Guida/Haughton stablemates in the Meadowlands Pace. The five pacers wound up sweeping five of the top six finishing positions, resulting in a $171,011.15 minus pool from an $829,000 show pool. The Pace pool of $1,168,010 established a harness racing industry record. The win payoff of $2.20 was the lowest in Pace history.