MUSCARA FULFILLS PACE DREAM WITH MACH THREE

When Joseph Muscara purchased Mach Three for a reported $2.2 million six weeks before the Meadowlands Pace, the 78-year-old construction executive said it was because he wanted to experience the thrill of competing in racing's premier events. “I felt that Mach Three would show me another end of the horse racing business that I had ever seen,” Muscara said. “Getting to race in the North America Cup and Meadowlands Pace are races I have never been in and probably would never get in on the approach I normally take. I really wanted to experience that. But I must also admit that I did look on this as an investment where I felt I would not lose money.”

Paired with John Campbell, the dominant driver in the track’s signature event, Mach Three turned out to be more than a sound investment as he crushed the 2003 Meadowlands Pace field in a stakes record time of 1:49 flat.

Muscara of Huntington Valley, Pennsylvania purchased Mach Three just prior to the $500,000 New Jersey Classic on June 1. The colt had trouble relaxing in that race and finished a disappointing third, but picked up a $60,000 paycheck for just three days’ work for his new owner.

Three weeks later, he finished second in Canada’s North America Cup to his stablemate Red River Hanover. Mach Three returned to the Meadowlands and a victory in his Pace elimination earned him the title of 3-5 favorite in the race.

Campbell put Mach Three to task early, clearing the lead past the half in a brisk 53 seconds. They repelled the challenge of Mini Me to the three-quarter pole, then held off the late bid of McArdle, who sat in the prime second-over position. In an awesome display of determination and speed, Mach Three dug in for a length and a half victory, shattering the stakes record by three-fifths of a second.

“I knew there would be a lot of early speed,” noted Campbell, who recorded an unprecedented seventh win in the Pace and his 20th million-dollar victory. “Put up a million dollars, and you’ll have four or five of them leaving hard. I wasn’t concerned about the fractions. When I moved him [three-wide on the backstretch], I was sure of him. He was full of himself, just swelled up.”

By the end of his three-year-old season, Mach Three had earned back $1,086,727 for Muscara.