The heated rivalry between Huntsville and Downbytheseaside reached a fever pitch in the $738,550 Crawford Farms Meadowlands Pace on Saturday night at the Meadowlands.

Huntsville held on by a head, gaining a 4-3 advantage in their eight showdowns. The only time neither got the victory was last month in the North America Cup – won by Fear The Dragon – where Huntsville was second and Downbytheseaside third.

Fear The Dragon was not nominated to The Pace, leaving Huntsville and Downbytheseaside to battle it out.

And battle they did.

Huntsville got away fourth in the early stages before charging past Blood Line to grab the lead down the backstretch.

The 1-5 favorite appeared comfortably in charge on the final turn as Downbytheseaside tipped outside for a long, grinding challenge.

Huntsville flashed past the three-quarter pole in 1:20 3/5 and the torrid pace started taking a toll.

In a display of guts and determination, Huntsville dug deep while Downbytheseaside relentlessly ate into his lead.

The finish line arrived just in time for last season’s 2-year-old champion to earn his first major win of this campaign.

It was the fifth Pace victory for driver Tim Tetrick, trailing only the recently retired Hall of Famer John Campbell, who had seven wins in the Meadowlands Racetrack’s signature event for 3-year-olds.

Trainer Ray Schnittker improved his Pace record to 2 for 2. He combined with Tetrick to win in 2010 with One More Laugh. Huntsville continued his remarkable consistency with a 12th win in 18 starts. He has never finished worse than second.

“My horse was tired late,” Tetrick said. “He kept pushing all the way to the wire.”

The time for the mile was a lifetime best 1:47 4/5 for the son of Somebeachsomewhere, who earned $369,275 for the ownership team of Schnittker, Ted Gewertz and Steven Arnold.

Huntsville paid $2.40, $2.10 and $2.10.

Downbytheseaside returned $2.80 and $2.40 as the 4-1 second choice.

Classic Pro paid $6 to show.

PAIR OF FIVES: Not only did Tetrick win his fifth Meadowlands Pace, but he registered five winners on the Meadowlands Pace Night program.

SOLID WAGERING: Attendance for the card was 10,111. All-source wagering totaled $3,823,629, which was less than last year’s $4.2 million, but that card included $747,891 in new money for a huge Jackpot Super Hi-5, which had a big carryover. On-track betting was $557,018, up almost $50,000 from 2016.

HUNTSVILLE DEAD GAME IN BIG M PACE

July 15, 2017

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