

ROAD TO THE PEPSI NORTH AMERICA CUP – TOP 10 (JULY 16, 2020)

1. Tall Dark Stranger

Owner(s): Crawford Farms Racing, Marvin Katz, Caviart Farms & Howard Taylor

Trainer: Nancy Takter

Driver: Yannick Gingras

Last year's Metro Pace, Breeders Crown, O'Brien Award and Dan Patch Award winner has looked superb through two starts this season and enters the Meadowlands Pace as the morning-line favourite. Took a mark of 1:47.4 in his season debut, the fastest mile this season by a three-year-old. He's the big dog and he looks poised to rule the yard all season.

2. Papi Rob Hanover

Owner(s): David McDuffee

Trainer: Brett Pelling

Driver: David Miller

The start of his three-year-old season hasn't gone completely as planned, thanks to terrible post position luck. Landed post-ten in his first two starts, charging home strong each time to finish second and third, respectively. But this weekend is the first major dance, the one that really counts and he would shock nobody with a winning effort from post-nine.

3. Tattoo Artist

Owner(s): Frank Cannon & Let It Ride Stables

Trainer: Dr. Ian Moore

Driver: Louis Philippe Roy

Last year's Ontario Sires Stakes champion is currently riding a three-race win streak, with each victory a bigger statement than the last. He's gone down the road in all three, including a dazzling 1:48.2 victory in his most recent, which just missed the all-time OSS record by a fifth of a second. Ontario's best will be ready to protect home turf.

4. Allywag Hanover

Owner(s): Allywag Stable

Trainer: Brett Pelling

Driver: David Miller/Tim Tetrick

Showed a couple glimpses of major talent as a rookie, but never reached the top. That has changed this season. Now racing for Brett Pelling, he's looked incredible posting three wins in three starts. Appears poised to give my top-two ranked horses a run in the Meadowlands Pace.

5. Capt Midnight

Owner(s): Marvin Katz, Kenneth Jacobs, Brad Grant & Capt Midnight Racing

Trainer: Tony Alagna
Driver: Andrew McCarthy

A rare bad night almost cost him a chance at the Meadowlands Pace, but he'll draw in as the also eligible with a stablemate bowing out for a different route. Following a steady and strong rookie campaign, he came back with a wicked performance in his season debut. Can't be overlooked.

6. Beaumont Hanover

Owner(s): Jack Darling Stables
Trainer: Jack Darling
Driver: Jody Jamieson

Posted a 1:49.4 score in his season debut and most recently took an OSS Gold division dominantly in 1:49.1. Squeezed in between were a couple narrow defeats. He's never raced bad and is showing that he's Grand Circuit material. Burst onto the scene late last-season in dominating fashion and is showing that those blowout wins had nothing to do with the company he was facing. He's the real deal.

7. Elver Hanover

Owner(s): Burke Racing Stable, Bridgette Jablonsky, Jason Melillo, JandT Silva Purnel & Libb
Trainer: Ron Burke
Driver: Chris Page

Perfect 10 for 10 and the fastest two-year-old pacer in history. Not a bad introduction for this Ohio superstar. Has only ventured away from Ohio for two starts, scoring back-to-back Grand Circuit victories last fall at The Red Mile. Won his season debut in an Ohio Sires Stakes and intrigue is high to see if he can keep the streak going and where he'll stack up against Grand Circuit rivals.

8. Captain Kirk

Owner(s): Brittany Farms, Marvin Katz, Brad Grant & Captain Kirk Racing
Trainer: Tony Alagna
Driver: Dexter Dunn/Joe Bongiorno

Posted a strong runner-up finish in the Meadowlands Pace elimination, charging home in :25.2. Went 1 for 9 as a rookie, but was right there in most starts and just got a little lost in the shadow of his stablemates and the top-ranked horse on this list. Strong qualifiers and two good starts this season have him looking like a player.

9. Captain Barbosa

Owner(s): Alagnafrankinthegym Stabl, Robert LeBlanc & David Anderson
Trainer: Tony Alagna
Driver: Andrew McCarthy/Brian Sears

Likely didn't get the credit he deserved for a solid two-year-old campaign. Grand Circuit winner, three-wins and 10 top-three finishes in 14 starts last year. Has comeback at three and caught the attention of many, which is notable considering he has yet to win in three starts. Came up half a length short to Allywag Hanover two-back in a 1:48 mile and then closed well in his Meadowlands Pace elimination to finish fourth. Both races he paced home in :25.3.

10. Groovy Joe

Owner(s): Hutt Racing Stable, Blake MacIntosh, Ozzie MacKay & Hoofbid Racing

Trainer: Blake MacIntosh

Driver: Matt Kakaley/James MacDonald

Was a model of consistency at two, winning seven of 10 and finishing second in the other three starts. Raced primarily in the New York Sires Stakes, finishing second in the State Championship. The start of his season didn't go exactly as connections would hope, but the ability was clearly there and he tapped into it in his most recent outing, scoring an outstanding 1:48.4 victory in a New York Sires Stakes event.

Honourable Mention (alphabetical order):

Beach Blanket Book

Owner(s): Hutt Racing Stable & Mac and Heim Stables

Trainer: Blake MacIntosh

Driver: Doug McNair

Catch The Fire

Owner(s): Ct Stables

Trainer: John Ackley

Driver: Mike Wilder

Chief Mate

Owner(s): Brittany Farms, Marvin Katz, Brad Grant & Captain Kirk Racing

Trainer: Tony Alagna

Driver: George Napolitano/Scott Zeron

Indictable Hanover

Owner(s): West Wins Stable, John Fielding & Mac Nichol

Trainer: Casie Coleman-Herlihy

Driver: Bob McClure

Roll With Jr

Owner(s): Pollack Racing & Jeff Cullipher

Trainer: Jeff Cullipher

Driver: Corey Callahan/Tim Tetrick/John De Long/Sam Widger/Doug McNair

