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Burlington entries get serious about NA Cup

Friday, June 11, 2010 - by Karen Briggs, USTA Web Newsroom Senior Correspondent



Karen Briggs

Campbellville, ON --- As of June 15, 63 sophomore pacers remained eligible to Canada's richest mile dash, the C\$1.5 million Pepsi North America Cup (scheduled for Saturday, June 26, at Mohawk Racetrack).

But it's the Burlington Stakes, divisions for which will go this Saturday night, June 12, at Mohawk, which really speak to which trainers are serious about pointing their colts towards the big payout at the end of the month.

The Burlington is the natural lead-in for the NA Cup, and 31 contenders have filled three C\$100,000 eliminations. Among them is the #1 choice in the Standardbred Canada Spring Book, Sportswriter, whose trainer [Casie Coleman](#) decided to forego the Hoosier Cup after her stable star had a mildly disappointing 3-year-old debut on May 29. Sportswriter finished second to 4-year-old former stablemate Kid Carson (now trained by Herb Holland) by a quarter of a length -- though the time for the mile was a sharp 1:50.2, with a :26.3 final quarter.

Sportswriter will face off against Dr. Ian Moore's well-regarded Malicious in the first of the three Burlington divisions, with the former having drawn post four (with [Mark MacDonald](#) in the bike) and the latter post one. Oddsmakers have pinned Sportswriter at even money, with Malicious the second choice at 7-2.

The second Burlington division also offers an interesting matchup, with Bruce Saunders' [Rock N Roll Heaven](#), victorious in his last three starts at the Meadowlands including the \$220,000 Berry's Creek and the \$200,000 New Jersey Sires Stakes final (where he delivered a blistering 1:48.3 mile) challenging Ideal Matters, who hails from the [Noel Daley](#)/Mike Vanderkemp stable. Unraced as a 2-year-old, Ideal Matters, who is in part Canadian-owned, has been making up for lost time by posting five wins in eight starts so far, and has never failed to pick up a check. He's rated at 8-5, while [Rock N Roll Heaven](#) gets the nod at 3-5.

Handicapping is a bit murkier for the third and final Burlington split, though Brenda Teague's [Delmarvalous](#) (one of her four Burlington entries, along with Dr Dreamy, Windfall Blue Chip, and [I'm Gorgeous](#)) may be well-positioned to score his first victory of his sophomore year. Also worth watching may be McArdle son Mcaracas, sent out by Ben Baillargeon and piloted by brother Mario. The Canadian-owned colt, who has snagged post three in the third dash, recently demolished his competition in the final of the Diplomat series at Mohawk, and followed that up with another victory in the Bud Light at Flamboro Downs.

One thing's certain: the handicapping picture for the North America Cup will be a good deal clearer by the close of Saturday night, as the cream of this year's crop of glamour boys begins to emerge.

Editor's Note: The views contained in this column are that of the author alone, and do not necessarily represent the opinions or views of the United States Trotting Association.

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Top contenders for the C\$1.5 million North America Cup for 3-year-old pacers will be in action this weekend at tracks across the U.S. and Canada.
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George and Brenda Teague will be busy Saturday night at Mohawk, sending out four entries in three divisions of the Burlington Stakes.



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