

O'Brien Awards Integrity Policy and Eligibility Criteria (updated October, 2025)

The Standardbred Canada Board of Directors has approved changes to the O'Brien Awards eligibility criteria.

The new Integrity Policy is as follows:

Horse Category Awards

A horse is ineligible for an O'Brien Award if the horse's owner has served or is currently serving a penalty for a period of 180 days or more during the calendar year. The horse also remains ineligible if the penalty extends into the following year. Additionally, horses that receive a Class I, II, III drug, or TCO2 positive are ineligible.

Trainer of the Year

Keith Waples Driver of the Year

O'Brien Award of Horsemanship

Armstrong Breeder of the Year

Leading Owner

Any trainer who receives a Class I, II, III, or TCO2 positive, or anyone who receives a suspension of 90 days or more, at any point during the calendar year leading up to the O'Brien Awards, is ineligible for the O'Brien Award for Trainer of the Year, the O'Brien Award of Horsemanship, and the Keith Waples Driver of the Year. Additionally, any trainer with two or more Class IV or Class V positives during the same period is also ineligible for these awards.

Future Star Award

To be eligible for the Future Star Award, a candidate must:

- Be 30 years of age or younger as of December 31 of the award year.
- Be in the first five full-time years of their career as a trainer or driver.
- Have made the majority of their starts (over 50 per cent) in Canada in the year of consideration.
- Cannot win this award more than once.
- Does not have to be a Canadian citizen.
- Must meet the full-time participation requirement:
 - Trainers: minimum of 75 starts per calendar year.
 - Drivers: minimum of 150 starts per calendar year.

The following candidates will be excluded from consideration for the Future Star Award:

- Any candidate who has any one or a number of suspensions totalling 60 days or more in any of the five years of eligibility, or carrying over into the year of presentation.
 - Any trainer who has received a positive test for a Class I, II, or III drug, or a TCO2 positive, in any of the five years of eligibility.
 - Any trainer who receives two or more Class IV or Class V positives during the calendar year, or at any time prior to the presentation of the O'Brien Awards.
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Notwithstanding Clause

Notwithstanding anything contained herein to the contrary, Standardbred Canada reserves the right to determine the eligibility of any horse, individual or entity at its sole discretion.

Additional Eligibility Criteria

Horse Eligibility

For horses to be eligible for consideration for an O'Brien Award, the horse must have had a minimum of three (3) starts in Canada between January 1st and November 30th, **in addition to** any Breeders Crown starts, when the Breeders Crown is hosted in Canada. The type of race (stakes, overnight) is irrelevant and schooling and qualifying races do not represent a start.

Armstrong Breeder of the Year Award

- Breeder must either be a resident of Canada or have a Canadian based breeding operation **AND** must fit one of the following criteria:

A minimum of 50 per cent of their starters, in the current year, must either be Canadian-foaled or Canadian-sired OR a minimum of 5 starters, in the current year, are Canadian-foaled or Canadian-sired.

- Earnings/wins of offspring for whom the member is the breeder of record.
- Stakes wins by offspring in a given year for whom the member is the breeder of record.
- Minimum 50 Canadian start requirement.

O'Brien Award of Horsemanship

The O'Brien Award of Horsemanship recognizes a trainer who exemplifies the high standard of

horsemanship that was demonstrated by Joe O'Brien during his career, including the outstanding care and training of Standardbreds, respect for the horse, a commitment to equine welfare and success in the development and training of young horses.

Canadian-based horse people will be evaluated on criteria which focuses on the development and performance of young horses within their care, for the given year. While the award will be open to both large and small operations, the focus of this award is on the hands-on horseperson who is able to achieve success within their racing jurisdiction, and possibly beyond.

Criteria for evaluation includes integrity, professionalism, and a commitment to putting the welfare of horses first. Other measures for evaluation include performance ratings, stakes wins as a percentage of overall starts, and race lines that indicate signs of development and maturity.

Trainer of the Year—Trainers must have a minimum of 30 percent of their total starts (up to and including Nov. 30) in Canada.