Media Excellence Award Criteria

The Standardbred Canada Media Excellence Award Program is aimed at honouring those who have, through one piece of exceptional work, covered Canadian harness racing in a manner that is extraordinary and of broad national appeal.

GENERAL CRITERIA:

Media Excellence Awards will be given out in three categories:

- Outstanding Written Work
- Outstanding Video, Film or Broadcast
- Outstanding Photograph

Submissions for award consideration must pertain to some aspect of the Canadian Standardbred racing industry. Submissions for must have been published or broadcast for the first time between November 1 of the previous calendar year and October 31 of the current calendar year.

Contestants in the media categories are limited to one submission per category. If more than one submission is received in any category, the author or producer/director will decide which submission should be entered.

Submissions must pertain to Canadian racing and must have appeared in a publication or through a broadcast medium that is editorially supervised and accessible to the industry and the general public. Standardbred Canada staff will be responsible for determining what mediums are considered 'editorially supervised' upon submission. Online mediums will be allowed, however, personal blogs and other self-publishing websites and distribution vehicles will not be considered.

All submissions must be received by or before the deadline date and be submitted under the correct procedure. Late and improper submissions will not be considered for award.

Criteria and Procedures for Submissions

All Media Excellence Award submissions, including entries in Outstanding Written Work, Outstanding Video, Film or Broadcast, and Outstanding Photograph, must be submitted to Standardbred Canada by email at obrienawards@standardbredcanada.ca. Entries in Outstanding Video, Film or Broadcast may also be submitted via WeTransfer to the same email address.

All entrants must include a cover letter with their name and address, as well as the location and date of publication or airing of the article or video.

All entries for Outstanding Written Work must be submitted to Standardbred Canada by e-mail. All Entries must include a jpeg or screenshot from the original publication exactly as it first appeared in print (or online); AND a Word or text document with no identifying names, dates or indication of what publication the work first appeared in. The text document must be submitted exactly as the article was originally published and not edited in any manner.

All entries for Outstanding Video, Film or Broadcast must be submitted by email, or We-Transfer, in an appropriate video file format and must not exceed 15 minutes in length. For video features and broadcasts that are longer than 15 minutes an excerpt no longer than 15 minutes in length must be submitted in its place. Submissions longer than 15 minutes in length will not be considered for award.

All entries for Outstanding Photography must be submitted by email and must include the following. All entries must include a jpeg from the original publication (or screenshot) exactly as it first appeared in print (or online) and a high-resolution jpeg file of the image, with no identifying names, dates or indication of what publication the work appeared in. Internet-based submissions should include a screen print with a letter from the website's editor confirming the date and author of the photograph. Standardbred Canada reserves the right to display any submitted entries in the photography category at the O'Brien Awards.

Judging

Each media award will be judged by an independent panel of individuals with an array of journalistic backgrounds. Judges will have experience in the discipline they are judging but differing knowledge of standardbred racing. The judges will represent a cross-section of media members. Anyone with a direct affiliation to an entrant or anyone working for an organization with a direct affiliation to an entrant or publication will not be allowed to act as a judge in that category.

Judges will evaluate works on their ability to engage the reader or viewer on a topic that pertains to Canadian Standardbred racing. For the written work and video, film, and broadcast categories, each judge will be asked to fill in the following scorecard with a score from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) for each criterion.

1) Presentation and polish

2) Storytelling ability and impact

3) Accuracy

4) Newsworthiness and broad appeal

5) Ability to educate and enrich the audience on a subject, topic or topics pertaining to Canadian Standardbred racing

6) Subject matter's importance and relevance to the Canadian Standardbred racing industry

Photography judging

For the photography category, the subject matter should be relevant to or representative of Canadian Standardbred racing. Photographs cannot be digitally altered. Each judge will be asked to fill in the following scorecard with a score from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) for each criterion:

1) Technical Merit -Includes exposure, shutter speed, focus, depth of field, appropriate focal length, etc.

2) Composition -Includes backgrounds, foregrounds, diagonal lines, the principle of thirds, attention to detail, perspective, and center of interest.

3) Impact - Does the image hold your attention?

4) Creativity - originality and uniqueness.

5) Subject Matter: Does the subject matter portray an element of excitement, interest, or intrigue in the Standardbred horse or the sport of harness racing?

Finalist selection and tie breaking

6) Judges will receive the submissions in the media categories by email or WeTransfer.. The submissions in the aforementioned categories will not reference the author or the publication in which they appeared.

7) The three finalists in the media categories will be determined based on the highest point totals, as determined by the judges. Ties will be adjudicated by Ranked Choice Voting. Judges will rank their choices in order (i.e., 1st, 2nd, 3rd), with the most 1st place votes moving on. If a tie remains, the decision will go to 2nds… 3rds… etc., until a winner is determined. If a tie still exists, the works of the tied participants will be sent to an independent adjudicator who will determine the winner based on the award criteria.