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**ONTARIO RACING PROGRAM
Implementation Criteria 3–2013
(Replaces Implementation Criteria 3-2011)**

Ontario Racing Program – Standardbred Elements

1. Canadian preference
2. Purse to claiming price ratio
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4. Qualifying Standards
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7. Allowances for purse earnings
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Background

The framework for the Ontario Racing Program was approved by Board of the Ontario Racing Commission (ORC) in 2010, a Program which lays out a new model for racing in the province. Developed over a year in consultation with the industry, the Framework lays out the principles to guide how horse racing is conducted.

Implementation of the Ontario Racing Program has been and will continue to be monitored to ensure the criteria are supporting the goals of the Framework. As with all aspects of the Ontario Racing Program, any new initiative will be reworked or modified if it is not positively affecting or supporting the Ontario Racing Program (ORP) in the long term. The racing community is encouraged to contact the ORP Implementation and Monitoring Group with opinions or details of their experiences with the new changes, both positive and negative.

As directed by the ORC Board relating to implementation of the Ontario Racing Program, the following standards will apply to the conduct of racing on approved race dates of each racetrack in Ontario, and all licensees are directed to comply with them accordingly:

1. Canadian preference

The date preference rule (Rule 17.10) of the Standardbred Rules of Racing is changed by Standardbred Directive 1-2011 to give first preference to horses stabled in Canada on the day of the draw, as follows:

Rule 17.10 Starters and also eligibles for overnight events shall be drawn by lot from horses properly declared to start, except as follows:

- i) first preference shall be given to a horse that is stabled in Canada the day of the draw and remains in Canada until the race is contested;
- ii) second preference shall be given according to a horse's last scheduled start in a purse race, other than races designated as schooling races, at the gait for which it is declared.

In addition preference shall be governed by the following:

<rule continued>

Exemption to this requirement will be provided for 2 and 3 year olds that have been sustained to the Ontario Sires Stake program for the period from May 1st to November 1st.

Rule 17:10.01

Notwithstanding the requirements under 17.10 (i), Ontario Sires Stakes eligible horses will be exempted from the requirement to meet first preference for the period of May 1 to November 1 inclusive.

The intent of defining a Canadian horse preference is to enhance the economy of the Ontario horse racing industry by directly impacting local job opportunities and return on investment.

2. Purse to claiming price ratio

Purses offered on Standardbred claiming races, including optional claiming races, shall be set as follows:

- Up to a maximum of 70% of the claiming price for Grassroots cards
- Up to a maximum of 80% of the claiming price for Signature cards

In claiming handicap races, the purse percentage shall apply to the highest priced claimer.

Currently different tracks use varying purse percentages which results in horse people being attracted out of their local racing region to pursue more lucrative purse opportunities. This causes some tracks to be inundated with entries while others end up with short fields. The aim of applying purse percentages on claiming races is to create consistency in purse offerings for similar races across the Province.

3. Minimum claiming amounts

The minimum claiming levels shall be as follows, dependent upon the classification of race program:

Race Program	Minimum Claiming Races
Grassroots	\$ 3,000
Signature	\$ 5,000
Premier	\$ 8,000

Currently there is a wide range of claiming levels offered across racetracks of similar levels. This causes horse people to move their horses out of their local racing region. Consistency of claiming amounts across similar levels of race cards will allow for grouping of similar quality horses which will help to improve the competitiveness of the races.

4. Qualifying Standards

As per Standardbred Directive 1-2011 affecting the Standardbred Rules of Racing, qualifying times are established as follows, where a horse must qualify in the time designated for the size of track where it is qualifying:

Track Size	Time		Tracks
1/2 mile	Pacers	2:03	Hanover, Woodstock, Dresden, Clinton, Sudbury, Flamboro, Western Fair, Grand River
	Trotters	2:06	
5/8 mile	Pacers	2:01	Rideau, Kawartha, Hiawatha, Georgian
	Trotters	2:04	
7/8 mile	Pacers	1:59	Mohawk, Woodbine
	Trotters	2:02	

Standardized qualifying times will help to create consistency among racetracks which is easier for horse people and customers to understand and this will also help to attract similarly competitive horses.

5. Time Allowances

Qualifying time allowances will be standardized as follows:

Reason	Allowance
Seasonal – for starts from November 1 to April 30, inclusive.	1 second
2 year-olds	2 seconds
3 year-olds	1 second
Up one track size	1 second
Up two track sizes	2 seconds

The qualifying times allowances are for Overnights only and do not apply to added money events.

Establishing standards across all racetracks for qualifying time allowances is intended to create more consistency in racing in the province and increase uniformity for horse people.

6. Allowances for Ontario Sired

Allowances for Ontario-sired horses will be based on the condition of the class, not on purse earnings of the horse, as follows:

Race Program	Earnings Allowance
Grassroots	50%
Signature	50%
Premier	none

Currently, racetracks are not applying the same allowance for Ontario Sired horses. This makes it difficult for horse people to classify their horses and confuses customers regarding how certain horses fit into the conditions of the race.

7. Allowances for purse earnings

Allowances will be based on the conditions of the race only

Race Program	Fillies/mares vs Colts and Geldings	Age Allowance 2 Year Olds	Age Allowance 3 Year Olds
Grassroots	25%	None	None
Signature	25%	None	None
Premier	25%	50%	25%

Inconsistency regarding how allowances on purse earnings are applied has led to inconsistency in racing. These standardized allowances are intended to increase consistency across Ontario regarding how allowances are applied and enhance overall competitiveness (e.g. create a level playing field among genders).

8. Conditions based on starts

Conditions will be written using the horses' last 3 starts.

The conditions based on starts vary considerably among racetracks regarding the number of starts applied. Currently the number of starts applied can range from 2 to 10. The concern from horsepeople is that their horse is restricted to a class in which they are not competitive for an extended period of time. Basing condition races on a horse's last three starts provides a better indicator of how the horse is currently performing.

9. 'Also Eligible' Conditions

ORC Rule 14:06(b) reads:

Conditions:

<rule continued>

(b) *Shall not be written in such a way that any horse is deprived of an opportunity to race in a normal preference cycle. Where the word preference is used in a condition, it shall only supersede date preference as provided in the rules. **Not more than three also eligible conditions shall be used in writing the conditions for overnight events.***

<rule continued>

A review of interpretation of the rule regarding 'also eligible' conditions has identified that there are inconsistencies among the Race Secretaries on how they write the conditions of the race.

In order to tighten up the competitiveness of the field and make it easier for horse people to know what class to enter, the consistency regarding the application of this rule is emphasized with the Race Secretaries of all racetracks. In application, there will only be 4 ways for a horse to meet the condition of the race, the original condition plus 3 also eligible conditions.

10. Two year old preference

ORC Rule 17.10 reads in part:

<rule continued>

Preference shall be governed by the following:

(f) If conditions so specify, preference can be given two-year-olds, regardless of preference date.

Race Secretaries are advised that this rule can no longer be use to give 2 year olds preference to draw the inside position over aged horses.



Steve Lehman
Executive Director