



2026 OVHDA RULES

1. All teams are subject to a drug test. Detailed explanation in Rule#18 Section A-K
2. All teamsters / representatives must have proof of current liability insurance for "horse pulling" in the amount of Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000)
3. All teamsters / representatives and owners must be a paid up participating member (\$50.00) of OVHDA and in good standing in order to draw in an OVHDA sanctioned pull.
4. There will be no alcoholic beverages used by the teamster / representative, helpers or officials while in the drawing area. If it is deemed that excessive drinking has taken place before or during the horse pull, appropriate action will be taken.
5. All lightweight teams must weigh at their first pull of the weekend on association scales. Exception, if there is only one OVHDA pull on a weekend, teams are not required to weigh. Teams will weight with a halter and loose shank. Absolutely no lifting and teams weigh only twice. If a person argues about the weight of his team, he will have the choice to draw in the heavy class or withdraw his team from the contest. Scales will be open a minimum of 2 ½ hr and a maximum of 3 hr prior to the scheduled pull time and weighing can begin as soon as the scales are set up. Lightweight teams weigh once per weekend (Thursday – Monday) on OVHDA, CCHPA, EODHA or Northern Draft Horse club scales and your team must enter and pull when weighed at the first pull with the exception if a pull is cancelled due inclement weather, weight slips will be honored. Lightweight class is 3400lb and under with a grace of 25lb and heavyweight class is over 3400lb. A horse or team can only draw in one class and must complete 2 draws to collect hitch money where paid. Distance pullers can rent OVHDA scales and their weigh slips will be accepted by OVHDA if team weighs 3400lb and under.
6. If a teamster / representative chooses to quit, it must be declared before they start loading the boat for the next round. If this is not done and he refuses to pull on the last load, he will forfeit and not receive any prize money.
7. A teamster / representative is allowed to enter and drive more than 1 team per class at OVHDA pulls and will draw for their pulling order prior to the beginning of the contest.
8. When a team enters the pulling area with or without blinders, they must stay that way for the duration of the contest. Adjustments to blinders during the pull are not allowed.
9. A) Length of a draw is 15 feet and a total of 5 minutes is allowed to complete 2 draws, three circle passes per hitch will be considered 1 draw. The stone boat is to be drawn one way only however, can be drawn both ways for several rounds if deemed safe by the judge and fair board committee. Side lines are to be 18 ft. apart. If the boat is within 36" from the side lines the next contestant can request to have the boat centered.
Teamsters can pass on the first load as long as there are more than 6 teams in each class.

B) When it is a distance pull -- teams will be allowed 2 attempts to pull the boat in one try. Their second attempt can be taken where the boat is or back to the start line if the boat has already been spotted. Anything over a 4" chuck in A or B above will be classified as one draw.
10. A teamster / representative is allowed 2 helpers and they must remain behind the leading edge of the whiffletrees while horses are drawing. After completing the first draw there will be no change of teamster / representative except in the case of injury.
11. If there is a break in harness the teamster / representative he has the option to keep that distance or start over. If he chooses to start over, the boat will be placed at the start of the course. Time to repair and break in harness will be determined by the Judge.
12. All teams are to remain stationary in the holding area until winners are determined. It is the responsibility of the teamster / representative to ensure their horses are attended to at all times.
13. A runaway or out of control team: 1st offence – horses will automatically be eliminated from the contest and given a 5 pull suspension followed by 5 pulls with the lines being tailed. 2nd offence – horse(s) will be banned from pulling at OVHDA sanctioned pulls. For both offence's horses will be tested at the expense of the teamster/representative and prize money will be forfeited to OVHDA.

14. No non-member competitor will not be allowed to pull his horses in another member's name.
15. A draw will be disqualified if:
 - A) horse steps on or over the line or markers while hooked to the boat and in motion
 - B) horses are beaten, lines are swung or foul language is used
 - C) helpers interfere in any way after horse are hitched
 - D) teamster / representative or helpers head the horses while drawing or hitching
 - E) teamster / representative or helpers slap, push or touch the horses with hands, lines or whiffletrees in the ring. No check slaps will be allowed.
16. Any teamster / representative or helper will automatically be ejected from the contest and all winning forfeited if :
 - A) he argues with the Judge
 - B) any abuse such as slashing, kicking or beating of horses takes place while in the holding area. There will be no chasing of horses around the ring. Decisions to be made by the Judge or Committee.
17. All decisions made by the judge are final. All OVHDA judges will be sanctioned by the Board of Directors before judging at OVHDA horse pulls.
18. Detailed explanation of Rule #1 - Drug Testing

All horses are subject to a drug test at any time with NO DRUGS OR STEROIDS to be allowed. Urine or blood samples only to be taken. Testing to be done at random by a licensed veterinarian or technician. Horse being tested is to be taken to an isolated area when possible or are to be taken directly to the drug testing area and then unharnessed. Horse and teamster / representative to remain until the urine or blood sample has been collected. A waiting time of 1 ½ hours is compulsory and if a urine or blood sample has not been collected within this limit, horse will be free to go. Teamster / representative or other authorized person to remain with the horse at the drug testing area at all times. No horse is to be left unattended.

- A) Teamster / representative will forfeit placing and prize money.
 - B) The prize money for the horse tested must be given by the fair board to OVHDA to hold until test results are received. If a horse tests positive, the prize money will go to OVHDA to defray the cost of the test.
 - C) When a drug test is done, the fair board should not pay the prize money until the tests have been cleared.
 - D) If there is a run-away or any damage caused by a team, that team will be impounded and drug tested immediately with the owner paying all costs. They will be placed last and will forfeit their prize money and the team will also be suspended from further contests until their drug test results are received.
 - E) Teamster / representative name and horses name to be publicized in our monthly newsletter for a period of 1 year from the date of the test results.
 - F) A letter will be sent to all fair boards advising them of a positive test.
 - G) Any voting member if found guilty will lose voting privileges in the Association for a period of 1 year.
 - H) *The teamster / representative will pay a fine of \$1000 for 1st offence, \$2000 for 2nd offence and \$4000 for 3rd offence and there will be no suspension of horses or teamster / representative once the fine is paid. Any open offences prior to this change remain. All fines must be paid in cash.
 - I) A person under suspension is prohibited from driving, hitching and/or helping in the ring once the contest has commenced.
 - J) Ottawa Valley Horse Drawing Association Inc. and Central Canadian Horse Pulling Association will honor each other's drug testing penalties if there is a positive test.
 - K) Teamsters/owners who have been selected for drug testing shall cooperate fully in a respectful manner with the veterinarian conducting the test. A refusal to comply with drug testing if selected will constitute a positive test and penalties will apply.
19. The use of any electronic stimulating device including but not limited to prods, tasers, shock collars or similar devices are strictly prohibited. Teamster / owner / helpers found using such devices will be immediately disqualified and subject to the penalties listed in drug testing rule# 18.
 20. A teamster / representative can request the help of another teamster to tail the lines at the judge's or any teamster's discretion.
 21. To vote on a lightweight rule you must have pulled a light weight team as an owner or driver in the previous year.