



PRESS RELEASE

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American Graded Stakes Expands Grade Eligibility Requirements

LEXINGTON, Ky. – The TOBA American Graded Stakes Committee today announced new eligibility requirements for graded stakes races in the U.S.

At its meeting this week in Saratoga Springs, New York, the committee adopted two new eligibility requirements for graded stakes.

States or racetracks through house rules must adopt, at a minimum, the Association of Racing Commissioners International (ARCI) model rule on androgenic anabolic steroids by January 1, 2009 or the date of a state or racetrack's first graded race in 2009, whichever is later. If a state or racetrack does not adopt the model rule, then their races will lose their graded status. Those races will not be eligible again for grading until the rule is adopted.

In addition, the committee adopted a requirement for grade eligibility whereby states or racetracks through house rules must adopt the ARCI model rule on toe grabs on front feet by January 1, 2009 or the date of a state or track's first graded stake in 2009. If the rule is not adopted, then races will lose their graded status. Those races will become eligible for grading once the rule is adopted.

"There has been much discussion recently about how any recommendations put forth by various groups could be implemented given Thoroughbred racing's fractured organizational structure," said Dan Metzger, president of TOBA. "The committee members feel strongly about these two issues and determined that they should be implemented in graded stakes by expanding the conditions of eligibility."

Also, the committee expanded its drug testing protocol to include testing for alkalinizing agents in graded stakes beginning January 1, 2009. All horses participating in graded stakes are to have blood samples drawn pre-race in accordance with the Racing Medication and Testing Consortium's recommended best practices. It will be up to the jurisdiction to determine the testing method, either TCO₂ or base excess. A race will lose its grade eligibility if this testing is not performed.

TOBA, based in Lexington, Ky., was formed in 1961 and is a national trade organization leading Thoroughbred horse breeders and owners. TOBA's mission is to *"improve the economics, integrity and pleasure of the sport on behalf of Thoroughbred owners and breeders."* Projects managed by TOBA include the American Graded Stakes Committee, Sales Integrity Program, The Racing Game, and Claiming Crown. TOBA is the owner of The Blood-Horse, Inc., and is represented on the Board of Directors of the National Thoroughbred Racing Association as a founding member. More information on TOBA appears on www.toba.org.

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