



2026

O3C INTERCLUB OPEN CHALLENGE RULES & GUIDELINES

Version	Release Date	Description of change
Version 26.1	November 23, 2025	-- DRAFT rewrite
		- Update Theme Topic to "Street Photography" Pages 7 and 10
Version 26.2	November 28, 2025	-- Draft update
		- Update to AI, What's Allowed
Version 26.3	December 7, 2025	-- Draft update
Version 26.4	December 18, 2025	-- Draft update on trophies
Version 26.5; 26.6	January 13, 2026	-- Grammar and spelling, Club Codes update
Version 26.7, 26.8, 26.9, 26.10	January 24, 2026	-- Awards based on Membership Roster, Club Codes Update

NOTE:

When updating or correcting this file please document the change in this table together with affected page number. Also, update the version number and release date in the document footer.

Versions should be:

1. – DRAFT rewrite

Version 19.0 – 2019 Rules, 19.1, 19.2, 19.3, etc. will represent changes within the same competition year.

Version 20.0 – 2020 Rules, etc.

Version 21.0 – 2021 Rules, etc.

Questions and inquiries about contest rules can be emailed to competitions@o3c.ca

Recommendations for changes and modifications can be emailed to competitions@o3c.ca

Please obtain the latest version of these guidelines available on the O3C OLIS site at <https://olis.o3c.ca/>

Dedicated to the Promotion of the Art of Photography and Serving the Photographic Communities of Ontario

INTRODUCTION:

Competition Purpose

The goal of this competition follows O3C's mandate to promote the art of photography by encouraging O3C Clubs, and their Club members, to share and showcase their art among peers. Clubs, and their members, may be recognized through various individual and club awards.

This is a Club centric Competition and not open to individual member submissions.

Judging

- Images will be judged on overall impact, composition, technical excellence, originality and artistic merit.
- Judging will be conducted individually online with final tie breaks & awards in a group deliberation.
- Judging will consist of scores only, 0-10, in half point increments. No comments.
- Each image will be judged by a team of 4 judges with the final score being the total of the 3 highest scores.
- O3C strives to achieve excellence in judging. All judges are accredited O3C Judges.

Disclaimer

- The most current version of this document shall be considered the Official Rules. None of the Rules & Guidelines from previous competitions carry over to this year's competition. To ensure you always have the most current version, please reference the O3C OLIS site at: <https://olis.o3c.ca/documents/>. And look for the [OCCC Open Challenge Rules & Guidelines] tile.
- All decisions of the O3C and its Judges are final.
- Disqualified images will not receive a reimbursement of the entrance fee.
- Disqualified images may not be withdrawn and a substitute presented to the competition.
- Disqualified images cannot be resubmitted in future Open Challenge Competitions.
- O3C will take all reasonable steps to protect the integrity of all entries; however, we cannot assume responsibility for damage to any entry, howsoever caused.
- Any or all entries may be presented with or without entrant identification at the Awards Presentation. Due to time and space constraints, the O3C reserves the right not to display or present all images.
- By submitting an image to this competition, the entrant warrants that he or she is the rightful owner and exclusive author of the image and grants the following non-exclusive rights and permissions to the O3C, specifically that:
 - The image may be displayed on any media for the purposes of competition judging and may be displayed without restriction in any subsequent presentations by the O3C.
 - The maker retains ownership of the image and all other rights to its subsequent use.
 - Gives the O3C express approval for use of images in publication, education purposes, presentation and/or use in promotional material for the O3C.
 - By submitting content, you acknowledge and agree to the terms.

O3C Interclub Open Challenge Rules & Guidelines

Important Dates

January 2026	Data Manager to send out Submission Information Package to Club Reps. Instructions to fill our Member/Club Forms and Instructions to upload files.
January 2026 (Mid)	Zoom Q&A Session with Comp Committee and Clubs to address any questions.
February-March 2026	Open Challenge Promos, Acquire Judges.
May 3, 2026	Submission Date for digital images. All digital files are to be uploaded by Club Reps to O3C by 11:00 pm.
May 3, 2026	All entry fees are due at the O3C together with copy of the Club's completed Consolidated Entry Form. Option of Paypal Invoice or eTransfer to treasurer@o3c.ca.
May 2026	File Prep & Administration, Online Judging of Digital Entries.
June-Aug 2026	Tie Breaks & Award Assignments (Closed session with Judges) Create AV Shows & Show Options (Live or Online).
Oct/Nov 2026	Tentative Awards Day (to be confirmed). Location TBA. Or this may be a Virtual Event.
Note:	Timelines subject to change based on number of entries received.

CATEGORY SUBMISSION STANDARDS

Entry Eligibility

The O3C Interclub Open Challenge (hereafter referred to as “the Competition”) is open to members of O3C Member Clubs. This is a Club centric Competition and not open to individual member submissions.

Entry Fee

The entry fee for is \$2 per digital image. No Discounts. Entry fees to be submitted via your club to the O3C Treasurer by the deadline date. Paypal invoicing or eTransfers to treasurer@o3c.ca Attn: Bill Traynor.

Number of Entries per Maker

The total number of allowable images for each entrant is limited to a **maximum of twelve images** constrained by:

- A maximum of 12 entries can be submitted into any category.
- No entrant shall submit more than 12 images regardless of the number of clubs to which the entrant belongs. If the maker exceeds these limits by submitting through more than one club the entrant will be disqualified from entering images for the current competition year.
- The maker is not required to enter multiple categories unless they are competing for the Photographer of the Year Award, which requires entries across at least 10 categories.

Method of Entry Submission

All entries are to be submitted via the O3C Member Club. An individual club member cannot enter or submit independently as an individual to this competition.

- The O3C Data Manager will supply the Club Reps with an Instruction Package detailing entry forms and file upload instructions by January 2026.
- Please consult with the Data Manager if alternate means of submission are required.
- All entries must be uploaded to the Data Manager by the deadline date.

Use of AI / Artificial Intelligence

O3C Overriding Philosophy

- O3C's overriding philosophy relies on a shared community value where member clubs and their individual members are expected to hold themselves accountable for upholding O3C's competition rules, particularly with regard to the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- O3C's policy is that we rely on member clubs and their individuals to adhere to the rules stated herein. We do reserve the right to question a particular image or set of images if it warrants it.

What's Not Allowed:

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated imagery that uses generative processes that draw from an external, cloud-based database of photographs—content not owned by the maker—is NOT allowed for any portion of a photo entry whatsoever. This includes Text-to-Image or Image-to-Image generative processes; it also includes AI tools without the use of text-prompts when such tools draw from an external source not owned by the maker. Such AI tools are not acceptable for use on original images for competition submissions.
- The use of neural filters, many of which rely on AI algorithms, is also NOT allowed for use on original images for competition submissions.
- Generative elements that were not originally in the photograph or in external image files of the maker.

What's Allowed:

- Photographic intent: If the maker's intent is to enhance their own work, without the incorporation of outside, external photos from the cloud, the maker should be fine.
- Specifically allowed is the use of various AI tools that replicate a process in post-production where the intent is to enhance your own image – a process that would have been done manually years ago, e.g. cloning, blurring, sharpening, that can now be done through the use of AI tools in a fraction of the time.
- Such AI enhancement tools ARE allowed as part of post-production, which includes the use of tools for sharpening, denoise, object selection, cloning, content aware fill, object removal, spot healing, blur, and lens blur; such tools are widely available in many software applications.
 - If expanding your canvas, be careful not to expand your canvas inadvertently with imagery drawn from the cloud; you do not want entirely new imagery and objects to appear that were not part of your original photo.
 - Sky replacement is allowed provided that it is the maker's own image and not drawn from the cloud or other external sources (e.g. installed software package).

Detection:

- For this competition, the O3C reserves the right to employ any tools available for detection of AI generation, should there be a question about an image's inappropriate use of AI. In such instances, the Competition Committee will give the member the opportunity to submit their RAW/Jpeg files that were used to produce the submitted image as part of the review or risk disqualification.
- Since AI technology, as well as the tools available to detect AI generation, are rapidly changing, these rules are subject to change.

Digital Manipulation

- Some Competition categories allow Digital Manipulation, and some do not. Full details regarding digital manipulation are found in the category descriptions. It is recommended that makers read the descriptions carefully to obtain a clear understanding of how much, if any, digital manipulation is allowed in each category. Full details and examples of acceptable allowances are noted in the category description.

Image Qualification

- All images submitted must be the makers own work.
- Each Image submitted must be a first-time submission to the O3C competition.
 - Images may not be the same as, or substantially similar to, another image submitted to an O3C competition in a current year or any previous year's categories either as a digital image or a print. This includes images submitted under O3C's previous name, the Greater Toronto Council of Camera Clubs (GTCCC), and images previously disqualified for any reason.
 - Images may not be a B&W version of a previously submitted photograph, or vice versa.
- An image that has been previously DQ'd in an O3C Open Challenge cannot be reentered into another O3C Open Challenge.
- Monochrome images are acceptable in all categories.
- Please refer to Honour System, Naming of Entries, Image Identification, and Image Sizing, further below.

Initial Vetting of Images

- All submitted images are **to be vetted by the submitting Club/Club Reps** for eligibility in category.
- Image file names must follow category convention or else they may be rejected.
- Images submitted in a (wrong) category that distinctly fit in one of the other defined categories risk disqualification:
 - Judges have the authority to determine out of category images for disqualification.

Honour System

- For all entries, the original image and all image elements including digital manipulation and post-processing must be the work of the entrant. Original images made in workshops without significant ownership and control of the entrant may be disqualified from the competition, e.g. the maker must have directed the model, the lighting, positioning and had full control over camera settings.
- All winning and accepted entries may be reviewed to ascertain if an image is authentic to the maker or sourced from elsewhere, whether in whole or part. The O3C reserves the right to request a maker's RAW, post-

O3C Interclub Open Challenge Rules & Guidelines

processed or other files, before awarding any prizes. If such files are not supplied in a timely manner, then the entry will be eliminated from the competition.

- It is the maker's responsibility to abide by the morals and principles of this competition.

Naming / Titling of Entries:

- Architecture, Pictorial, People, Creative Vision, Scapes, People in Action, and Annual Theme can be Titled as it suits the maker.
- For Birds, Animals, Botany and Nature General the Titles should be the common or scientific name of the subject. However, descriptive names as it pertains to the subject are allowed. Refrain from giving pictorial like names to images in Nature categories.
 - **Acceptable:** "Northern Blue Jay" or "Cyanocitta Cristata", or "Blue Jay Preening Chick".
 - **Not acceptable:** "Blue & White Splendor".
- No image may display any titling or maker identification that could serve to identify the maker or club, or risk disqualification of the image.

Image Identification

- Each digital file and print must meet the O3C Image Identification requirements and include your Club Code, Maker ID#, Category Code and Sequence Number. Category Codes can be found in the Category & Abbreviations section and Club Codes are on the last page of this document.
- Your Club Representative is responsible for applying the identifier for each image entry, but may request entrants apply the identifier to the filename before submitting the file to the rep.
- Image Identifier:
 - The image identifier consists of 9 upper case characters, for example, RH160PD01. The code structure consists of the following, sequentially:
 - **Club Code:** 2-alpha characters which identify your club [Reference: last page of this document],
 - **Entrant Number:** 3-numeric characters which is your individual maker # which your club rep assigns, and includes leading 0's as necessary,
 - **Category Code:** 2-alpha characters [Reference: Categories & Abbreviations section]
 - **Sequence #:** 2 numeric characters that identify your 1st to 12th image, includes leading 0's as necessary.

Examples:

- TP005BO02: Trillium PC, maker #005, Botany, entry number 02,
- ET121PD12: Etobicoke CC, maker #121, Pictorial, entry number 12,
- RH130AR01: Richmond Hill, maker #130, Architecture, entry number 01.

Image Sizing

- The recommended size for images submitted to the competition is 1920 x 1080px.
 - That is, landscape aspect images should be 1920px wide with the vertical dimension being proportionately 1080px or less,
 - Vertical aspect images should be 1080px tall with the horizontal dimension being proportional up to a maximum of 1920px,
 - Square images should be 1080px on both the horizontal and vertical axes.

O3C Interclub Open Challenge Rules & Guidelines

- This fulfills our objective of maintaining the highest image quality possible for judging and presentation as images are typically judged on monitors with the 1920x1080 aspect ratio.
- However, images may reasonably exceed or be less than the above recommended dimensions without concern; in such cases the images will be resized to fit. However, it is to the maker's benefit to submit images within the 1920/1080 dimensions to avoid artifacts being introduced in the resizing process.
- Makers using Lightroom Classic can easily achieve these dimensions using an Export dialog selecting [✓] Resize to Fit "Width & Height", W: 1920, H:1080 pixels; Specifying Image Format: JPEG, Quality 90-100 with Colour Space: "sRGB IEC6 etc."
- Similar capabilities are provided in Photoshop and other post processing software.

Use of Image or Keyline Borders

- Keyline borders such as 1 or 2 pixel borders are allowed in any category. However, they are usually only needed for images with dark backgrounds where they can help the viewer see where the actual image frame is to judge composition. The Keyline would usually be a lighter or complimentary colour to the image.
- Decorative borders such as digital picture frames are only allowed in the Pictorial category where a decorative border may be an intrinsic part of the image and it adds to the image story.
- Artistic borders such as torn edges, antique edges, grunge borders, film edges, etc. are allowed in all categories except Nature categories (Birds, Animals, Botany, Nature General and Scapes).

COMPETITION CATEGORIES

Important Considerations

- Please always check the most recent version of these guidelines for any last-minute changes and revisions to this document; revisions are noted on the cover page.
- Any image that fails to meet the criteria of a category may be declared ineligible and could be disqualified from the competition.
- To maximize the scoring potential, the member and the club/club O3C Rep should take care to ensure the image is strong in the category to which it is entered.
- The topic of the Theme Category will change each year; O3C invites all members to submit topic suggestions.
- In various of the category descriptions it states "manipulation is allowed as long as the results look natural." While "looking natural" is to some degree subjective, we strongly suggest that "looking natural" be carefully considered.
- This year we have combined Landscapes & Geology with Expansive Views into a new category called "Scapes". For clarity we have indicated that hand of man (HOM) is allowed. This, of course, does not mean that HOM must be present. Nature landscapes and seascapes with or without HOM should be submitted to this category. Cityscapes should also be submitted to this same category. We seek to avoid the earlier confusion presented by having two essentially identical categories except for whether or not it allowed HOM.
- This year we have introduced a new category called Nature General. HOM is allowed.

Categories & Abbreviations

Category	Category Type	Abbreviation	Category Title
1.	Digital	BR	Nature Birds
2.		AN	Nature Animals
3.		BO	Nature Botany
4.		NG	Nature General
5.		SG	Scapes
6.		PE	People
7.		PA	People in Action
8.		AR	Architecture
9.		PD	Pictorial
10.		CV	Creative Vision
11.		TH	Theme Topic – “Street Photography”

Category Descriptions

1. *Birds, HOM allowed*

- This category is open to any type of bird, domesticated or wild,
 - For example, ducks, geese, herons, raptors, song birds, sea and shore birds, etc.
- Images may be shot in a studio, zoo setting or in the wild.
- Artificial backgrounds ARE permitted either in studio or the wild.
- Any form of image manipulation is allowed as long as the results look natural,
 - Large areas of black/solid/manipulated background, while permissible, must look natural, and
 - Photographs that do not appear natural may result in a lower overall score or a potential out of category (OC) designation.
- Hand of Man is allowed.
- Artificial or taxidermy specimens are NOT permitted.
- Any replacement imagery must be the maker’s own work.

2. *Animals, HOM allowed*

- This category is open to any type of animal; domesticated or wild,
 - For example, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, invertebrates, crustaceans, fish, insects, family pets, etc.
- Images may be shot in a studio, zoo setting or in the wild.
- Artificial backgrounds ARE permitted either in studio or the wild.
- Any form of image manipulation is allowed as long as the results look natural,
 - Large areas of black/solid/manipulated background, while permissible, must look natural, and
 - Photographs that do not appear natural may result in a lower overall score or a potential out of category (OC) designation.
- Hand of Man is allowed.
- Artificial or taxidermy specimens are NOT permitted.
- Any replacement imagery must be the maker's own work.

3. *Botany, HOM allowed*

- This category is open to any type of botany subject whether wild or cultivated,
 - For example, flowers of any type, trees, seed pods, etc., and
 - Fungi/mushrooms, which are not considered botany, should be submitted in Nature General.
- Images may be shot in a studio or in the field.
- Artificial backgrounds ARE permitted either in studio or the wild.
- Any form of image manipulation is allowed as long as the results look natural,
 - Large areas of black/solid/manipulated background, while permissible, must look natural, and
 - Photographs that do not appear natural may result in a lower overall score or a potential out of category (OC) designation.
- Hand of Man is allowed.
- Artificial or taxidermy specimens are NOT permitted.
- Any replacement imagery must be the maker's own work.

4. *Nature General, HOM allowed*

- Nature General is a category meant for nature photographs in general that do not fit into other existing categories, e.g. natural phenomena, fungi.
 - Photos of Animals should be placed into Animals; they are not permitted here,
 - Photos of Birds should be placed into Birds; they are not permitted here,
 - Photos of Botany should be placed into Botany; they are not permitted here,
 - Photos of Landscapes, Seascapes, Skyscapes should be placed into Scapes with or without HoM; they are not allowed in the Natural General category.
- Fungi in general refers to mushrooms; photographs for this category would typically be taken in the forest, riverside or lakeside.
- Natural Phenomena refers to an observable event which is not man-made
 - Examples include: sunrise, weather, tornadoes, biological processes, decomposition, germination, physical processes, frost, ice patterns, snowflakes, wave propagation, erosion, tidal flow and natural disasters such as electromagnetic pulses, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes.
- Any form of image manipulation is allowed as long as the results look natural,
 - Large areas of black/solid/manipulated background, while permissible, must look natural, and

- Photographs that do not appear natural may result in a lower overall score or a potential out of category (OC) designation.
- Hand of Man is allowed.
- Artificial or taxidermy specimens are NOT permitted.
- Any replacement imagery must be the maker's own work.

5. *Scapes, HOM allowed*

- This category is open to Landscapes, Cityscapes, Seascapes and Skyscapes including astronomy.
 - Landscape is described as an expanse of scenery that can be seen in a single view.
 - Cityscape is described essentially as an urban landscape.
 - Seascape is described as an expanse of water in which the water or waves predominate. Coastal features or the shoreline may be included, including hand of man.
 - Skyscape is described as an expanse of imagery of the sky that can be seen in a single view.
- Any form of image manipulation is allowed as long as the results look natural,
 - Photographs that do not appear natural may result in a lower overall score or a potential out of category (OC) designation.
- **Hand of Man is allowed.**
- Any replacement imagery must be the maker's own work.

6. *People*

- This category is limited to images of human subjects only as the primary subject,
 - For example, portraits, group portraits, environmental portraits, posed or candid, etc.
- Subjects may be photographed in any environment, including studio setting.
- Any form of image manipulation is allowed as long as the results look natural. If the image is highly or creatively altered it may be more suitable in the **Creative Vision** category.
 - Photographs that do not appear natural may result in a lower overall score or a potential out of category (OC) designation.
- Any replacement imagery must be the maker's own work.

7. *People in Action*

- This category must include a person, or a group of people, engaged in an activity depicting energetic physical motion. This can be related to sports, racing, gymnastics, or other energetic physical motion where the activity represented is the principal subject. Activities that depict minimal motion/action would be considered very weak in category and may be judged accordingly; the maker could consider entering those images in the Pictorial category.
- Examples of People in Action,
 - Running, canoeing, bicycle riding, car or boat racing, etc.,
 - The intent is to show a person in obvious motion or action, not merely engaged in an activity in which the motion is passive or slow that would be more suitable in another category.
- A physical person, or evidence of a person, must be present in the image.
 - It is not required that the person's face be visible if it is clear that there is a person engaged in an activity in which there is obvious action taking place, e.g. a skier in full gear, race car driver with helmet visible through window, a racing vehicle (such as a car or boat) would be eligible as long as there is clear evidence of a person.
 - If a driver is not visible, the entry would be ineligible.

- Any form of image manipulation is allowed as long as the results look natural. If the image is highly or creatively altered it may be more suitable in the **Creative Vision** category.
 - Please refer to Important Considerations above.
 - Photographs that do not appear natural may result in a lower overall score or a potential out of category (OC) designation.
- Any replacement imagery must be the maker's own work.

8. Architecture

- This category is limited to images of any architectural manmade structure.
- The subject must be a significant aspect of a landscape or cityscape,
 - For example, building exteriors/interiors, architectural details, bridges, piers, etc.
- Any form of image manipulation is allowed although the intent is that images look natural. If the image is highly or creatively altered, including HDR images, it may be more suitable in the **Creative Vision** category.
 - Photographs that do not appear natural may result in a lower overall score or a potential out of category (OC) designation.
- Any replacement imagery must be the maker's own work.

9. Pictorial

- This category comprises subject matter that does not already fall into any other category,
 - For example, still life and tabletop photography, food, man-made objects, transportation, etc.
- The following are NOT permitted to be entered into this category.
 - Images deemed suitable for architecture as the main subject are NOT permitted.
 - Images deemed suitable for botany as the main subject are NOT permitted.
 - Images deemed suitable for birds as the main subject are NOT permitted.
 - Images deemed suitable for nature general as the main subject are NOT permitted.
 - Images deemed suitable for scapes as the main subject are NOT permitted.
 - Images deemed suitable for people in action as the main subject are NOT permitted.
 - Images deemed suitable for people and portraiture as the main subject are NOT permitted.
 - Images deemed suitable for Creative Vision as the main subject are NOT permitted.
 - Images deemed suitable for Special Theme as the main subject are NOT permitted.
- Any form of image manipulation is allowed. If the image is highly or creatively altered it may be more suitable in the **Creative Vision** category.
 - Photographs that do not appear natural may result in a lower overall score or a potential out of category (OC) designation.
- Any replacement imagery must be the maker's own work.

10. Creative Vision

- The objective of this category is to **tell a story or evoke an emotion** through creative use of photographic art.
- This category is limited to highly creative and artistic images,
 - For example, altered reality, abstracts, graphical designs, conceptual art, composites, montages, etc.
- Any form of image manipulation is allowed.
- Use of artistic filters or post-processing is acceptable and is, of course, encouraged.
- Any replacement imagery must be the maker's own work.
- By definition photographs in this category are not meant to appear natural.

11. Annual Theme – “Street Photography”

- The subject of the 2026 Annual Theme category is “**Street Photography**”.
- For this competition we are encouraging a wide variety of subjects.
- Main subject should be focused on the street photography theme, broadly defined.
 - For purposes of this competition, street photography is defined as: “the candid, unposed capture of everyday life in public places, focusing on chance encounters, random incidents, and the human condition.”
 - Examples of good street photography include the capture of a genuine moment, whether a candid gesture or a surprising interaction; the image tells a compelling story.
 - Environmental portraits are not considered good examples of street photography, and would be considered very weak in category, e.g. posing a homeless person for a portrait.
 - The candid, unposed capture of everyday life in public places, focusing on chance encounters, random incidents, and the human condition
- Any form of image manipulation is allowed although the intent is that images look natural. If the image is highly or creatively altered, it may be more suitable in the **Creative Vision** category.
 - Photographs that do not appear natural may result in a lower overall score or a potential out of category (OC) designation.
- Any replacement imagery must be the maker’s own work.

AWARDS

All images are eligible for individual awards by category. Additionally, individual image scores are used to determine club awards, club trophies, the O3C Showcase Trophies, Specialist Category winners, and the Photographer of the Year awards.

Accepted Entries

Accepted entries represent approximately the top scoring 25-30% of the entries in each category. Accepted entries will be included in the Awards video.

Honourable Mentions

Honourable Mentions comprise approximately 10-15% of the accepted entries within each category.

Individual Category Awards

In each of the 11 categories there will be a maximum of three top awards and a number of Honourable Mentions. A maker can only be awarded one top award per category. In the event of a tie, judges will identify the winner. However, a maker will retain all points on images if a subsequent award has to be given to the next entrant with the next highest scoring entry. The three top awards in each category will be:

- one First Place, (receives a Certificate and a Medal)
- one Second Place, (receives a Certificate and a Medal)
- one Third Place, (receives a Certificate and a Medal)
- plus, Honourable Mentions (receives a Certificate).

Specialist Category Awards

- Recognizing that there are many outstanding photographers whose excellence lies in a limited sphere of categories; this award recognizes photographers with the highest total score based on their top 6 scoring images within one category.
- Each of the 11 categories in the Open Challenge can have a Specialist for a total of 11 Specialists.
- If two or more entrants tie for the highest total score in a category, as per the criteria, multiple entrants can win the title of Specialist Category Award.
- It is possible for one entrant to win Specialist Category Award in multiple categories.
- O3C reserves the right to withhold awards if there are less than 3 candidates eligible in a category.
- Specialist Category Award winners will receive a medal and a certificate.

Club Category Awards

- Awarded to the top scoring club in each of the 11 categories. Top scoring clubs are determined by summing the highest score, from 6 different makers in each club, for each category. If there is a tie, then the highest score by 7 different makers determines the winning club, etc., until a clear winner is determined.
- Club category award winners will receive a Medal.

Photographer(s) of the Year

- **Photographer of the Year**
 - There are 11 digital categories. To be eligible for the Photographer of the Year award, the entrant **must submit at least one image in ten of the eleven digital categories including at least one in the Theme Topic**. A minimum of 10 entries is required in total.
 - The winner is the entrant scoring the highest total point count for their top scoring 10 submissions. If the entrant submits more than 10 images, only their top scoring 10 digital images will be considered. Each top scoring digital image must be from a different category.
 - If two or more entrants tie for the highest total point count, as per the criteria, multiple entrants can win the title of Photographer of the Year.
 - Photographer of the Year winner(s) receives a plaque and a certificate and receive a prize (e.g. gift card).

The Freedman Trophy

- After many wonderful years, we are retiring the Freedman Trophy to usher in a new era of competition, allowing us to celebrate future champions in a fresh way.

O3C Showcase Trophies

We are ushering in a new era of competition. We wish to recognize the excellence in art among the smaller as well as the larger clubs.

In the past, smaller clubs have had relatively few makers enter the Open Challenge, often as few as three or four. Indeed, in 2025 more than half the clubs (20) had fewer than 15 makers enter the competition from their club. Obviously, such clubs have been at a distinct disadvantage when competing against the larger clubs for recognition of

O3C Interclub Open Challenge Rules & Guidelines

excellence, their scores more a reflection of their size and level of participation than anything else.

At the same time, we recognize that larger clubs have been very successful in terms of their efforts, their recruitment and dedication, and in their excellence among their members in the pursuit of art and photography. There is a desire to recognize their efforts and participation appropriately as well.

Which brought us to the following.

- **The O3C Showcase Trophy Celebrating Photographic Excellence in Large Clubs**
 - Qualification for consideration: clubs who have a **Membership Roster of 100 or more members** at the date of submission.*
 - The summation of the highest score by 12 different makers of each club in this group, regardless of category, determines the winning club. If there is a tie, then the highest score by 13 different makers determines the winning club, etc., until a clear winner is determined.
 - The winner receives a trophy.
- **The O3C Showcase Trophy Celebrating Photographic Excellence in Medium Clubs**
 - Qualification for consideration: clubs who have a **Membership Roster of between 51-99 members** at the date of submission.*
 - The summation of the highest score by 6 different makers of each club in this group, regardless of category, determines the winning club. If there is a tie, then the highest score by 7 different makers determines the winning club, etc., until a clear winner is determined.
 - The winner receives a trophy.
- **The O3C Showcase Trophy Celebrating Photographic Excellence in Small Clubs**
 - Qualification for consideration: clubs who have a Membership Roster of 50 or fewer members at the date of submission.*
 - The summation of the highest score by 3 different makers of each club in this group, regardless of category, determines the winning club. If there is a tie, then the highest score by 4 different makers determines the winning club, etc., until a clear winner is determined.
 - The winner receives a trophy.

* There must be a minimum of three clubs for the award to proceed and a trophy issued

The 2026 Open Challenge Competition Committee:

Gray Graffam, VP, O3C Competitions Chair

Randy Nickerson, O3C Judges Chair

Bharat Mistry, O3C Past President

Jim Camelford, O3C Data Manager

O3C MEMBER CLUBS & CLUB CODES

Note: The following table is for quick reference and represents all O3C member clubs at time of publication.
If your Club is not in this list, please check with the O3C Data Manager for a code.

#	Current Clubs	Club Code:
1	Ajax Photography Club	AJ
2	Barrie Photography Club	BA
3	Beach Photo Club	BE
4	Brant Camera Club	BT
5	Brockville & Area Photo Club	BV
6	Camera Club of Ottawa	CO
7	Chinese Canadian Photographic Society of Toronto	CC
8	Don Mills Camera Club	DM
9	Etobicoke Camera Club	ET
10	Georgian Bay Photography Club	GB
11	Grand River Imaging & Photographic Society	GR
12	Grimsby Photo Group	GP
13	Guelph Photographers Guild	GU
14	Haldimand Photography Club	HL
15	Hamilton Camera Club	HC
16	Highland Glen Camera Club	HG
17	Jiahua Elite Photography Ass'n - JEPA	JE
18	Kawartha Camera Club	KW
19	Kingston Photographic Club	KP
20	Lanark County Camera Club	LN
21	Latow Photographers Guild	LP
22	Life Institute Photo Club	LI
23	Lightchasers Photographic Society	LS
24	Mississauga Camera Club	MI
25	Northumberland Photography Club	NP
26	Oakville Camera Club	OA
27	Orillia & District Camera Club	OR
28	Oshawa Camera Club	OC
29	Photo Arts Club of Newmarket	NM
30	Photo Historical Society of Canada	PH
31	Port Franks & Area Camera Club	PF
32	Richmond Hill Camera Club	RH
33	St. Catherine's Photographic Club	ST
34	Thornhill Seniors Camera Club	TS
35	Toronto Camera Club	TC
36	Toronto Digital Photography Club	TD
37	Trillium Photographic Club	TP
38	Windsor Camera Club	WC
39	Woodstock Camera Club	WS