



2024 USEF Dressage National Championships Qualifying Requirements

Young Rider, Junior, Pony Rider, and Children

Approved by the USEF Board of Directors Executive Committee on October 16, 2023.

The 2024 Dressage National Championships (Championships) Qualifying Requirements published herein are effective on October 16, 2023, unless stated otherwise. The qualifying criteria published herein are subject to additions or revisions. This Championship qualifying criteria pertains to the following divisions:

- USEF Children Dressage National Championship
- USEF Pony Rider Dressage National Championship
- Adequan® / USEF Junior Dressage National Championship
- USEF Young Rider Dressage National Championship

While every effort has been taken to avoid mistakes in this publication, the United States Equestrian Federation, Inc. assumes no liability to anyone for errors or omissions. For questions concerning these Qualifying Requirements, please contact the USEF Dressage Department at festival@usef.org. These Championships will be conducted under USEF Rules except where outlined herein.

I. Application, Membership, and Registration Requirements for Qualifying and Championships.

Application:

1. In order to be considered for these Championships, an Application of Intent must be completed and submitted to USEF no later than June 13, 2024 at 11:59pm, ET. The Application of Intent is made available on the USEF website here after September 14, 2023.
 - a. Applications of Intent received by the USEF on or before May 15, 2024 at 11:59pm, ET will require an application fee of fifty dollars (\$50) per horse.
 - b. Applications of Intent received between May 16, 2024 and June 13, 2024 at 11:59pm, ET will require a fee of one hundred fifty dollars (\$150) per horse.
 - c. An Application of Intent is considered complete once the confirmation email is received. If the applicant does not receive the confirmation email, it is the applicant's responsibility to contact USEF (festival@usef.org).
 - d. Additional horses must be added to an existing Application(s) of Intent until June 13, 2024 and will require a fee of fifty dollars (\$50) per horse.
 - e. Athlete/horse combinations without a complete Application of Intent by the closing date will be removed from their respective ranking list.
2. No Application of Intent will be accepted after June 13, 2024 at 11:59pm ET and no refunds will be given after the closing date.
3. Athletes are permitted to compete at these Championships with only those horses and/or ponies named on the athlete's application.
4. Qualifying scores are permitted to be earned prior to the submission of the Application of Intent.

Athlete Membership:

1. Athletes must be U.S. Citizens to earn scores towards their respective ranking list and to compete in the Championships.
2. If the athlete has an FEI Registration, they must have designated the USA as their Sport Nationality with the FEI prior to earning scores towards their respective ranking list and to compete in the Championships.
3. Athletes must be Active Competing Members in good standing with USEF for scores to count towards their respective ranking list and at the time of application.

- Athletes must be an Active Competing Member in good standing with USEF at the time of invitation through the conclusion of the Championships.
- Athletes are NOT required to have an FEI Rider Registration to earn scores or compete in these Championships.

Horse/Pony Membership:

- Horses/Ponies must be Annual or Life Recorded in good standing with USEF for scores to count towards their respective ranking list and at the time of application.
- Horse Identification (HID) Numbers DO NOT fulfill the above requirement.
- Horses must be Annual or Life Recorded with USEF and in good standing at the time of invitation through the conclusion of the Championships.
- An FEI Horse Registration, FEI passport, or FEI Recognition Card is NOT required to earn scores or compete for these Championships.

Horse Owner(s) Membership:

- Owners must be Active Competing Members in good standing with USEF for scores to count towards the combination's respective ranking list and at the time of application.
- Owners must be Active Competing Members in good standing with USEF at the time of invitation and through the conclusion of the Championships.
- Ownership may change during the qualifying period and up to the close of entries for the Championship as long as the new owner(s) meets all of the above criteria.
- All the above owner requirements apply to all listed owners on file with USEF, including all owners of a partnership, farm, company, corporation, etc. if a horse is recorded as owned by that type of entity.

USEF strongly encourages all athlete, horse, and owner membership requirements be completed by June 6, 2024, or rush fees may be required in order to submit the application of intent by 11:59pm, ET on June 13, 2024.

II. Division and Age Requirements for athlete and horse/pony.

For the Young Rider, Junior, and Pony Rider divisions, qualification is based upon athlete/horse or athlete/pony combination. Athletes are not permitted to compete more than two (2) horses or ponies (when applicable) in each Championship division. The same combination shall only participate in one division at these Championships. A horse or pony is permitted to only be competed in one division at the U.S. Dressage Festival of Champions.

For the Children division, qualification is based upon athlete/horse or athlete/pony combination. No athlete is permitted to compete more than one horse or pony at the U.S. Dressage Festival of Champions. The same combination shall only participate in one division at this Championship. A horse or pony is permitted to only be competed in one division at this Championship. See Section V for Invitations to the Championship.

Exception, a horse or pony that is competed in the Young Rider, Junior, Pony Rider, or Children divisions at these Championships, may also be competed in the USEF Dressage Seat Medal Finals.

For all divisions listed below, mules will not be allowed to qualify for or compete in these Championships. Per DR119.10, the horse's age is counted from January 1 of the year of birth to January 1 of the current competition year. FEI Rules apply in CDI competition.

Children:

- Athletes are eligible to compete in the Qualifying Competitions and the Championship as Children from the beginning of the calendar year in which they reach the age of twelve (12) until the end of the calendar year in which they reach the age of fourteen (14).
- Both horses and ponies are eligible to compete in this division.
- Horses/Ponies must be six (6) years old or over.

4. The height of ponies must not exceed 148cm without shoes, and 149cm with shoes (DR119.1). Ponies must have a current and valid USEF Standard or Temporary Measurement Certificate for Dressage/Driving. All ponies may be subject to additional measurement at the Championships.

Pony Rider:

1. Athletes are eligible to compete in the Qualifying Competitions and the Championship as Pony Riders from the beginning of the calendar year in which they reach the age of twelve (12) until the end of the calendar year in which they reach the age of sixteen (16).
2. Only ponies are eligible to compete in this division.
3. To compete in this division, ponies must be six (6) years old or older.
4. The height of ponies must not exceed 148cm without shoes, and 149cm with shoes (DR119.1). Ponies must have a current and valid USEF Standard or Temporary Measurement Certificate for Dressage/Driving. All ponies may be subject to additional measurement at the Championship.

Junior:

1. Athletes are eligible to compete in the Qualifying Competitions and the Championship as Juniors from the beginning of the calendar year in which they reach the age of fourteen (14) until the end of the calendar year in which they reach the age of eighteen (18).
2. Only Horses are eligible to compete in this division. Horses must be six (6) years old or older.

Young Rider:

1. Athletes are eligible to compete in the Qualifying Competitions and the Championship as Young Riders from the beginning of the calendar year in which they reach the age of sixteen (16) until the end of the calendar year in which they reach the age of twenty-one (21).
2. Only Horses are eligible to compete in this division. Horses must be seven (7) years old or older.

Once an athlete has taken part in a National or FEI Dressage Championship at a higher level, the following restrictions apply to competing Dressage National Championship at a lower level beginning January 1 of the following year:

- Once an athlete has taken part in a National or FEI Dressage Championship for Juniors (i.e., NAYC) they are no longer eligible to compete at a Dressage National Championship as a Children or Pony Rider.
- Once an athlete has taken part in a National or FEI Dressage Championship for Young Riders (i.e., NAYC) they are no longer eligible to compete at a Dressage National Championship as a Pony Rider or Junior.
- Once an athlete has taken part in a National or FEI Dressage Championship for Brentina Cup (16-25), they are no longer eligible to compete at a Dressage National Championship as a Pony Rider or Junior.
- If a combination places in the top three (3) in the Brentina Cup (16-25) National or FEI Championship, the same combination is no longer eligible to compete at a National Championship as a Young Rider.

If the above restrictions do not apply to an athlete, the following rules apply to qualifying and Championship participation for athletes meeting the eligible age requirement:

Children

- An athlete is permitted to compete in the Children, Pony Rider, and Junior divisions; however, may not compete in these divisions at the same qualifying competition(s) with the same mount.
- An athlete is permitted to compete in the Children and Pony Rider National Championships within the same year; however, not permitted to compete in these divisions at the National Championships with the same mount.
- An athlete is not permitted to compete at the National Championships for the Children and Junior divisions in the same year.

Pony Rider

- An athlete is permitted to compete in the Pony Rider, Children, Junior, Young Rider, and Brentina Cup (16-25) divisions; however, not permitted to compete in these divisions at the same qualifying competition(s) with the same mount.
- An athlete is permitted to compete in the Pony Rider, Children, Junior, Young Rider, and Brentina Cup (16-25) National Championships within the same year; however, not permitted to compete in these divisions at the National Championships with the same mount.

Junior

- An athlete is permitted to compete in the Children, Pony Rider, Young Rider, or Brentina Cup (16-25) divisions, however, not permitted to compete in these divisions at the same qualifying competition(s) with the same mount.
- An athlete is permitted to compete in the Pony Rider and Junior National Championships within the same year; however, not permitted to compete in these divisions at the National Championships with the same mount.
- An athlete is permitted to compete in the Junior, Young Rider and Brentina Cup (16-25) National Championships within the same year; however, not permitted to compete in these divisions at the National Championships with the same mount.
- An athlete is not permitted to compete in National Championships for the Children and Junior divisions in the same year.

Young Rider

- An athlete is permitted to compete in the Pony Rider, Junior, Young Rider, and Brentina Cup (16-25) divisions; however, not permitted to compete in these divisions at the same qualifying competition(s) with the same mount.
- An athlete is permitted to compete in the Pony Rider, Junior, and Young Rider, National Championships within the same year; however, not permitted to compete in these divisions at the National Championships with the same mount.

III. Qualifying System.

Qualifying Period:

The qualifying period shall begin July 25, 2023, and is scheduled to end July 22, 2024 unless otherwise noted by USEF no later than February 1, 2024.

Qualifying Competitions:

Competitions throughout the U.S. have been designated as national USEF/NAYC Qualifying Competitions (Qualifying Competitions) and a list of these Competitions is available on the USEF website [here](#). The 2023 FEI Calendar can be found [here](#) and please note that the 2024 FEI Calendar will not be published on this link until approved by the FEI, no later than December 31, 2023). Scores must only be earned at national Qualifying Competitions or CDIs.

For all divisions, please check regularly for updates to the FEI Calendar and the USEF/NAYC Qualifying Calendar as changes to competitions may be posted at any time.

All tests must be held as individual classes which are specifically designated as USEF Qualifying (“Test of Choice” classes will not count). USEF/NAYC Qualifying Competitions held over the course of a weekend are considered one qualifying opportunity, even if they have separate license/recognition numbers. Only one score per respective Test may be earned over the course of a weekend. See Section IV for Judging Panels.

Athletes competing in the Junior or Young Rider divisions may also earn scores at the FEI North American Youth Championships if held during the qualifying period. For scores to count, see point 3 below.

Scores from the 2023 USEF Young Rider and Junior Dressage National Championships may not be used towards qualifying for the 2024 U.S. Dressage Festival of Champions.

CDI scores are calculable at the option of the athlete and will only be computed into the combination's overall average upon receipt of the [USEF CDI/CPEDI Report Form](#) within the specified deadline stated on the form to the USEF Dressage Department. Scores submitted late will not be accepted. It is the sole responsibility of the athlete to ensure that all CDI scores for these Championships are presented to USEF on time and are accurate.

1. Children
 - a. Combinations must achieve a minimum overall average of 62% to receive an invitation for these Championships.
 - b. At least two (2) scores must be earned in the current edition of the FEI Children Team Test and at least two (2) scores must be earned in the current edition of the FEI Children Individual Test. The Technical Test scoresheet and Quality Marking sheet will be averaged, and the average will serve as the final score on the ranking list.
2. Pony Rider
 - a. Combinations must achieve a minimum overall average of 62% to receive an invitation for these Championships.
 - b. At least two (2) scores must be earned in the current edition of the FEI Pony Rider Team Test and at least two (2) scores must be earned in the current edition of the FEI Pony Rider Individual Test.
3. Junior
 - a. Combinations must achieve a minimum overall average of 66% to receive an invitation for these Championships.
 - b. At least two (2) scores must be earned in the current edition of the FEI Junior Team Test and at least two (2) scores must be earned in the current edition of the FEI Junior Individual Test.
4. Young Rider
 - a. Combinations must achieve a minimum overall average of 66% to receive an invitation for these Championships.
 - b. At least two (2) scores must be earned in the current edition of the FEI Young Rider Team Test and at least two (2) scores must be earned in the current edition of the FEI Young Rider Individual Test.

Score Calculation:

For calculation purposes, the combination's overall average will be determined by averaging the scores earned in the Team Test with the scores earned in the Individual Test. For all divisions, scratches, eliminations, and withdrawals will not be penalized on the ranking list.

1. Ranking List
 - a. USEF will automatically track scores for athlete/horse combinations which are earned at National Qualifying Competitions. Submission of score sheets to USEF is not necessary for these Championships unless requested by USEF staff.
 - b. As stated above, CDI scores must be reported to USEF by the deadline as indicated on the form to be counted.
 - c. Percentages are carried out to the third decimal point with numbers of five (5) and above rounded up (63.4555% = 63.456%). USEF is not responsible for inaccurately reported scores. If any errors are detected, athletes are encouraged to contact USEF Dressage Department at festival@usef.org immediately.
2. **Junior and Young Rider:** GAIG/USDF Regional Championships
 - a. For those qualified to compete in GAIG/USDF Regional Championship classes, FEI Junior and FEI Young Riders may also earn qualifying scores in their respective FEI division GAIG/USDF Regional Championship classes. Qualifying information for GAIG/USDF Regional Championships can be found on the USDF website [here](#). For these scores to count, scores must be reported by athletes via the USEF CDI/CPEDI Report form by the deadlines as indicated on the form.

- b. In cases where USEF/NAYC Qualifying classes are held in addition to a GAIG/USDF Regional Championships, scores earned in FEI Junior and FEI Young Rider Qualifying classes are automatically recorded. This means that an athlete may report their scores from the GAIG/USDF Regional Championship Junior and/or Young Rider Team Test Championship class(es) as an additional (second) Team Test score.
3. Drop Scores: If a combination completes three (3) or more Team Tests at different Qualifying Competitions, the lowest score earned in the Team Test will be dropped. If a combination completes three (3) or more Individual Tests at different Qualifying Competitions, the lowest score earned in the Individual Test will be dropped. Only one (1) score will be dropped from the Team Test and only one (1) score will be dropped from the Individual Test. All remaining scores will be used to calculate each combination's overall average.
4. **Withdrawals:** Withdrawals must be submitted in writing to festival@usef.org. Withdrawals received between June 14, 2024 and July 22, 2024 will be noted as WD on the final ranking list.

IV. Additional Rules and Requirements.

One Athlete Rule:

1. When qualifying for Children, Pony Riders, Juniors, Young Riders, and Brentina Cup (Young Adults) within 24 hours prior and through the conclusion of the competition, any horse/pony entered in a USEF Qualifying class shall not be ridden by anyone other than the athlete entered in that class on that horse/pony, under penalty of disqualification from the class for USEF championship qualifying purposes. Exception: grooms riding on a loose rein. For purposes of this rule, the competition starts when horse or pony and athlete arrive on the show grounds.
2. For USEF Championships for Children, Pony Riders, Juniors, Young Riders and Brentina Cup (Young Adults), within 24 hours prior and through the conclusion of the competition, any horse/pony entered in a USEF Championship class shall not be ridden by anyone other than the athlete entered in that class on that horse/pony under penalty of elimination from the USEF championships. Exception: grooms riding on a loose rein. For purposes of this rule, the competition starts when horse or pony and athlete arrive on the show grounds.
3. For CDI Events, FEI Dressage Rules apply.

Dress and Saddlery:

1. Please refer to [DR120-121](#) for dress and saddlery rules for national USEF/NAYC Qualifying Competitions.
2. **For Juniors and Young Riders:** Snaffle bridles are permitted for NAYC qualifying and championship classes, USEF Young Rider qualifying and championship classes, and USEF Junior qualifying and championship classes.
3. If competing in a CDI event, all [FEI Dressage](#) and [General Regulations](#) must be followed.
4. See Section V regarding Dress and Saddlery rules at the Championships.

Judging Panels for National Qualifying Competitions:

1. For all divisions, qualifying tests held at a national Qualifying Competition must be judged by a panel of two (2) or more USEF 'S' and/or FEI Judges (or at least one (1) FEI Judge and one (1) USEF 'S' Judge).
2. For tests to be counted towards qualification, at least one (1) judge must differ per Qualifying Competition.

Conflict of Interest:

1. Judging Panels at CDI Events: Refer to FEI Dressage Regulations for Judge Requirements and Codex for Judges.
2. Judging Panels at USEF National Licensed Competitions: Refer to USEF Chapter 13, GR1304.
3. All competitors and officials are subject to the conflict of interest rules as outlined in the [USEF General and Dressage Rules](#).

Non-Discrimination Policy:

USEF does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), sex, gender identify, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations. Everyone involved in the development of selection procedures and selection process must abide by the Non-Discrimination Policy.

Clean Sport

1. [Equine Anti-Doping](#): All horses/ponies shall be subject to drug and medication testing during qualifying and at the Championship and the horse must meet all Federation drug and medication rules. Blood and/or urine samples may be collected at any time during the competition. Samples collected from horses/ponies will be tested for the presence of all substances forbidden and/or controlled by USEF. Any horse/pony whose sample contains a prohibited substance or a restricted substance in a concentration greater than USEF limits shall be subject to sanctions in accordance with USEF Rules.
2. [Human Anti-Doping](#): Athletes must adhere to all WADA, FEI, USEF and USADA protocols, policies and procedures. This includes participation in out-of-competition testing as required by WADA, FEI, USEF, and/or USADA rules, if applicable.

Grievance Procedures:

Athletes wishing to file a grievance challenging a denial or threatened denial to participate in competition, please see the [Athlete's Guide to Filing a Grievance Regarding Opportunity to Participate](#) and Opportunity to Participate Complaint Form. For procedural guidance for filing a grievance, please contact Emily Pratt at epratt@usef.org.

Please contact the USOPC Athlete Ombudsman Office at (719) 866-5000, or ombudsman@usathlete.org, or visit www.athleteombudsman.org for guidance as to the USOPC grievance process.

General:

1. It is the responsibility of the owners and athletes of horses/ponies to ensure that they know and understand the [USEF Rules](#) and [Qualifying Requirements](#), and the USEF Code of Conduct.
2. All athletes, horse owners, and trainers are required to follow the [USEF Safe Sport Policy](#) which includes the [USEF Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies](#).
3. USEF is not responsible for any late, lost, delayed, misdirected, or stolen correspondence either electronic, postal, commercially shipped, or voice activated. It is the athlete's responsibility to ensure that all applications, application fees, and qualifying competition scores have been received by published deadlines.

V. Championship Competition.

Invitations to the Championship:

1. Invitations to these Championships are anticipated to be sent via email no later than Friday, July 26, 2024.
2. Combinations that submitted the Application of Intent as outlined above (see "Application") and have qualified by the method outlined above (see "Qualifying System") will be ranked according to scores and be accepted up to the numbers of entries available, not to exceed 12 athlete/horse or pony combinations unless there is a tie.
3. **For the Children division**, no athlete is permitted to compete more than one horse or pony in this Championship. The same combination shall only participate in one division at this Championship. A horse or pony may only be competed in one division at this Championship.
 - a. If an athlete qualifies more than one horse or pony in the top twelve (12) ranked combinations, the second horse or pony may serve as the athlete's direct reserve if the higher ranked horse or pony is unable to be competed at these Championships and USEF is notified prior to the close of the entry deadline. The deadline to submit an entry will be published in the official prize list and in the invitation to these Championships.

4. For all divisions (Young Rider, Junior, Pony Rider, and Children):

- a. In the case of a tie, the athlete/horse or pony combinations shall remain tied but shall take up two places so that if tied for first place, the next ranked combination shall be ranked third.
- b. If there is a tie for 12th place, all tied combinations will be invited, thereby increasing the total number of entries accepted (i.e., 13 entries accepted).
- c. Following the end of the qualifying period, athlete/horse or pony combinations not qualified as listed in Section III – Qualifying System may be invited to participate in their respective Championship if there is not a maximum of 12 qualified combinations on the final ranking list, not to exceed 12 unless there is a tie, if the following criteria is obtained:
 1. The athlete/horse or pony combination obtained at least two (2) scores in their respective Team and Individual Tests within the qualifying period at Qualifying Competitions.
 2. The athlete/horse or pony combination's final overall average is within 1% of the minimum overall average as required per their respective Championship and is the next highest overall average on their respective Final Ranking List.

For clarification purposes to the above, the additional invitations are based upon the Final Ranking List posted no later than Friday, July 26, 2024 and not on the final entry list for these Championships.

Competition Information:

1. The 2024 U.S. Dressage Festival of Champions will take place on August 19-25, 2024 at HITS Chicago at Lamplight Equestrian Center in Wayne, IL.
2. USEF Championship Rules will be followed and the Championship Format for each division will be available on the USEF website by March 1, 2024.
3. With the exception of the USEF Dressage Seat Medal Finals, all horses entered in these Championships will be examined for soundness. A horse inspection will be scheduled prior to the start of the Championship classes, at which time horses must be presented to an FEI Veterinarian and at least one (1) member of the judging panel for examination. Horses shall be evaluated from the side and following consultation with the FEI Veterinarian, the decision of the judge(s) is final and not subject to further protest. If a horse does not pass the horse inspection, the athlete may request to re-present the horse to the judge(s). The judge(s) must give an option for reinspection in consultation with Competition Management at any time up to one hour prior to the start of the class. The FEI Veterinarian and the judge(s) from the original panel must be present. All individuals aged 25 and under must wear protective headgear during the horse inspection.
4. Tests shall be ridden from memory and WHIPS ARE FORBIDDEN. Please refer to USEF Dressage Division Rules for complete dress and saddlery requirements (See USEF DR120-DR121).
5. Snaffle and Double bridles are permitted for the USEF Junior and Young Rider Dressage National Championships.

These Qualifying Requirements are based on the USEF and FEI rules and regulations as presently known and understood. Any change in the Qualifying Requirements caused by a change in USEF or FEI rules and regulations will be distributed to the affected athletes immediately. The Qualifying Requirements are based on the latest information available to USEF. However, the Qualifying Requirements are always subject to unforeseen, intervening circumstances, and realistically may not have accounted for every possible contingency. Changes in Qualifying Requirements are subject to approval by USEF.