

**UNITED STATES EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION, INC.**  
**SELECTION PROCEDURES**  
**2026 FEI Dressage World Championships**  
**Aachen, Germany**

**I. SELECTION SYSTEM**

**A. Minimum eligibility requirements for an athlete to be considered for nomination to the Team:**

- 1. Nationality/Passport Requirements** - The athlete must be a U.S. citizen and in compliance with the FEI General Regulations, 24<sup>th</sup> Edition, Article 119 (see [www.fei.org](http://www.fei.org)) at the time of application, selection, and until the conclusion of the 2026 FEI Dressage World Championships ("Event").
- 2. Minimum International Federation (IF) Standards for Participation:**
  - a. All athletes and horses wishing to compete on the 2026 FEI Dressage World Championships U.S. Dressage Team ("Team") must meet the FEI qualification criteria in accordance with the FEI Dressage Rules [26<sup>th</sup> edition, updates effective 1 January 2023], Article 450. The rules and a list of qualifying events can be found on the FEI website ([www.fei.org](http://www.fei.org)).
  - b. The athlete must have been born on or before December 31, 2010 (see the FEI Dressage Rules [26<sup>th</sup> edition, updates effective 1 January 2023], Article 422).
  - c. To be eligible for participation in the Event, athletes and horses must comply with all current FEI Rules.
  - d. A horse must be born on or before December 31, 2018 (eight (8) years of age) and have height at the withers exceeding 149 cm including shoes (see FEI Dressage Rules [26<sup>th</sup> edition, updates effective 1 January 2023], Article 422).
  - e. The athlete and horse must be registered with the FEI.
  - f. FEI Qualification Criteria: In order to qualify for participation at the Event, Athlete/Horse combination must have achieved a percentage score of at least 66% attributed by the Ground Jury and by any two (2) different FEI Level 4 Dressage Judges, of a nationality other than that of the rider, in a Grand Prix, at two (2) different CDI3\*/CDI4\*/CDI5\*/CDI-W or CDIO3\*/CDIO4\*/CDIO5\* events, from 1st January 2025 until the date of the Nominated Entries.
- 3. Other Requirements:**
  - a. The athlete must be a Competing member of the United States Equestrian Federation ("USEF") in good standing from at the time of Nominated Entry and through the conclusion of the Event.
  - b. The horse must be recorded with USEF pursuant to USEF GR1102 in good standing from at the time of Nominated Entry and through the conclusion of the Event.
  - c. **Application** - Athletes wishing to be considered for the Team must complete an online application (Attachment A) with the appropriate application fee at [www.usef.org](http://www.usef.org). Applications submitted online on or before **March 2, 2026**, at 11:59pm ET will be charged seventy-five dollars (\$75.00) per application. Applications submitted online after **March 2, 2026** and received by USEF on or before **March 9, 2026**, will be charged an application fee of three hundred dollars (\$300.00) per application. **NO APPLICATIONS OR CHANGES TO SUBMITTED APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER March 9, 2026, at 11:59pm ET.** Athletes must list any and all horses they wish to be considered for the Team on their Application by the stated deadline. Each athlete must certify, by signing the Application, that they have received, read, understand, and agree to be bound by these Selection Procedures, [the USEF Code of Conduct](#), [the USEF Release, Assumption of Risk, Waiver and Indemnification](#), [the U.S. Center for SafeSport Code](#), [the USEF Safe Sport Policy](#), including the [Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies](#), [the USEF Non-Discrimination Policy](#), and the [USEF Whistleblower & Anti-Retaliation Policy](#).
  - d. **Horse Participation Consent Agreement:** Individual owners of horses named to the FEI Nominated Entry (See I.C.3 below) must be Competing members of USEF in good standing from at the time of Nominated Entry and through the conclusion of the Event. Owners must sign the USEF Horse Participation Consent Agreement prior to the Nominated Entry deadline. A horse owner(s)' failure to sign the USEF Horse Participation Consent Agreement may result in the removal of the horse and/or athlete from the FEI Nominated Entry. The owner(s) must certify, by signing the Horse Participation Consent Agreement, that they have received, read, understand, and agree to

be bound by these Selection Procedures, [the USEF Code of Conduct](#), [the USEF Release, Assumption of Risk, Waiver and Indemnification](#), the [U.S. Center for SafeSport Code](#), [the USEF Safe Sport Policy](#), including the [Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies](#), [the USEF Non-Discrimination Policy](#), and the [USEF Whistleblower & Anti-Retaliation Policy](#).

- e. Any athlete age 18 or older as of the end of the Event will be required to undergo a background check in accordance with the current [USEF Background Check Policy](#).
- f. Any athlete age 18 or older as of the end of the Event will be required to remain current with the U.S. Center for SafeSport's education and training requirements in accordance with the [USEF Athlete Safety Policy](#).

#### **B. Tryout Events:**

**1. Provided below are the event names, dates, locations and description of how athletes qualify for any "preliminary or qualifying" events or procedures that are prerequisites to attend any of the events listed above in B.1 (if any):**

- a. Athlete/horse combinations must complete the FEI Grand Prix test and FEI Grand Prix Special Test at a minimum of two (2) CDI Tryout Events/Qualifying Competitions ("Qualifying Competitions"). Qualifying Competitions include all U.S. and foreign CDI 3\*/4\*/5\*/CDI-W or CDIO events beginning September 1, 2025, and ending May 17, 2026 ("Qualifying Period"). A list of these Qualifying Competitions can be found at <https://data.fei.org/Calendar/Search.aspx>.

A minimum of one (1) of the Grand Prix tests at Qualifying Competitions must be completed after January 1, 2026. In addition to the requirements above, athlete/horse combinations must complete the 2026 USEF Grand Prix Dressage National Championship (May 13-17, 2026, in Ocala, FL).

#### **C. Provided below is a comprehensive, step-by-step description of the method that explains how athletes will go through the selection process to be named to the Team:**

**1. Short List:** Following the conclusion of the Qualifying Period, May 17, 2026, up to eight athletes will be named with their horses to a Short List and invited to compete at Observation Events. Each athlete will be selected with a horse or horses listed on their application. It is possible for an athlete to be selected with an additional horse(s). There will be no ranking of Short List athlete/horse combinations. The Selectors, in consultation with the Chef d'Equipe and Team Veterinarian, will recommend athletes and horses for the Short List and participation in Observation Events to the USEF Board of Directors or an Ad Hoc Selection Group approved by the Board of Directors based on the following criteria (in no priority order):

- Scores earned during the Qualifying Period from tests [FEI Grand Prix, FEI Short Grand Prix\*, FEI Grand Prix Special and FEI Grand Prix Freestyle] at Qualifying Competitions;
- Scores from the 2026 USEF Grand Prix Dressage National Championship, including the completion of the FEI Grand Prix, FEI Grand Prix Special, and FEI Grand Prix Freestyle;
- 2026 USEF Grand Prix Dressage National Championship Ranking List from May 17, 2026;
- USEF Grand Prix Dressage 8-Month Ranking List May 17, 2026;
- Consistency of scores over 74%;
- Trend in the scores during the Qualifying Period, greater weight will be given to the trend in scores in the final three months of the initial qualifying period;
- Previous international experience of athlete and/or horse;
- "Errors of Course" (FEI Dressage Rules [25<sup>th</sup> edition, updates effective 1 January 2021], Article 430) or Incomplete Qualifying Competitions due to elimination or withdrawal;
- Potential to contribute to medal winning team; and
- Behavior of athlete and people associated with the athlete (including, without limitation, owners, coaches and grooms) that may have an impact on creating a positive team environment.

NOTE: For all combinations, the FEI Short Grand Prix may be considered by the Selectors as a lesser importance as this test will not be used at the Event.

In exceptional circumstances, additional applicant athlete/horse combinations may be added to the Short List (possibly exceeding eight (8) athletes) which have not completed the required qualifying events as outlined in Section I.C.2.b. These combinations may be invited to compete at the Observation Events if the scores are reflective of a combination that could assist in the overall Team performance. In reviewing the possibility of adding the combination to the Short List, Selectors will use the criteria cited above, in addition to the combination's scores achieved over the last six (6) months in FEI Dressage Events, greater weight will be given to the trend in scores in the most recent three months.

Please note that an invitation to the Observation Events is not a guarantee that an athlete/horse combination will be named to the Team for the Event.

**Chef d'Equipe Permissions:** Once athlete/horse combinations have been named to the Short List they will come under the control of the Chef d'Equipe through the completion of the Event. They shall not compete without the permission of the Chef d'Equipe.

**2. Observation Events** – Athlete/horse combinations named to the Short List will compete in designated Observation Events between May 17, 2026 and July 20, 2026, except as noted below. The designated Observation Events and additional details will be published on [www.usef.org](http://www.usef.org) no later than April 6, 2026, and may include events in Europe and/or events within the United States. Special Consideration may be granted for these Observation Events by the Selectors as described in Section a below.

**a. Special Consideration.** An athlete named to the Short List may request special consideration for Team selection without competing in the required number of Observation Events by submitting a written request prior to or during the Observation Event to the Selectors, who will approve or disapprove the request based on these factors:

- An athlete/horse combination that has demonstrated "Proven Ability" (See definition on page 12) to succeed at CDI competitions;
- Previous international experience of the athlete and/or horse;
- The circumstances, facts, and in the case of illness or injury to a horse or athlete, documentation by the Team Veterinarian or physician(s) approved by USEF; and/or
- Unforeseen circumstances which create a logistical emergency.

If an athlete's request is approved by the Selectors, an additional athlete/horse combination may be named to the Short List to compete in the Observation Events.

**b. Additional Athletes.** In exceptional circumstances, additional applicant athlete/horse combinations may be added to the Short List (possibly exceeding eight (8) athletes) that have not completed the required Qualifying Competitions. These combinations may be invited to compete at the Observation Events if the scores are reflective of a combination that could assist in the overall Team performance in the Observation Event and/or Event. In reviewing the possibility of adding the combination to the Short List, Selectors will use the criteria in Section I.C.1, in addition to the combination's scores achieved over the last six (6) months in FEI Dressage competitions, greater weight will be given to the trend in scores in the most recent three months.

**c.** Please note that an invitation to the Observation Events is not a guarantee that an athlete/horse combination will be named to the Team for the Event.

**d.** If USEF does not receive invitations for all combinations named to the Short List to compete at Observation Events, the Chef d'Equipe, in consultation with the Selectors, will recommend athletes for designated Observation Events, including any CDIOs, subject to the approval of the USEF Board of Directors or an Ad Hoc Selection Group approved by the Board of Directors. Additionally, if an Observation Event is found unsuitable for selection purposes following the publication of the FEI Definite Schedule, the Chef d'Equipe, in consultation with the Selectors, may recommend an additional Observation Event or may recommend athletes for designated

Observation Events subject to approval of the USEF Board of Directors or an Ad Hoc Selection Group approved by the Board of Directors.

- e. The Chef d'Equipe, in consultation with the athlete and Selectors, may request that the athlete and horse combination attend additional Observation Events. If this request is made by the Selectors, they will articulate their reasoning for making the request in writing to the athlete. Failure to abide by the Chef d'Equipe's recommendation may result in the removal of the athlete and/or horse from consideration for the Team.

**3. FEI Nominated Entry (July 6, 2026)** - Following the conclusion of the Qualifying Period but no later than the closing date for the FEI Nominated Entry (TBD), and based upon the procedures set forth herein, the Selectors, in consultation with the Chef d'Equipe and Team Veterinarian, will recommend at least four (4) athletes and four (4) horses and up to the maximum number of athletes and horses able to be nominated under FEI Rules for the Event subject to the approval of the USEF Board of Directors or an Ad Hoc Selection Group approved by the Board of Directors. The FEI Nominated Entry will be forwarded to the FEI by no later than the FEI Nominated Entry date.

The athletes and horses named to the Nominated Entry will be selected based on the following criteria (in no priority order):

- Scores from tests [FEI Grand Prix, FEI Short Grand Prix\*, FEI Grand Prix Special and FEI Grand Prix Freestyle] from any CDI or CDN scores within the last 12 months;
- Consistency of scores over 74%;
- Trend in the scores during the Qualifying Period and Observations Events, greater weight will be given to the trend in scores in the final three months of the Qualifying Period;
- The experience and standing of the judges in relevance to the 2026 FEI Dressage World Championships;
- An athlete/horse combination that has demonstrated "Proven Ability" (see definition of page 12) to succeed at CDI competitions;
- The FEI rankings and other competitors and individual placings;
- Previous international experience of athlete and/or horse;
- Potential to contribute to medal winning team;
- "State of Preparedness" (see definition of page 12) of athlete and or horse;
- "Errors of Course" (FEI Dressage Rules [26<sup>th</sup> edition, updates effective 1 January 2023], Article 424) or Incomplete Qualifying Competitions, European Observations Events due to elimination or withdrawal;
- Meet FEI Dressage World Championships Qualification Criteria.

NOTE: For all combinations, the FEI Short Grand Prix may be considered by the Selectors as a lesser importance as this test will not be used at the Event.

Athletes and horses may be named to the FEI Nominated Entry that have not completed the minimum qualifying competitions and/or have been approved for special consideration by the Selectors (see Section I.C.2a) to not compete in the Observation Events based on the criteria listed above.

**4. FEI Definite Entry (July 27, 2026)** - Following the conclusion of the Observation Events but no later than the closing date for the FEI Definite Entry for the Event, the Selectors, in consultation with the Chef d'Equipe, will evaluate the athletes and horses submitted on the FEI Nominated Entry and nominate to the FEI, as required, the Team composed of four (4) Athletes and four (4) Horses (per FEI Dressage Regulations [26<sup>th</sup> edition, effective 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023], Articles 412) subject to the approval of the USEF Board of Directors or an Ad Hoc Selection Group approved by the Board of Directors. The Selectors may also recommend up to two (2) reserve athlete/horse combinations and/or reserve horses that may be required to travel with the Team for the Mandatory Final Training (see Section XI).

Athlete/horse combinations named to the Team and the reserve athlete/horse combination will be selected bases on the following criteria (in no priority order):

- Scores from tests [FEI Grand Prix, FEI Short Grand Prix\*, FEI Grand Prix Special and FEI Grand Prix Freestyle] from any CDI or CDN scores within the last 12 months;

- Performance at Observation Event(s);
- Consistency of scores over 74%;
- Trend in the scores, greater weight will be given to the trend in scores in the final three months of the Qualifying Period;
- The experience and standing of the judges in relevance to the 2026 FEI Dressage World Championships;
- An athlete/horse combination that has demonstrated “Proven Ability” (see definition of page 12) to succeed at CDI competitions;
- The FEI rankings and other competitors and individual placings;
- Previous international experience of athlete and/or horse;
- Potential to contribute to medal winning team;
- “State of Preparedness” (see definition of page 12) of athlete and or horse;
- Incomplete Qualifying Competitions, European Observations Events due to elimination or withdrawal;
- The physical conditions in which the Games will be held, including the travel to the Games, and the potential impact of those conditions on the athlete/horse combinations’ performance; and
- Behavior of athlete and people associated with the athlete (including, without limitation, owners, coaches and grooms) that may have an impact on creating a positive team environment.

NOTE: For all combinations, the FEI Short Grand Prix may be considered by the Selectors as a lesser importance as this test will not be used at the Event.

5. **State of Preparedness (see definition on page 12):** The Selectors, in consultation with the Chef d’Equipe and the athlete, may recommend that the athlete/horse combination attend additional competitions after being named to the Team or the reserve position. If this request is made by the Selectors, they will articulate their reasoning for making the request in writing to the athlete. An athlete’s refusal to attend additional competitions may result in the athlete and/or horse’s removal from consideration.
6. **Replacements/Substitutions** per FEI Dressage Rules [26<sup>th</sup> edition, updates effective 1 January 2023], Article 416. See section IV.B for the method in which substitute athletes and horses should be selected, should a vacancy occur.
7. **Declaration of Starters** per FEI Dressage Rules [26<sup>th</sup> edition, updates effective 1 January 2023], Article 416.

## II. DISCRETIONARY SELECTION

- A. **Rationale for utilizing discretionary selection:** The option of discretionary selection is used to field the best Team possible in the Event.
- B. **Define the discretionary criteria to be used (if any):** For discretionary selection used please see the following sections:
  - Short List: Section I.C.1
  - Nominated Entry: Section I.C.3
  - Definite Entry: Section I.C. 4
- C. **Other Discretionary Criteria.**
  1. **Soundness** - Horses that are candidates for selection for the Event may be examined at any time during the selection process and through the conclusion of the event for soundness by the Team Veterinarian and/or a member of the Veterinarian Panel and/or a Selector upon the request of the Selectors, Chef d’Equipe, or Team Veterinarian. Horses found to be unsound by the Team Veterinarian or Veterinarian Panel may result in the elimination of the athlete/horse combination from the selection process, but only with the recommendation of the Selectors, Chef d’Equipe, and approval of the USEF Board of Directors or an Ad Hoc Selection Group approved by the Board of Directors.

2. **Team Veterinarian Request** – Applicants, **at their own expense**, shall make available, upon the request of the Team Veterinarian, 24 months' worth of complete veterinary records of horses considered for selection. In addition, applicants, **at their own expense**, shall be responsible for supplying any follow-up diagnostic information requested by the Team Veterinarian for horses under consideration for selection. Applicants, **at their own expense**, shall complete any treatment prescribed by the Team Veterinarian, after consultation with the horse's treating veterinarian if such a consultation is requested by the athlete, for horses under consideration for selection. Failure to comply with any reasonable request of the Team Veterinarian may result in the removal of the athlete/horse combination from the selection process by the Selectors upon the recommendation of the Team Veterinarian and with the recommendation of the Selectors, Chef d'Equipe, and approval of the USEF Board of Directors or an Ad Hoc Selection Group approved by the Board of Directors.
3. **Veterinary Treatment** - Once the Athletes are named to compete in the Observation Events (including any athlete with permission not to compete), by no later than the date of FEI Nominated Entry, and prior to the departure of the horses for the Event venue for the purpose of competing in the Event, athletes will be required to obtain written permission from the Team Veterinarian prior to treatment of "invited" horses being treated by any person other than the Team Veterinarian or Veterinary Panel. This permission must be obtained by using an official USEF Dressage Veterinary Treatment Request Form.

Failure to adhere to this policy and/or the directives of the Team Veterinarian as outlined on the USEF Dressage Veterinary Treatment Request Form may result in the removal of the athlete/horse combination from the selection process by the Selectors upon the recommendation of the Team Veterinarian and with the recommendation of the USEF Dressage Sport Committee, and approval of the USEF Board of Directors or an Ad Hoc Selection Group approved by the Board of Directors.

4. **Medical Request** - In the event of illness or injury, applicants may be required to submit to a medical examination by a physician(s) approved by the USEF International Disciplines Council at any time during the selection process for the purposes of determining the applicant's ability to compete at the Event. Failure to submit to such examination may result in the removal of the applicant from the selection process by the Selectors upon the recommendation of the USEF approved physician(s) and with the recommendation of the USEF Dressage Selectors, and approval of the USEF Board of Directors or an Ad Hoc Selection Group approved by the Board of Directors. Following the examination, should the USEF approved physician(s) find the applicant to be unfit to compete, the applicant may be removed from the selection process pending review by the USEF Dressage Sport Committee, and approval of the USEF Board of Directors or an Ad Hoc Selection Group approved by the Board of Directors.
- D. **Provided below are the names of all committees/groups who oversee the selection process, including the name(s) and role(s) of their members.** The USEF Dressage Selectors will oversee the selection process, that will be reviewed and approved by the USEF Board of Directors or Executive Committee.
- E. **Names of the committee(s) that will be responsible for discretionary selection.**
- USEF Dressage Selectors
  - USEF Dressage Chef d'Equipe
  - USEF Dressage Veterinary Panel
  - USEF Dressage Team Veterinarian
  - USEF Board of Directors or Ad Hoc Selection Group
- See Attachment F for list of USEF committees, their roles, and list of members.

F. **Process that will be used to identify and handle any potential conflicts of interest involving a member of the committee(s) listed above:**

All Athletes involved in the selection of the Squad must comply with the USEF [Conflict of Interest and Gifts & Entertainment Policy](#).

Any person involved in the selection of the Team who has an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest must disclose it to the USEF Legal Department prior to December 1, 2025 (the "Application" date). Additionally, they may be required to recuse oneself from the review process and/or voting. Selectors are bound by the conflict of interest procedures and management restrictions imposed by the USEF Audit Committee.

Additionally, any person (including any potentially impacted Athlete, Owner, or Coach of a potentially impacted Athlete or Horse) with a good faith belief that an Athlete has a conflict of interest may report the alleged conflict of interest to the USEF General Counsel and/or Audit Committee. Reports may be made anonymously. No Athlete shall retaliate in any way against a person who, in good faith, reports an alleged conflict of interest.

**III. REMOVAL OF ATHLETES**

A. At any time during the selection process through the conclusion of the Event, USEF has jurisdiction over athletes and horses. An athlete and/or horse that is nominated or selected to the Team by USEF may be removed for any of the following reasons, as determined by USEF:

- Voluntary withdrawal. An athlete must submit a written letter to the USEF CEO.
- Injury or illness as certified by a USEF approved physician (or medical staff). If an athlete refuses verification of their illness or injury by a USEF approved physician (or medical staff), their injury will be assumed to be disabling and they may be removed.
- Violation of the USEF Code of Conduct (Attachment C).
- Failure of an owner to sign the Horse Participation Consent Agreement (Attachment B).
- Injury or illness of the horse as determined by a majority of the Veterinary Panel and/or Team Veterinarian. If an athlete and/or horse owner refuses to have the horse examined by the Team Veterinarian and/or Veterinary Panel, the injury or illness will be assumed to be disabling and the horse may be removed.
- Exceptional circumstances having a direct bearing upon obtaining the best qualified team for the Event, in consultation with the Chef d'Equipe and Selectors.
- Detection of a prohibited substance in the horse.
- Failure to adhere to all WADA, FEI, USEF and/or USADA, anti-doping protocols, policies and procedures including participation in out-of-competition testing as required by the WADA, FEI, USEF and/or USADA Rules.
- Failure to comply with a request of the Team Veterinarian and/or any member of the Veterinary Panel or with the USEF Dressage Veterinary Treatment Request Form protocols.
- Failure to adhere to the agreed upon plans, programs, guidance, and/or directives of the Chef d'Equipe and/or Team Veterinarian.
- Failure to comply with reasonable requests regarding Logistical information and deadlines.
- Failure to comply with USEF Safe Sport Policy (Attachment E) and U.S. Center for SafeSport's Code.
- Behavior of the athlete and people associated with the athlete (including, without limitation, accredited owners, coaches and grooms) that may have an impact on creating a positive team environment that will affect (either positively or negatively) the ability to win a team medal.
- Non-compliance with the eligibility requirements listed in these selection procedures.
- Failure to obtain written permission from the Team Veterinarian prior to the Horse receiving veterinary treatment by any veterinarian who is not the Team Veterinarian or a Team Evaluating Veterinarian.
- Failure to participate in veterinary exams or other requirements as defined in these procedures.
- Failure to participate in a Mandatory Training and/or Competition (see Section XI).

In these procedures the removal of an athlete is closely related to the process by which they will be substituted. Therefore, the reasons for which an athlete may be removed are thoroughly addressed in Section IV.  
SUBSTITUTION/REPLACEMENT OF ATHLETE/HORSE COMBINATIONS AND/OR HORSE.

An athlete removed from selection pursuant to this provision has the right to a hearing per the USEF's Bylaw, Part VII or USOPC Bylaw, Section 9.

#### **IV. SUBSTITUTION/REPLACEMENT OF ATHLETES/HORSE COMBINATIONS AND/OR HORSE**

##### **A. Following is the process by which the substitution/replacement pool of athlete/horse combinations will be identified:**

The list of athletes on the Short List will comprise the pool of substitute athlete/horse combinations.

##### **B. Substitution/Replacement athletes and horses will be selected, should a vacancy occur, according to the following method:**

- 1. Prior to acceptance of the FEI Nominated Entry:** Once the Short List for the event has been announced and prior to the submission of the FEI Nominated Entry (Date TBD) Short List athlete/horse combinations may be substituted in accordance with the process cited in Section I.C.2-4 above. To fill openings, if they occur, the Selectors, in consultation with the Chef d'Equipe, will evaluate the athletes and horses and will base their evaluations on the factors outlined in Section I.C.2-4. Any substitution other than voluntary withdrawal must be upon the recommendation of the Selectors, in consultation with the Chef d'Equipe, and subject to the approval of the Board of Directors or an Ad Hoc Selection Group approved by the Board of Directors. Any substitution for veterinary reasons other than voluntary withdrawal must have the approval of the Team Veterinarian and when appropriate the Veterinary Panel. Any substitution for medical reasons other than voluntary withdrawal must be documented by a physician(s) who is approved by the USEF.
- 2. Prior to acceptance of the FEI Definite Entry:** Once the Team for the Event has been announced and prior to the closing date of the FEI Definite Entry, Team members may be replaced with an athlete/horse combination on the FEI Nominated Entry for reasons set forth in Section III.B. Replacements may only be made by recommendation of the Chef d'Equipe and the Selectors and are subject to the approval of the USEF Board of Directors or an Ad Hoc Selection Group approved by the Board of Directors and in accordance with the FEI Dressage Rules and/or for reasons set forth in Section III.B and subject to approval by the USEF Chef de Mission. To fill openings, if they occur, the Chef d'Equipe, in consultation with the Selectors and Team Veterinarian will evaluate the athletes and horses named to the Team and the FEI Nominated Entries and may recommend that a replacement be made. The Chef d'Equipe and Selectors when evaluating athletes and horses will base their evaluations on the factors outlined in Section I.C.2-4. Any substitution for veterinary reasons other than voluntary withdrawal must have the approval of the Team Veterinarian and when appropriate the Veterinary Panel. Any substitution for medical reasons other than voluntary withdrawal must be documented by a physician(s) who is approved by the USEF.
- 3. After acceptance of FEI Definite Entry and up to two hours prior to the Horse Inspection (per FEI Dressage Regulations Article 423).** After acceptance of the FEI Definite Entry and until the latest possible substitution permitted FEI regulations (this date will be communicated to all athletes named to the FEI Nominated Entry), USEF has the ability to replace athletes and/or horses on the FEI Definite Entry for reasons set forth in Section III.B. During this time period, Team members may only be replaced with an athlete/horse combination from the FEI Nominated Entry. However, the reason for a substitution must only be because either, the athlete is unfit to compete due to injury or illness or there is a strong veterinary case for substitution or the performance of the Team member has dropped off to such an extent that for the success of the Team a substitution is vital. The latter situation will almost certainly occur as a result of a veterinary problem which it may or may not be possible to define given the time/resources available at the time. Replacements may only be made by recommendation of the Chef d'Equipe, with approval of the Dressage Team Leader and USEF Chef de Mission, and in accordance with the FEI Dressage Rules or for reasons set forth in Section III.B. Any replacement for veterinary reasons must be upon the recommendation of the Chef d'Equipe and must also have the approval of the Team Veterinarian. Any replacement for medical reasons must be documented by a physician(s) physically present at the Event venue approved by the USEF.



**C. Group or committee that will be responsible for making athlete substitution/replacement determinations:**

1. **Group or committee who determines the substitution/replacement pool:** USEF Dressage Selectors, Chef d'Equipe, USEF Team Veterinarian, USEF Board or Directors or an Ad Hoc Selection Group approved by the Board of Directors.
2. **Group or committee who determines a substitution/replacement to the team:**
  - a. **Prior to acceptance of the FEI Nominated Entry:** USEF Dressage Selectors, Chef d'Equipe, USEF Team Veterinarian, and the USEF Board of Directors or an Ad Hoc Selection Group approved by the Board of Directors.
  - b. **Prior to acceptance of the FEI Definite Entry:** By the USEF Chef de Mission, USEF Dressage Selectors, USEF Dressage Chef d'Equipe, and USEF Dressage Team Veterinarian.
  - c. **After acceptance of FEI Definite Entry and up to two hours prior to the Horse Inspection (or earlier date if determined):** By the USEF Chef de Mission, Dressage Team Leader, USEF Dressage Chef d'Equipe, and USEF Dressage Team Veterinarian.

**V. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:** USEF will retain all approved Selection Procedures and all supporting documents, including evaluation forms and data from the selection process for six months past the date of the Closing Ceremonies of the Event.

**VI. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS:** The following documents are required to be properly executed by applicants and horse owners as a condition of nomination for the Event and are included as attachments:

- Application
- Horse Participation Consent Agreement
- USEF Code of Conduct
- USEF Release, Assumption of Risk, Waiver and Indemnification

Applicants and horse owners will be required to certify that they have received and read a copy of the USEF Code of Conduct and USEF Safe Sport Policy and that they understand them and agree to be bound by them.

In addition, all persons participating in any decision made pursuant to the Selection Procedures including but not limited to Selectors, Chef d'Equipe, Team Veterinarian, members of the Veterinary Panel, Physicians, and the USEF Board of Directors or an Ad Hoc Selection Group approved by the Board of Directors will be required to abide by the USEF Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policies.

**VII. ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS:** Athletes selected to the FEI Nominated Entry will be required to read the USEF Athlete Agreement (Attachment I) and are requested to sign this document.

**VIII. PUBLICITY/DISTRIBUTION OF PROCEDURES:** The USEF approved Selection Procedures (complete and unaltered) will be posted/published by USEF in the following locations:

- USEF Website - [www.usef.org](http://www.usef.org) - These procedures will be posted as soon as possible, but not more than 5 business days following notice of approval by USEF.
- Other: The Selection Procedures and Application will also be available by mail or email upon request.

**IX. DATE OF NOMINATION:** The FEI Nominated Entries will be submitted to the FEI no later than entry due date (July 6, 2026). The FEI Definite Entry will be submitted to the FEI no later than July 27, 2026.

**X. ANTI-DOPING REQUIREMENTS:**

1. **Human Anti-Doping:** Athletes must adhere to all WADA, FEI, and USADA anti-doping protocols, policies, and procedures, as applicable. This includes participation in Out-of-Competition Testing as required by the WADA, FEI, and USADA rules, as applicable.
2. **Equine Drug Testing:** All applicant horses are subject to drug testing both in competition and out of competition. In-Competition. All horses entered to compete in any FEI or USEF competition are subject to drug testing at any time from when the competition begins until the competition ends or beginning when the horse arrives for the competition until the competition ends, whichever beginning occurs first. Blood and/or urine samples may be collected and tested for substances prohibited or forbidden under the subject competition rules. National competitions may invoke GR 409

whereby samples will be tested for FEI prohibited substances, including metabolites and markers.

Positive Finding. At any time during the selection period that the presence of a prohibited or forbidden substance, or a metabolite or marker, is detected in the sample collected in-competition, the results, including the level detected for controlled medications, will be reported to the USEF Chief Executive Officer and General Counsel, who will notify the Director of Sport or the Discipline Director for dissemination of information as appropriate. In such instance, the positive finding may result in the elimination of the horse and/or athlete from the Selection Process. Before elimination occurs, the owner and athlete will be afforded a hearing by a panel ("Selection Hearing Panel") comprised of at least one member of the applicable discipline Sport Committee along with at least two members of the Hearing Committee, one of which must be an Eligible Athlete. The Chairman of the USEF Veterinary Committee, or his designee, may serve Ex Officio and a member of the Veterinarian Panel selected for the Event may serve Ex Officio.

Out-of-Competition. Blood and/or urine samples may be collected out-of-competition at any time throughout the selection period, which is defined for equine drug testing as commencing on September 1, 2025, following notification to the applicant at least 24 hours prior to collection of samples. Samples collected from horses out-of-competition will be tested for the presence of substances prohibited by the FEI, including metabolites and markers. Failure to make the horse available for collection of samples may result in the elimination of the horse and/or athlete from the Selection Process. Before elimination occurs, the owner and athlete will be afforded a hearing by the Selection Hearing Panel.

Positive Finding. At any time during the selection period that the presence of a prohibited or forbidden substance, or a metabolite or marker, in the sample, the results, including the level detected for controlled medications, will be reported to the USEF Chief Executive Officer and General Counsel, who will notify the Director of Sport or the Discipline Director for dissemination of information as appropriate. In such instance, the positive finding may result in the elimination of the horse and/or athlete from the Selection Process unless the Veterinarian Panel appointed for selection of the Event certifies that the substance detected has been approved or is legitimate and appropriate under the circumstances. Before elimination occurs, the owner and athlete will be afforded a hearing by the Selection Hearing Panel.

This provision does not abrogate the enforcement of applicable equine anti-doping rules at Federation licensed competitions, including competitions where GR 409 is invoked whereby samples will be tested for FEI prohibited substances, including metabolites and markers.

Also see the section on Veterinarian Treatment, a violation of which may result in elimination under this provision. Before elimination occurs in either instance, the owner and athlete will be afforded a hearing by the Selection Hearing Panel.

#### **USEF GR409.2 Equine Drugs and Medications, Prohibited Substance Provisions**

No horse and/or pony competing in a Breed or Discipline designated as (or part of) a No Prohibited Substance Group is to be shown in any class at a competition licensed by the Federation if it has been administered in any manner or otherwise contained in its tissues, body fluids or excreta a prohibited substance as defined in the FEI Equine Anti-Doping and Controlled Medication Regulations, which can be found at [www.fei.org](http://www.fei.org).

**XI. MANDATORY TRAINING AND/OR COMPETITION:** Short List athletes and horses may be required to meet in one location for the final Veterinary Evaluation (see definition on page 12). Date and time of final Veterinary Evaluation will be communicated to Short List athletes no later than July 6, 2026. The Team and reserve(s) athletes/horses may be required to meet in one location for a mandatory final training camp. These dates will be communicated no later than thirty (30) days prior to the start of the camp.

**XII. DEVELOPMENT OF SELECTION PROCEDURES:** The following committees/groups were responsible for creating these Selection Procedures: USEF Dressage Sport Committee and the USEF Board of Directors.

#### **XIII. USEF BYLAWS AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES:**

USEF Bylaws and Grievance Procedures can be found in USEF Bylaws Part VII and in the Supplemental Procedures for Complaints and Grievances. See [www.usef.org](http://www.usef.org).

**XIV. 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.

**XV. INTERNATIONAL DISCLAIMER:** These procedures are based on USEF and/or FEI rules and regulations as presently known and understood. Any change in the selection procedures caused by a change in USEF and/or FEI rules and regulations will be distributed to the affected athletes immediately. The selection criteria are based on the latest information available to USEF. However, the selection procedures are always subject to unforeseen, intervening circumstances, and realistically may not have accounted for every possible contingency.

In any force of nature, or force majeure, should cause alteration or cancelation of the selection events listed in this document, these selection procedures will be revised, pursuant to their submission to the USEF.

**XVI. ATHLETE OMBUDS OFFICE:**

Team USA athletes may contact the Office of the Athlete Ombuds for independent and confidential advice on a variety of sport related matters, including their rights, applicable rules, policies or processes, and questions related to resolving disputes and grievances. The Athlete Ombuds can also help Team USA athletes connect with legal counsel or mental health resources if needed. All other NGB athletes (i.e., athletes competing domestically at the masters or youth level, recreational athletes, foreign athletes) are welcome to visit the Athlete Ombuds website to review informational resources and should work directly with their NGB to understand additional resources and options available to them.

Phone: 719-866-5000

Email: [ombudsman@usathlete.org](mailto:ombudsman@usathlete.org)

Website: [usathlete.org](http://usathlete.org)

Athlete Ombuds Confidentiality and Privacy Policy:




- (A) In general.—The Office of the Athlete Ombuds shall maintain as confidential any information communicated or provided to the Office of the Athlete Ombuds in confidence in any matter involving the exercise of the official duties of the Office of the Athlete Ombuds.
- (B) Exception.—The Office of the Athlete Ombuds may disclose information described in subparagraph (A) as necessary to resolve or mediate a dispute, with the permission of the parties involved.
- (C) Judicial and administrative proceedings.—
- (i) In general.—The ombudsman and the staff of the Office of the Athlete Ombuds shall not be compelled to testify or produce evidence in any judicial or administrative proceeding with respect to any matter involving the exercise of the duties of the Office of the Athlete Ombuds .
  - (ii) Work product.—Any memorandum, work product, notes, or case file of the Office of the Athlete Ombuds—
    - (I) shall be confidential; and
    - (II) shall not be—
      - (aa) subject to discovery, subpoena, or any other means of legal compulsion; or (bb) admissible as evidence in a judicial or administrative proceeding.
- (D) Applicability.—The confidentiality requirements under this paragraph shall not apply to information relating to—
- (i) applicable federally mandated reporting requirements;
  - (ii) a
    - felony personally witnessed by a member of the Office of the Athlete Ombuds;
  - (iii) a situation, communicated to the Office of the Athlete Ombuds, in which an individual is at imminent risk of serious harm; or
  - (iv) a congressional subpoena.

**Anti-retaliation Statement:** No employee, contractor, agent, volunteer, or member of USEF shall take or threaten action against an athlete as a reprisal for disclosing information to or seeking assistance from the Office of the Athlete Ombuds.

**XVII. FUNDING DISCLAIMER:** Selection to the Team does not guarantee that funds will be available to send a team.

**XVIII. DISCLAIMER:** Please see USEF Release, Assumption of Risk, Waiver and Indemnification.

**XIX. NGB SIGNATURES:** I certify that I have read, understand and incorporated our IF standards/criteria into our Selection Procedures and that the information provided herein regarding these Selection Procedures represents the method approved by the United States Equestrian Federation.

Position	Print Name	Signature	Date
USEF CEO	William J. Moroney		10/20/2025
USEF Dressage Managing Director	Laura Roberts		10/20/2025
Team USA Athlete Representative*	Sydney Elliott		10/20/2025

Any questions regarding these Selection Procedures should be addressed to Laura Roberts, USEF Managing Director of Dressage, United States Equestrian Federation, 4001 Wing Commander Way, Lexington, KY 40511, Phone (859) 225-6986, Email: lroberts@usef.org.

Approved by the USEF Dressage Sport Committee on September 2, 2025.

Approved by the USEF Executive Committee on September 30, 2025.

### **DEFINITIONS**

**USEF DRESSAGE SELECTORS** - Five (5) individuals (the “Selectors”) will be appointed upon recommendation of the USEF Dressage Sport Committee. The Selectors are subject to the USEF Code of Conduct and the Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest policies of the USEF. The Selectors are Senior Active Members in good standing of USEF, who are also members of the Dressage community and who are knowledgeable and experienced in Dressage at the international level, and include a minimum of two Dressage Eligible Athlete Representatives as defined by the USOPC (See Definitions) but who is not an applicant for the Team (the “Eligible Athlete Representative Selectors”).

The Selectors will make recommendations to the Dressage Sport Committee based on consultation with the Chef d’Equipe, the Team Veterinarian and when appropriate, the Veterinary Panel.

A minimum of two (2) Replacement Selectors will also be named. A Replacement Selector will take the place of a Selector who has a conflict of interest or a substantial appearance of a conflict of interest. There will be a minimum of 33.333% Eligible Athlete Representation on the panel of Selectors.

**SUBSTITUTE** –Substituting an athlete/horse combination after submittal of the FEI Definite Entries.

**STATE OF PREPAREDNESS** – Athlete/horse combinations overall state of readiness to perform successfully at International Dressage Competition, not just limited to health and soundness of the horse.

**PROVEN ABILITY** – An athlete/horse combination that has met at least one of the following criteria:

- i) Represented the US at the 2026 FEI World Cup Final earning a minimum of a 76% in the FEI Grand Prix Test.
- ii) Earned recent results (minimum of a 76% in the FEI Grand Prix, or FEI Grand Prix Special Tests in 2025/2026 at CDI5\*, CDI4\*, CDI-W or CDI03\*/4\*/5\* events.

**CDI** - Concourse de Dressage International

**EVENT** – The 2026 FEI Dressage World Championships

**TEAM** – The 2026 FEI Dressage World Championships US Dressage Team