



MEMORANDUM

To: Potential Applicants for the 2026 U.S. Dressage Festival of Champions

Date: May 28, 2025

From: Laureen Johnson, Director, Para Equestrian

Copy: Hallye Griffin
Kristen Brett

Re: Qualifying Dates and Competitions for the 2026 USEF Para Dressage National Championships for the Grand Prix and Intermediaire I Divisions.

This preliminary information is being provided to assist you with your competition planning and may be subject to change. Please remember that this information is based upon the recommendations of the USEF Para Equestrian Sport Committee and the final qualifying requirements are subject to approval by the USEF Board of Directors, Executive Committee, or an Ad Hoc Selection Group approved by the USEF Board of Directors.

Date and Location: The 2026 U.S. Dressage Festival of Champions is scheduled to take place on August 24-30, 2026, at HITS Lamplight Equestrian Center in Wayne, IL.

Qualifying Period: The qualifying period for the 2026 USEF Para Dressage National Championships ("Championships") for the Grand Prix and Intermediaire I divisions will begin on July 22, 2025, and end on July 27, 2026.

For these Championships, qualification is athlete/horse combination based. Therefore, any change to the athlete during the qualifying period will result in a new combination for qualifying purposes.

Qualifying Competitions: Qualifying Competitions include national USEF/NAYC Qualifying Competitions as well as U.S. and foreign CPEDI events. Qualifying Competitions held over the course of a weekend are considered one qualifying opportunity, even if they have separate license/recognition numbers.

The list of national USEF/NAYC Qualifying Competitions is available on the USEF website [here](#). The 2025 FEI Calendar can be found [here](#) and please note that the 2026 FEI Calendar will not be published on this link until approved by the FEI, no later than December 31, 2025.

Scores earned from the 2025 U.S. Dressage Festival of Champions cannot be used towards qualifying for the 2026 U.S. Dressage Festival Champions.

Eligibility Requirements for Athlete and Horse:

- Athletes must be a minimum of 13 years old as of December 1, 2025 (refer to DR128.1).
- Horses must be a minimum of six-years-old in 2026 (refer to DR119.1 and DR305).
- Athletes must have a USEF National and/or FEI International Para Equestrian Dressage Classification and be assigned a Grade I-V with a confirmed or review, with a fixed review date (FRD), status to earn qualifying scores (refer to DR119.12, DR119.13, and DR305).
- Athletes must ride independently and at their classified Grade.

Qualifying Tests: Hors de Concours entries are not permitted in USEF/NAYC Qualifying classes. Qualifying tests at national Qualifying Competitions must be judged by a panel of at least two (2) FEI or USEF 'S' judges. Freestyle Tests completed at a national Qualifying Competition must be judged by a minimum of one (1) USEF 'S' or FEI judge. For CPEDI Events, [FEI Para Dressage Rules](#) apply.

- a. **Grand Prix:** Combinations must obtain at least one (1) score in their respective Grade level from the current edition of the FEI Para Grand Prix A Test and at least one (1) score in their respective Grade level from the current edition of the FEI Para Grand Prix B Test.
- b. **Intermediaire I:** Combinations must obtain at least one (1) score in their respective Grade level from the current edition of the FEI Para Intermediate A Test and at least one (1) score in their respective Grade level from the current edition of the FEI Para Intermediate B Test.
- c. **Freestyle:**
 - i. **Grand Prix:** Combinations must also earn at least one (1) score in the FEI Para Grand Prix Freestyle Test. The Freestyle Test score must be earned in an FEI Para Grand Prix Freestyle Test of Choice class or in an FEI Para Grand Prix Freestyle Test offered at a national Qualifying Competition, CPEDI, or through the [USEF Virtual Judging Program](#). If an athlete completes their freestyle through the [USEF Virtual Judging Program](#), a copy of the entire score sheet(s) must be submitted to and received by the USEF Dressage Department (festival@usef.org) no later than 5pm, ET on July 27, 2026 for consideration. Freestyle scores will automatically be noted on the final ranking list and are not used in the calculation of a combination's overall average.
 - ii. **Intermediaire I:** Combinations must also earn at least one (1) score in the FEI Para Intermediate Freestyle Test. The Freestyle Test score must be earned in an FEI Para Intermediate Freestyle Test of Choice class or in an FEI Para Intermediate Freestyle Test offered at a national Qualifying Competition, CPEDI, or through the [USEF Virtual Judging Program](#). If an athlete completes their freestyle through the [USEF Virtual Judging Program](#), a copy of the entire score sheet(s) must be submitted to and received by the USEF Dressage Department (festival@usef.org) no later than 5pm, ET on July 27, 2026 for consideration. Freestyle scores will automatically be noted on the final ranking list and are not used in the calculation of a combination's overall average.

Ranking List Score Calculation:

- a. USEF will automatically track scores for combinations which are earned at national Qualifying Competitions.
- b. For all divisions, scratches, eliminations, and withdrawals will not be penalized.
- c. **CPEDI Scores:** CPEDI scores are calculable at the option of the athlete and will only be computed into the combination's overall average upon receipt of a 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 qualifying CPEDI scores for this Championship are submitted to USEF on time and are accurate.
- d. A combination cannot earn a score in a national Qualifying Competition if the athlete submits the USEF CDI/CPEDI Report Form from the same event.

Questions: If you have any questions regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact the USEF Para Equestrian Department at lkjohnson@usef.org or festival@usef.org.