



## 2026 USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final

The 2026 USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final (“Final”) Specifications (“Specifications”) published herein are effective April 28, 2026, unless stated otherwise.

### I. Eligibility to Compete-Riders

- a. The USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final is open to Individual Junior Members in good standing who have not reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday in accordance with GR128. No credit will be given for winnings before a competitor becomes a member.
- b. A rider can enter USEF Hunter Seat Medal classes anywhere in the United States but the number of points to qualify for the USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final (or semi-finals if held) depends on the requirements of the rider’s point state. A rider’s point state is the state given on the rider’s membership application. That address is locked on December 1 of the competition year or the first day of the rider’s membership activation, whichever comes first. However, a Life member’s address is always locked on December 1 of the competition year. A rider may have only one domicile which is where the rider has **their** permanent home and where, whenever **they are** absent, intends to return. The address given on the membership application must be the state where the rider is domiciled at the time of membership activation or renewal. If a rider is found not in compliance with this rule, the rider may be subject to disqualification from the USEF Hunter Seat Medal Finals. A person may apply to the Federation for permission to change their point state.
- c. Any rider in their final junior year is not eligible to compete in any qualifying classes held at a competition with a start date after August 31 of that competition year.
- d. The winner of the USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final is no longer eligible to compete in USEF Hunter Seat Medal classes.

### II. Eligibility to Compete-Horses

- a. All horses competing in USEF Hunter Seat Medal qualifying classes must be properly identified through its USEF HID and recorded microchip number and must obtain a Registration Number from USHJA in order for the rider to accumulate points.
- b. All horses competing in USEF Hunter Seat Medal qualifying classes and Final must provide a microchip number that verifies the animal’s identity in order for the rider to accumulate points. The microchip must be compliant with EQ103.

### III. Qualifying Criteria

a. The qualifying period for the **2026** USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final is September 1, 2025- August 31, 2026. Points from qualifying classes will count based on the start date of the competition.

b. Increment Chart:

| Placings        | Number of Exhibitors who Complete the Course |                 |                  |                |
|-----------------|--|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
|                 | 3-5 Exhibitors                               | 6-15 Exhibitors | 16-30 Exhibitors | 31+ Exhibitors |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> | 5  | 10              | 20               | 40             |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 4  | 8               | 16               | 32             |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> | 3  | 6               | 12               | 24             |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> |  | 4               | 8                | 16             |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> |  |                 | 4                | 8              |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> |  |                 | 2                | 4              |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> |  |                 |                  | 2              |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> |  |                 |                  | 1              |

c. In the USEF Hunter Seat Medal, exhibitors must qualify by the minimum number of points required by their state. The number of points required for each state will be posted on the USEF website no later than 30 days following the completion of the previous year’s qualifying period.

d. Riders may compete in a total of fourteen (14) USEF Hunter Seat Medal Qualifying classes in a single qualifying period. Any rider who continues to compete after they have competed in fourteen (14) qualifying classes will no longer be eligible to compete in the USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final. (Exception: If a rider is not yet qualified for the USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final after fourteen (14) classes, that rider may continue to compete until qualified. That rider must stop competing in USEF Hunter Seat Medal Qualifying classes as soon as he or she is qualified for the USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final or he/she will no longer be eligible to compete in the USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final.) It is the rider’s responsibility to calculate and know their points in addition to the number of classes in which they have competed in.

e. On or before July 1 of each year the Federation will announce the competitions at which the Finals will be held. Even though entries for the designated competitions have closed before an individual qualifies, post entries will be accepted.

IV. **Officials**

a. The USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final will be judged by a minimum of two judges who hold an “R” Registered status in the Hunter/Jumping Seat Equitation Division.

b. The Judges for the USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final are to be approved by the Federation giving consideration to the recommendation of the relevant equitation committee or task force.

c. Issues arising at the USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final may be reviewed and rectified by the USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final Review Committee. This committee will consist of a Competition Steward, the Competition Manager, and a USEF Representative.

V. **Class Conditions**

- a. The USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final will consist of a minimum of two rounds **and a test.**
  - 1. In the USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final, a minimum of 25 riders must be called back for the second round. The second round shall not contain testing.
  - 2. **A minimum of four riders are required to test based on their cumulative performances of rounds one and two. Riders will be tested using a minimum of two tests from USEF tests 1-23.**
- b. Two cumulative refusals in the USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final will result in elimination.
- c. Riders may only change mounts for the second round of the USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final in the case of injury or illness to the declared horse and must obtain approval from the USEF Hunter Seat Medal Finals Committee following examination of the horse by the competition veterinarian.

VI. **Course requirements (First and Second Round)**

- a. The judges for the USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final will design the course in conjunction with an 'R' licensed Hunter Course designer.
- b. The intent of the course built for the USEF Hunter Seat Medal Finals is to ask appropriate questions that allow the riders to demonstrate both their riding skills and their ability to properly school their horse. The questions asked in the first round should be difficult enough to befit a national championship and begin to separate the top riders, but at the same time not overly discourage or tax first time competitors or riders on lesser horses. The questions asked in the second round can be significantly more difficult to separate the highest level of riders competing at this national championship and allow them the platform to truly show off their skills. The second round shall not contain testing.
- c. The course for the USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final must be posted one hour prior to the class
- d. Upon conclusion of the course walk for the second round, there will be a minimum of 15 minutes prior to the first horse on course.
- e. To be shown over a course of no less than eight obstacles.
- f. **If obstacles are numbered, all obstacles used must be numbered.**
- g. The course must include:
  - 1. One combination (including an oxer)
  - 2. Two changes of direction after the first obstacle
  - 3. At least three of the following:
    - 1. Bending Line
    - 2. Narrow Jump (5'6"-8')
    - 3. Roll back turn
    - 4. Fence at the end of the ring
    - 5. Long approach to a single jump
- h. One third of the obstacles must be oxers.
- i. All obstacles must be set at 3'6" in the first and second round.

- j. Obstacles must simulate those found in the hunting field such as natural post and rail, brush, hedge, Aiken, natural foliage, straw, stone wall, white board fence or gate, chicken coop, logs, etc.
- k. Verticals may be built with or without ground lines. They may be jumped in either direction, provided ground lines are correct (i.e. no false ground lines).
- l. Oxers may have a maximum spread of 4' and may consist of ramped oxers, square oxers, and Swedish oxers. Swedish oxers may have no more than 12" difference between the high side to low side must be no higher than 3'6" in the middle.
- m. Triple bars and hogs backs may have a maximum spread of 5'. Hogs backs may be jumped in either direction.
- n. Fan jumps may have a maximum spread of 5' at the widest point.
- o. Liverpool's, water jumps, or water used as decoration are prohibited.

VII. **Special Requirements for Competition**

- a. Horse Arrival: All horses competing and any horse potentially competing in the USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final must be on the competition grounds no later than the time designated by USEF and competition management. Horses must be physically presented at a check-in location and have their microchip scanned. Any horses exempt from the microchip requirements set forth in EQ103 must provide a copy of either a coggins or a passport. All horses competing in the USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final must remain on the competition grounds until they have finished competing in all phases of the Final. Horses not checked in prior to the time designated will not be permitted to compete in the USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final or any training sessions.
- b. Competition Numbers: All horses potentially competing in the USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final will be assigned a number which must be displayed at all times whenever the horse is outside of its stall, mounted or unmounted. Only horses which have been assigned numbers and are checked in prior to the time designated as per point a above are eligible to compete in the USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final, including any horses to be used as a replacement horse.
- c. Training and Warm-up Area Monitoring and Soundness: The steward(s) and/or Schooling Supervisor(s) shall monitor all training and warm-up areas to ensure equine welfare, soundness, competitor safety and to prevent overcrowding. In the event any of these officials observe any unsoundness, the horse must immediately stop working and the Competition Veterinarian must be called to make a determination if the horse is serviceably sound. If the Competition Veterinarian determines a horse is not serviceably sound, the USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final Review Committee will determine whether to permit a horse to be re-presented for soundness prior to returning to work and competing in the event or whether to eliminate the horse from the competition. The Competition Veterinarian who raised the question to the Committee will not participate in the determination of whether to permit the horse to be re-presented or to eliminate the horse, but it is permitted to provide their evidence to support their report. The decision of the committee is final and cannot be appealed or protested.
- d. Excessive Training or Preparation: Any rider, trainer, coach or groom found by a Steward, Schooling Supervisor, or Competition Management to be training or otherwise preparing a

horse in an excessive manner shall be subject to elimination from participation in the USEF Hunter Seat Medal Finals. All incidents of excessive training or preparation and any other questions will be addressed by the USEF Hunter Seat Medal Final Review Committee. The official who raised the question to the committee will not participate in the determination of whether to eliminate the rider, trainer, coach or groom, but is permitted to provide their evidence to support their report. The decision of the Committee is final and cannot be appealed or protested. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the USEF and further action may be taken by the Hearing Committee.

- e. Schooling and Lunging area rules will be determined by the USEF and Competition Management and will be published in the competition Prize List as well as distributed to all riders and trainers prior to the start of the competition. All other USEF Schooling Rules for the Equitation division will be enforced. However, if there is a conflict between the USEF Schooling Rules and the rules determined by USEF and Competition management, the rules determined by USEF and Competition Management will prevail.

***These Specifications are based on the USEF rules and regulations as presently known and understood. Any change in the Specifications caused by a change in USEF rules and regulations will be distributed to the affected participants immediately. The Specifications are based on the latest information available to USEF. However, the Specifications are always subject to unforeseen, intervening circumstances, and realistically may not have accounted for every possible contingency. Changes in Specifications are subject to approval by USEF. For questions concerning these Specifications, please contact the Hunter Department at [hunterdept@usef.org](mailto:hunterdept@usef.org) Qualifying for this Final will be conducted under USEF Rules except where outlined otherwise herein.***