



U.S. Dressage Festival of Champions  
August 24-30, 2026  
HITS Chicago Lamplight Equestrian Center; Wayne, IL.

**2026 USEF Dressage National Championship Qualifying Requirements**

**Intermediaire I and Brentina Cup**

*Approved by the USEF Board of Directors on November 17, 2025.*

The 2026 USEF Intermediaire I and Brentina Cup Dressage National Championships ("Championships") Qualifying Requirements published herein are effective on November 17, 2025 unless stated otherwise. The qualifying requirements published herein are subject to additions or revisions. These qualifying requirements pertain to the following divisions:

- USEF Brentina Cup Dressage National Championship
- USEF Intermediaire I Dressage National Championship

While every effort has been taken to avoid mistakes in this publication, the United States Equestrian Federation, Inc. ("USEF") assumes no liability to anyone for errors or omissions. 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 scores have been received by published deadlines.

For questions concerning these Qualifying Requirements, please contact the USEF Dressage Department at [festival@usef.org](mailto:festival@usef.org). Qualifying for these Championships will be conducted under USEF Rules except where outlined otherwise herein.

**I. Deadlines and Membership Requirements for Application.**

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.

Athletes are permitted to compete at these Championships with only those horses named on the athlete's application (i.e., athlete/horse combination or combination).

Scores are permitted to be earned prior to the submission of the application.

**Application Deadlines:**

1. Athletes wishing to earn an invitation to these Championships must successfully complete an online application. The online application will be available beginning on December 1, 2025.
2. Applications completed between December 1, 2025 and May 14, 2026, at 11:59pm ET will be assessed a seventy-five dollar (\$75.00) fee per horse.
3. Applications completed between May 15, 2026, and June 18, 2026, at 11:59pm ET will be assessed a one hundred fifty-dollar (\$150.00) fee per horse.
4. Additional horses must be added to an existing application by June 18, 2026 at 11:59pm ET and will require a seventy-five dollar (\$75.00) fee per horse.
5. No application will be accepted after June 18, 2026 at 11:59pm, ET and no refunds will be given after the closing date.

6. An application is considered complete once the confirmation email is received. It is the athlete's responsibility to ensure that the rider and horse information listed in the confirmation email is correct. If the athlete does not receive the confirmation email, it is the athlete's responsibility to contact USEF ([festival@usef.org](mailto:festival@usef.org)) to determine if the application has been received.
7. Following the close of the applications on June 18, 2026 at 11:59pm, ET, only combinations which have completed an application for the Championships will display on the ranking lists.
8. By signing the application, the athlete and owner(s) certify that they have received, read, and understand the [USEF Rules](#), [USEF Code of Conduct](#); USEF Release, Assumption of Risk, Waiver and Indemnification; Qualifying Requirements, [U.S. Center for SafeSport Code](#) and the [USEF Safe Sport Policy](#) including the [Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies](#); the [Non-Discrimination Policy](#); and the [USEF Whistleblower & Anti-Retaliation Policy](#) and that they understand these documents, and that they agree to be bound by them.

### **Membership Requirements for Application:**

**Athlete:** Athletes must be a U.S. Citizen and a Competing member in good standing with USEF at the time of application and through the conclusion of the Championships, and for the combination to earn a score towards their respective ranking list.

**Brentina Cup:** Athletes are eligible to compete in this Championship 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-five (25).

**Intermediaire I:** Athletes are eligible to compete in these Championships from the beginning of the calendar year in which they reach the age of sixteen (16).

**Horse:** The horse must be recorded with USEF pursuant to USEF GR1102, and in good standing at the time of application and through the conclusion of the Championships, and for the combination to earn a score towards their respective ranking list. Horse Identification (HID) Numbers DO NOT fulfill the above requirements.

Ponies and mules are not permitted to qualify for or compete in these Championships.

Horses must fit into one of the following age categories for competition. 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:

**Brentina Cup:** Horses must be a minimum of eight (8) years old to compete in these Championships.

**Intermediaire I:** Horses must be a minimum of seven (7) years old to compete in this Championship.

**Horse Owner(s):** Owners must be a Competing member in good standing with USEF at the time of application and through the conclusion of the Championships, and for the combination to earn scores towards their respective ranking list.

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 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 to be completed by June 4, 2026, or rush fees may be required to submit the application of intent by 11:59pm, ET on June 18, 2026.*

## II. Additional Eligibility Requirements for Qualifying Competitions and Championships.

**FEI Registration:** If an athlete has an FEI Registration (inactive or active), they must have designated the USA as their sport nationality with the FEI to earn scores towards their respective ranking list and to compete in these Championships.

**Intermediaire I:** Combinations must meet the [FEI General and Dressage Rules](#) when competing in a CDI and must be in good standing with the FEI at the time of invitation through the conclusion of these Championships.

**Brentina Cup (U25):** Athletes are NOT required to have an FEI Rider Registration to earn scores or to compete in this Championship. An FEI Horse Registration, FEI Passport, or FEI Recognition is NOT required to earn scores towards the ranking list or to compete in this Championship.

Once an athlete has taken part in a U25 National or FEI Dressage Championship, they are no longer eligible to compete in a Dressage National Championship for Pony Rider or Junior beginning January 1 of the following year.

If a combination places in the top three (3) of a U25 National or FEI Championship, the same combination is no longer eligible to compete in a Young Rider National Championship beginning January 1 of the following year.

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:

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

## III. Qualifying Competition Specifics.

**Qualifying Period:** The qualifying period shall begin on July 22, 2025, and is scheduled to end July 27, 2026, unless otherwise noted by USEF no later than February 5, 2026.

**Qualifying Competitions:** Qualifying Competitions include national USEF/NAYC Qualifying Competitions as well as U.S. and foreign CDI events (CDI1\*, CDI2\*, CDIO, CDI-U25, CDI-Am). 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 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.

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.

Scores from the 2025 U.S. Dressage Festival of Champions are not permitted to be used towards qualifying for the 2026 U.S. Dressage Festival of Champions.

**Brentina Cup:** Scores earned from the 2025 FEI NAYC can be used towards qualifying for the 2026 U.S. Dressage Festival of Championships if held during the qualifying period (See below for CDI Scores).

**Judging Panels for National Qualifying Competitions:** Qualifying tests must be officiated by a panel of at least two (2) USEF 'S' and/or FEI Judges. For CDI Events, [FEI Dressage Rules](#) apply. See Section V for Conflicts of Interest.

Freestyle Tests completed at a national Qualifying Competition must be officiated by a minimum of one (1) USEF 'S' or FEI judge.

**One Athlete Rule:** Please refer to [DR128](#) for national Qualifying Competitions. For CDI Events, [FEI Dressage Rules](#) apply.

**Dress and Saddlery:** A snaffle or double bridle is permitted for national Qualifying Competitions. The use of a whip will be permitted at national Qualifying Competitions. If competing in a CDI event, all [FEI Dressage](#) and [General Regulations](#) must be followed.

#### **IV. Qualifying Tests and Minimum Overall Average Specifics:**

All tests listed below and completed at a national Qualifying Competition must be in individual classes specifically designated as USEF, USEF/NAYC, Markel/USEF/NAYC, or Markel/USEF Qualifying in the prize list. Test of Choice (TOC) classes will not count. Hors de Concours (HC) entries are not permitted in USEF/NAYC Qualifying classes. Only one score per respective Test may be earned over the course of weekend.

**Brentina Cup:** Combinations must achieve a minimum overall average of 65% on the final ranking list to receive an invitation to this Championship by earning at least two (2) scores in the current edition of the FEI Grand Prix 16-25 Test and at least two (2) scores in the current edition of the FEI Intermediate II Test.

Additionally, combinations must attain a Certificate of Capability by earning a minimum score of 65% in the FEI Grand Prix Freestyle Test. The Freestyle Test score must be earned in an FEI Grand Prix Freestyle Test, or an FEI Freestyle Test of Choice class held at a national Qualifying Competition or a CDI. Freestyle scores will automatically be noted on the final ranking list and are not used in the calculation of a combination's overall average. When more than one Freestyle score is earned at a national Qualifying Competition, the highest score will be noted on the Final Ranking List.

**Intermediaire I:** Combinations must achieve a minimum overall average of 66% on the final ranking list to receive an invitation to this Championship by earning at least three (3) scores in the current edition of the FEI Prix St. Georges Test and at least three (3) scores in the current edition of the FEI Intermediate I Test.

Combinations must attain a Certificate of Capability by competing in at least one CDI1\*, CDIO, or CDI-AM event and earning a minimum score of 67% in the FEI Prix St. Georges or FEI Intermediate I Test.

Additionally, combinations must also earn at least one (1) score in the FEI Intermediate I Freestyle Test. The Freestyle Test score must be earned in an FEI Intermediate I Freestyle Test or an FEI Freestyle Test of Choice class held at a national Qualifying Competition or a CDI. Freestyle scores will automatically be noted on the final ranking list and are not used in the calculation of a combination's overall average. When more than one Freestyle score is earned at a national Qualifying Competition, the highest score will be noted on the final ranking list.

*For all divisions, a combination cannot earn a score in a national Qualifying Competition if a CDI is also offered at the same event. Exception, if a CDIO-U25 is held a combination may earn scores from the CDI-U25 or national qualifying classes if offered by the competition.*

**Calculation of the Overall Average on the Ranking Lists:** Submission of score sheets to USEF are not necessary for these Championships unless requested by the USEF Dressage Department. For all divisions, scratches, eliminations, and withdrawals will not be penalized on the ranking list with the following exception: *In the case of a combination who applied for the Intermediaire I Championships is disqualified by USEF or the FEI for a medication rule violation from a sample collected in connection with a Qualifying Competition (CDI or National), that score will be marked as E (Elimination) on the final ranking list but will not be counted in the overall average.*

The ranking lists can be found [here](#) and will be updated as results are processed from national Qualifying Competitions and CDI events. It can take up to a minimum of 10 business days from the completion of a competition for results to reflect on the ranking lists. The ranking lists can be found [here](#) between July 9, 2026 and July 31, 2026.

USEF is not responsible for inaccurately reported scores. If errors are detected, athletes are encouraged to contact the USEF Dressage Department at [festival@usef.org](mailto:festival@usef.org) immediately.

**For calculation purposes:** USEF will automatically track scores for combinations which are earned at National Qualifying Competitions. See below for CDI Scores.

Percentages are carried out to the third decimal point with numbers of five (5) and above rounded up (63.4555% = 63.456%).

**Brentina Cup:** A combination's overall average will be calculated by averaging the scores in the FEI Grand Prix 16-25 Test with the scores earned in the FEI Intermediate II Test.

If a combination earns three (3) or more scores in the FEI Grand Prix 16-25 Test, the lowest score earned in this Test will be dropped. If a combination earns three (3) or more scores in the FEI Intermediate II Test, the lowest score in this Test will be dropped. Only one (1) score will be dropped from the Grand Prix 16-25 Test and only one (1) score will be dropped from the Intermediate II Test. All remaining scores will be used to calculate each combination's overall average.

**Intermediaire I:** Each FEI Prix St. Georges and FEI Intermediate I Test will count as 50% of a combination's overall average from each Qualifying Competition (i.e., PSG 50% + Int. 1 50% = 100%) on the ranking list.

If a combination earns four (4) or more scores in the FEI Prix St. Georges Test, the lowest score earned in this Test will be dropped. If a combination earns four (4) or more scores in the FEI Intermediate I Test, the lowest score earned in this Test will be dropped. Only one (1) will be dropped from the Prix St. Georges Test and only one (1) score from the Intermediate I Test will be dropped. The score earned for the Certificate of Capability may serve as a drop score. All remaining scores will be used to calculate a combination's overall average.

**CDI Scores (Intermediaire I and Brentina Cup):** 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. Changes to a submitted USEF CDI/CPEDI Report Form will not be accepted following the specified deadline stated on the form to the USEF Dressage Department.

It is the sole responsibility of the athlete to ensure that all CDI scores for these Championships are submitted to USEF on time and are accurate.

**Brentina Cup:** Combinations competing in the FEI North American Youth Championships may also earn scores for the 2026 U.S. Dressage Festival Champions if held during the qualifying period. For those scores to count, scores must be reported by athletes via the USEF CDI/CPEDI Report Form by the deadline as indicated on the form.

**Withdrawals:** Withdrawals must be submitted in writing to [festival@usef.org](mailto:festival@usef.org). Withdrawals received between June 19, 2026 and July 27, 2026 will be noted as WD on the final ranking list.

## **V. Additional Rules and Requirements.**

**Conflict of Interest:** Judging Panels at CDI Events: Refer to [FEI Dressage Regulations for Judge Requirements and Codex for Judges](#).

Judging Panels at USEF National Licensed Competitions: Refer to [USEF Chapter 13, GR1304](#).

All competitors and officials are subject to the conflict of interest rules at USEF Licensed Competitions as outlined in the [USEF General and Dressage Rules](#).

**Clean Sport: [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.

**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](mailto:epratt@usef.org).

**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.

## **VI. Invitations to the U.S. Dressage Festival of Champions.**

Invitations are anticipated to be sent via email no later than Friday, July 31, 2026.

For these Championships,

- Athletes are permitted to compete with a maximum of two (2) horses in each Championship division.
- The same combination is permitted to participate in one (1) division at the U.S. Dressage Festival of Champions.
- A horse is permitted to be competed in one (1) division at the U.S. Dressage Festival of Champions. Exception, a horse that is also competed in Intermediaire I or Brentina Cup divisions is permitted to be competed in the USEF Dressage Seat Medal Finals pending confirmation of the final timetable.
- Once entries close for the U.S. Dressage Festival of Champions, additional combinations shall not be invited to participate.

**Final Ranking List:** After the conclusion of the qualifying period (July 27, 2026), combinations will be ranked according to their overall average and be accepted up to the number of entries available, not to exceed 12 combinations.

In the case of a tie, the 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.

If there is a tie for 12<sup>th</sup> place, all tied combinations will be invited, thereby increasing the total number of entries (i.e., 13 entries accepted).

Combinations ranked as an alternate, if applicable, on the Final Ranking List will be invited to the Championships up until the close of the entry deadline published in the official prize list and in the invitation to these Championships.

**Brentina Cup:** Following the end of the qualifying period, combinations not qualified as listed above will be invited to participate in the Championship if there is not a maximum of 12 combinations on the Final Ranking List, not to exceed 12 unless there is a tie, if the following criteria is obtained:

- a. The combination obtained at least two (2) scores in the FEI Intermediate II Test and at least two (2) scores in the FEI Grand Prix 16-25 Test within the qualifying period.
- b. The combination's final overall average is within 1% of the minimum overall average of 65% and is the next highest overall average on the Final Ranking List.
- c. For clarification purposes to the above, the additional invitations are based upon the Final Ranking List posted no later Friday, July 31, 2026 and not on the final entry list for this Championship.

**Wild Card Invitations:**

Brentina Cup is not eligible for Wild Card invitations.

**Intermediaire I**

- Combinations qualified through the fulfillment of the criteria listed above are not eligible to request a Wild Card invitation. Combinations qualified in another division are not eligible to request a wild card invitation unless they withdraw from the other Championship by the qualifying period.
- Combination(s) not qualified (as listed above) with at least one FEI Prix St. Georges CDI Score, one FEI Intermediate I CDI score, one FEI Intermediate I Freestyle score, or have not earned the Certificate of Capability within the qualifying period, may request a wild card invitation.
- Wild Card requests must be submitted to [festival@usef.org](mailto:festival@usef.org) no later than 11:59pm, ET on July 27, 2026.

The Dressage Sport Committee or its Designees may award up to three (3) Wild Card invitations in the Intermediaire I Championship based upon on results of the combination, as well as any extenuating circumstances that may have led to the combination not qualifying otherwise.

The following factors will be considered:

- Number of requests received. In some circumstances, an athlete may receive a maximum of one wild card invitation.
- Scores earned in the FEI Prix St. Georges Test and/or the FEI Intermediate I Test from CDIs during the qualifying period. Scores from National Qualifying Competitions carry less weight than scores from CDIs.
- International experience of the athlete, horse, or combination.
- The experience and standing of the national judges.
- The combination's ranking on their respective National Championship ranking list noted as "Pending Final Score Verification."
- Consistency of scores over 66% (which is the minimum overall average for the Qualifying Process).
- The trend in scores if the combination competed in multiple competitions within the qualifying period.
- Factors beyond the control of the athlete which led to the combination not earning the required CDI results.

**VII. Championship Information.**

USEF Championship Rules will be followed and the Championship Format for each division will be available on the USEF website by March 5, 2026.

*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.*