

2026

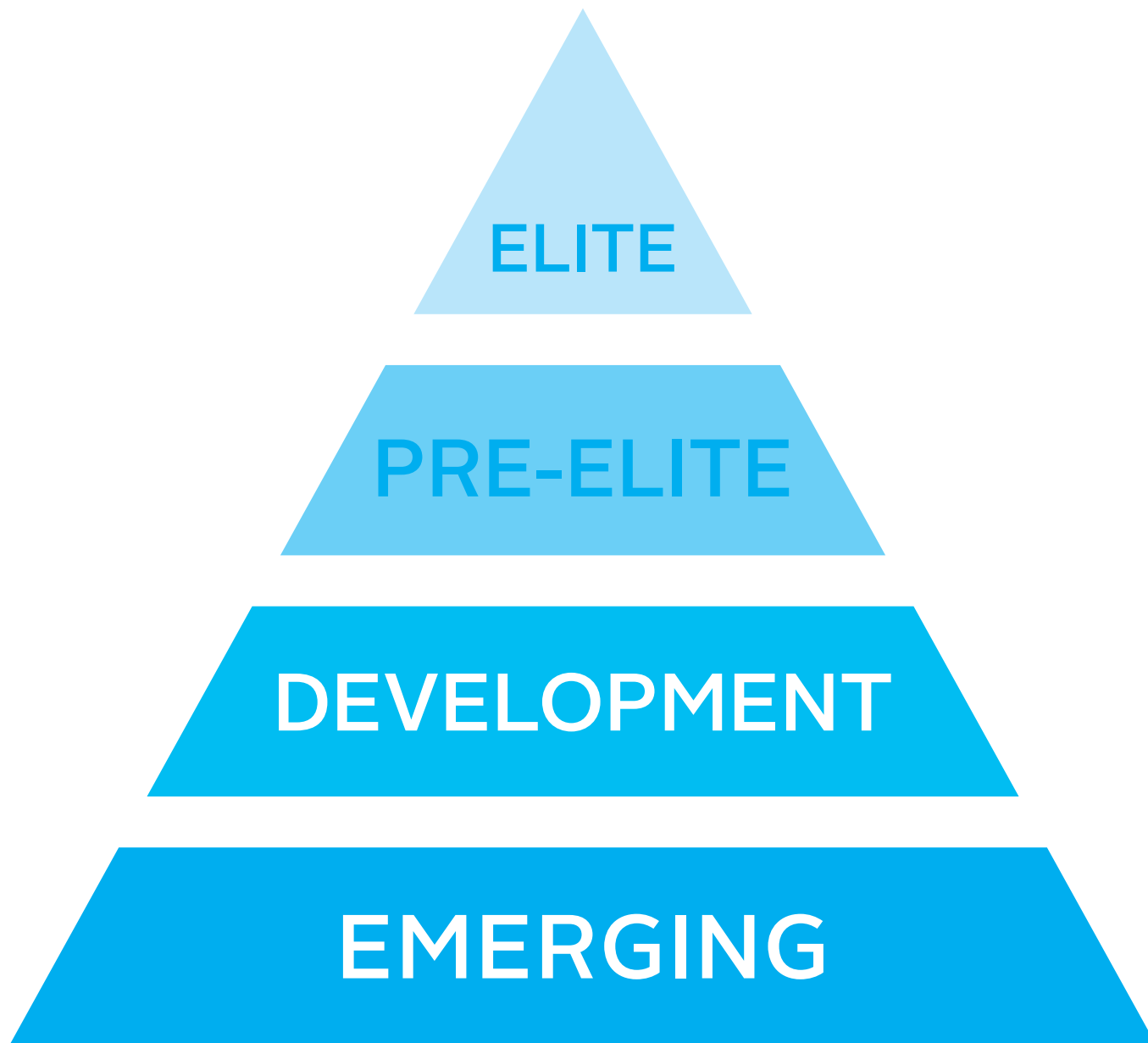
# PARADRESSAGE



## PATHWAY PROGRAM



## PARA DRESSAGE PATHWAY PROGRAM



To learn more about the Para Dressage Pathway Programs, visit the USEF Para Dressage webpage. In addition to the information included within this booklet, program membership lists, retention criteria, program benefits, and more can be found on the website.



## ELITE PROGRAM

### Overview

The Aim of the Elite Athlete Program is to identify athlete / horse combinations that are truly internationally competitive.

### Principles

- Internationally competitive athlete / horse combinations with potential to help put the U.S. Team in the Medal Zone and moving towards winning a Team Medal at Paralympic Games and World Championships.
- Based on competition & training opportunities and Games preparation and success.
- Technical Advisor and USEF Discipline Director led communication, training sessions, competition planning, selection methodology, logistical planning.
- Competing at a given level does not imply “elite athlete status,” being internationally competitive does.

### Competitions

- Paralympic Games
- World Championships
- CPEDI3\*s in Europe
- CPEDI3\*s in North America

### Identification

- Selection Personnel – Technical Advisor / Discipline Director / Selectors / Representatives of Sport Committee.

- Objective/Scores at CPEDI3\* plus subjective criteria.

### Support

- Communication with Technical Advisor and Discipline Director.
- Observations by Technical Advisor at Athlete's home base with home coach.
- Competition Planning toward key Championship events and strategies for the short term and long term.
- Establish KPI's (Key Performance Indicators) for short term and long term.
- Review of KPI's.
- Prioritized access to Training Sessions and home visits by the Technical Advisor jointly with Team Vet.
- Competition Opportunities.
- Equine and Human Sports Science Medicine Support (ESSM and HSSM).
- Financial support, if available
- Logistical planning and support.

### Criteria

Open to current athlete/horse combinations who have met the criteria from one of the two track



Photos: Devyn Ivy Media

options within the previous 24 months:

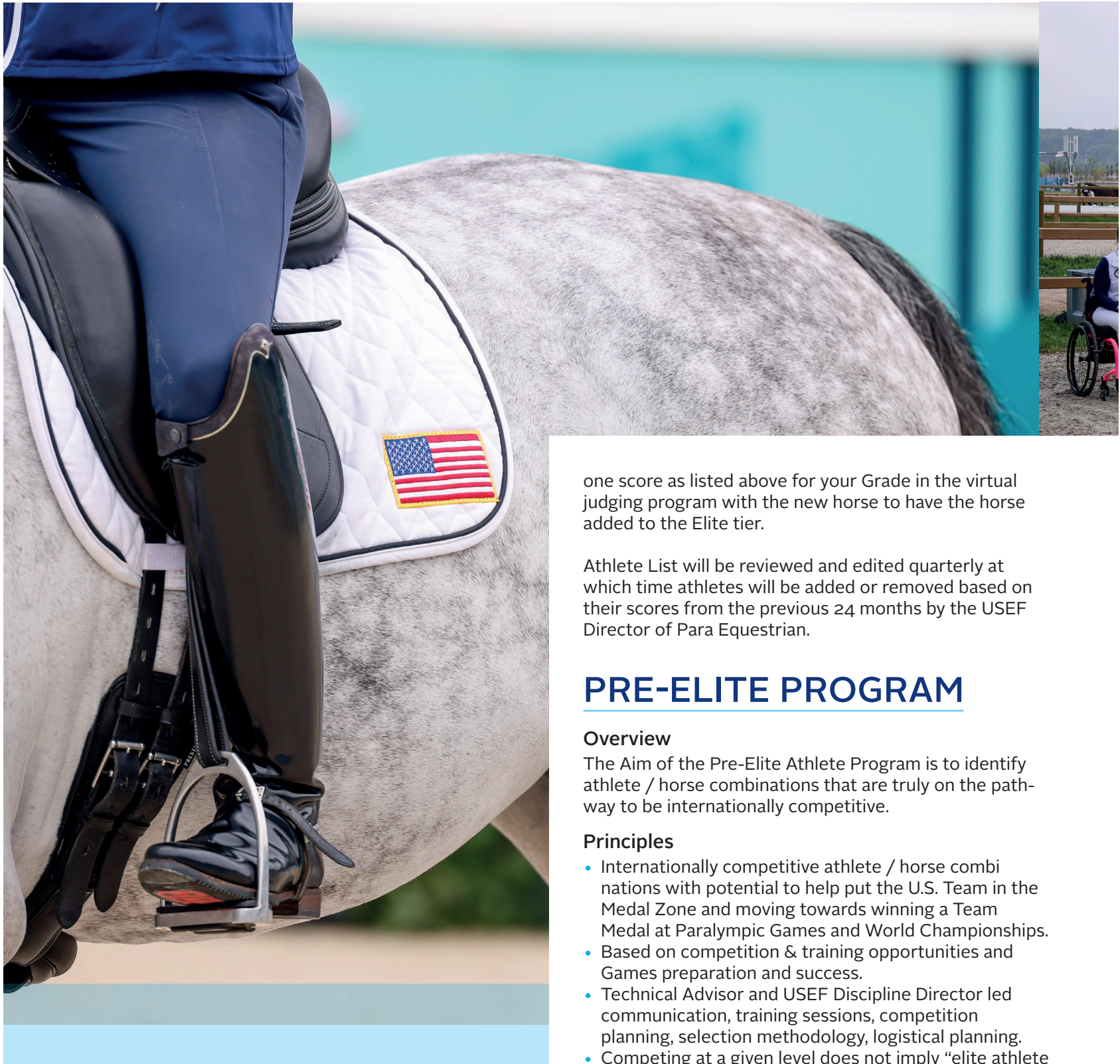
- **Track 1:** The athlete/horse combination have medaled (FEI Para Dressage Grand Prix A, Grand Prix B, Grand Prix Freestyle) at the previous World Championships or Paralympic Games.
- **Track 2:**
  - » Gr. II – V - The athlete / horse combination have earned two (2) 73% or above scores in the FEI Para Dressage Grand Prix A and Grand Prix B tests (4) scores at Athletes' classified Grade, and two FEI Para Dressage Grand Prix Freestyle scores at a minimum of 74%) for a total six (6) scores at a minimum of one CPEDI3\*.
  - » Gr. I - The athlete / horse combination have earned two (2) scores 74% or above in the Grand Prix A and Grand Prix B tests (4) scores at Athletes' classified Grade, and two (2) Grand Prix Freestyle scores at a minimum of 74% for a total of six (6) scores at a minimum of one CPEDI3\*. Scores do not have to be obtained from the same CPEDI3\*. One set of scores (1-Grand Prix A, 1-Grand Prix B & 1-Grand Prix Freestyle) may be obtained through the USEF Virtual Judging program.

Athlete/horse combination must compete in a minimum of two (2) separate USEF licensed competitions in FEI Para Dressage Grand Prix A Test or Grand Prix B Test at their Grade OR through the USEF virtual judging program.

Athletes/horse combinations who have not produced the minimum scores in the previous 24 months from Track 2, will be identified by an \* as inactive, until the athlete/horse combination have achieved the required scores for regaining the Elite Pathway tier.

Elite athletes who have secured a new horse must have earned a minimum score as listed above for your Grade in a FEI Para Dressage Grand Prix A or Grand Prix B test at a CPEDI3\* and





one score as listed above for your Grade in the virtual judging program with the new horse to have the horse added to the Elite tier.

Athlete List will be reviewed and edited quarterly at which time athletes will be added or removed based on their scores from the previous 24 months by the USEF Director of Para Equestrian.

## **PRE-ELITE PROGRAM**

### **Overview**

The Aim of the Pre-Elite Athlete Program is to identify athlete / horse combinations that are truly on the pathway to be internationally competitive.

### **Principles**

- Internationally competitive athlete / horse combinations with potential to help put the U.S. Team in the Medal Zone and moving towards winning a Team Medal at Paralympic Games and World Championships.
- Based on competition & training opportunities and Games preparation and success.
- Technical Advisor and USEF Discipline Director led communication, training sessions, competition planning, selection methodology, logistical planning.
- Competing at a given level does not imply “elite athlete status,” being internationally competitive does.

### **Competitions**

- Paralympic Games
- World Championships



- CPEDI3\*s in Europe
- CPEDI3\*s in North America

### Identification

- Selection Personnel – Technical Advisor / Discipline Director / Selectors / Representatives of Sport Committee.
- Objective/Scores at CPEDIs plus subjective criteria.

### Support

- Communication with Technical Advisor and Discipline Director.
- Observations by Technical Advisor at Athlete's home base with Home coach
- Competition Planning toward key Championship events and strategies for the short term and long term.
- Establish KPI's (Key Performance Indicators) for short term and long term.
- Review of KPI's.
- Prioritized access to Training Sessions and home visits\* by the Technical Advisor (\*jointly with Team Vet at strategic times).
- Competition Opportunities.
- Equine and Human Sports Science Medicine Support (ESSM & HSSM).
- Financial support, if available
- Logistical planning and support.

### Criteria

Open to current athlete/horse combinations who have met the criteria listed below within the previous 24 months:

- Gr. I – V - The athlete/horse combination have earned two (2) 69% or above scores in the Grand Prix A and Grand Prix B tests (4) scores at Athletes' classified Grade, and two Free style scores at a minimum of 69%(2) for a total six (6) scores at a minimum of one CPEDI3\*. Scores do not have to be obtained from the same CPEDI3\*. One set of scores (1-Grand Prix A, 1-Grand Prix B & 1-Grand Prix Freestyle) may be obtained through the US Dressage Festival of Champions Para Dressage Division OR USEF Para Dressage virtual judging program.

Pre-Elite athletes who have secured a new horse must have earned a minimum score as listed above for your Grade in a Grand Prix A or Grand Prix B test at a CPEDI3\* and one score as listed above for your Grade

in the virtual judging program with the new horse to have the horse added to the Pre-Elite tier.

Athlete List will be reviewed and edited quarterly at which time athletes will be added or removed based on their scores from the previous 24 months by the USEF Director of Para Equestrian.

## DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

### Overview

The Aim of the Development Athlete Program is to identify athlete/horse combinations with the perceived ability to reach Pre-Elite status. This will include developing athletes who have not yet reached Pre-Elite status and athletes who have, previously reached Pre-Elite status but who currently have a horse that has not yet reached Pre-Elite status but is on a trajectory to do so.

### Principles

- Identification of developing athlete/horse combinations and developing Athletes is a key component of the Development Athlete Program in order to manage expectations, facilitate direct



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- communication and foster the talent effectively.
- The Development Athlete Program is not a centrally based clinic driven program but a communication- based system that provides opportunities. Educational and training opportunities will be offered.
  - Para Dressage Development Coach, Technical Advisor and USEF Discipline Director led communication, training sessions, competition planning, selection methodology, logistical planning.
  - Ensure Technical Advisor is briefed on combinations moving up the Pathway.
  - Empower Development Athletes to remain with their own trainers within their own programs but challenge them to move up the Pathway and provide opportunities where possible or requested. Identify certain KPIs and requirements to stay in the Development Athlete Program.
  - Work with Development Athletes' trainers to better involve them and help them (where necessary) to understand what is required to be internationally competitive within each Grade.

### Competitions

- North American CPEDIs
- European CPEDIs

### Criteria

Open to current athlete / horse combinations who have met the criteria listed below within the previous 24 months:

#### *CPEDI3\* Criteria*

- The athlete/horse combination have earned one (1) 64% or above score in each of the





three (3) tests at Athletes' classified Grade (FEI Para Dressage Grand Prix A, Grand Prix B, and Grand Prix Freestyle) for a total three (3) scores from a CPEDI<sub>3</sub>\* or at the US Dressage Festival of Champions, Para Dressage Events. Scores may be obtained from more than one of the above events.

- Athlete / Horse combination must compete in a minimum of two (2) separate USEF licensed competitions in FEI Para Dressage Grand Prix A or Grand Prix B Tests at their Grade OR at the US Dressage Festival of Champions, Para Dressage Division OR through the USEF virtual judging program.

#### *CPEDI<sub>2</sub>\* Criteria*

- The athlete / horse combination have earned one (1) 66% or above score in each of the three (3) tests at Athletes' classified Grade (FEI Para Dressage Intermediate A, Intermediate B, and Intermediate Freestyle) for a total three (3) scores at CPEDI<sub>2</sub>\* events. Scores do not have to be obtained from the same CPEDI<sub>2</sub>\*.
- Athlete / Horse combination must compete in a minimum of two (2) separate USEF licensed competitions in FEI
- Para Dressage Intermediate A or Intermediate B Tests at their Grade OR at the US Dressage Festival of Champions, Para Dressage Division OR through the USEF virtual judging program.
- Development athletes who have secured a new horse must have earned a minimum score in one test at a CPEDI<sub>3</sub>\* or CPEDI<sub>2</sub>\* as outlined above in their respective grade and a score from the virtual judging program with the new horse to have the horse



added to the Development tier.

- Athlete List will be reviewed and edited quarterly at which time athletes will be added or removed based on their scores from the previous 24 months by the USEF Director of Para Equestrian.
- Athlete must meet these proficiencies:
  - » Technical skills
  - » Trainability
  - » Strategy & Planning
  - » Commitment
  - » Mind set
  - » Management
  - » Fitness (athlete / equine)
  - » Competition record
  - » The length of time the athlete/horse combination has been on the Program and their progression up the Pathway in conjunction with what the Program can still offer
  - » Demonstrate Potential for the Pre-Elite Program
  - » Quality of the athlete's horse and their perceived ability to progress up the competition levels. As an indication a minimum score may be required.

In extenuating circumstances, the Technical Advisor may request the Selectors select an athlete / horse combination to the Development Athlete Program for a set period of time (maximum 12 months).

#### **Additional Development Athlete Criteria (Applicable to All)**

- FEI Classification or interim Classification by a USEF approved Classifier (all FEI Approved Classifiers are automatically USEF Approved).
- Satisfactory veterinary inspection and/or report if requested by Selectors.
- Agreement to Requirements of Program.
- Willingness of athlete to agree to the aims of the Program including facilitating effect communication between the athlete's support staff (trainer, vet, farrier etc.) and the Program.

## **EMERGING PROGRAM**

### **Overview**

The Aim of the Emerging Athlete Program is to reinforce the Development Athlete Program and will be

comprised of “recognized” programs that could be run by the USEF, United States Para Equestrian Association (USPEA), and/or individual Centers of Excellence (COEs).

### Criteria

- Obtained a USEF National or FEI International Para Dressage classification with a confirmed or review status with a fixed review date (FRD), and
  - » **Track 1:** Received two (2) scores of 64% or greater from the FEI Para Dressage Novice A and B tests OR 62% or greater in the FEI Para Dressage Intermediate A and B tests OR 60% or greater in the FEI Para Dressage Grand Prix A and Grand Prix B tests, at the athlete’s classified grade at a USEF recognized show or through the USPEA Virtual judging program within 12 months of the application.
  - » **Track 2:** Received a 60% or greater from the FEI Para Dressage Novice A and B tests at a CPEDI1\* within 24 months of application.

Emerging athletes who have not produced the minimum scores as outlined above in the previous 24 months, will be removed from the Pathway Program, until the athlete has achieved the required scores for regaining the Emerging Pathway tier.



Photos: Avery Wallace/US Equestrian

Each COE that runs a recognized Emerging Athlete Program will develop a program which includes:

- A Coach nominated for approval or approved by the USEF / USPEA.
- A roadmap to Classification, ideally to FEI standard (USEF Classification meets criteria).
- Quarterly written updates on athletes' progress.
- A yearly review system of the program, trainer, venue, athlete and USEF/USPEA support.

USEF will provide:

- A structure and template for Reviews.
- Learning materials regarding the international standards in each Grade.

USPEA will provide:

- Jonathan Wentz Memorial, Hope Hand Memorial and Meg Mullin Memorial Grants for Emerging athletes that meet the criteria as stated in each grant.
- USPEA Virtual Judging Program for the FEI Para Dressage Introductory A and B tests. Criteria and details of the above may be found at [www.uspea.org](http://www.uspea.org)
- Emerging Athletes who have successfully obtained a classification and required results as listed above must complete and submit an application in order to be added to the USEF Emerging Athlete List.

Athletes who have not achieved scores within 24 months will be removed from the Program, until scores are secured and athlete re-applies to the Program.

Athlete List will be reviewed and edited quarterly by the USEF Director of Para Equestrian.





## MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Opportunity to participate in USEF Training Sessions/Clinics/Coaching Sessions.
- One-on-One Coaching/Home Visits.
- Access to USEF Human and Equine Sports Science Medicine Education Programs and resources when available, appropriate and as funding allows.
- Assistance in transition to the next age bracket or division level (training, strategic planning, setting competition and training targets, data analysis, etc.).
- Included on USEF Program Member List published on [www.usef.org](http://www.usef.org).
- Additional horses in addition to those horse(s) associated for membership may be reviewed for comment via video submission.
- If funding permits, it is possible for these athlete/horse combinations to receive some funding to support their agreed upon targets and goals. Priority is given to Program Members for all USEF Program events (except those that may be specially restricted). If an athlete has more

Photo: Devyn Ivy Media

than one horse qualified for a Program membership, they may not receive the same financial support with additional horses.

- Additional benefits may be available depending on specific program membership.

## APPLICATION

It will be the responsibility of the athlete to apply for selection to the Pre-Elite Athlete Program based on results achieved in the previous 24 months to the Application, in addition to submitting new scores quarterly to the Director of Para Equestrian, Laureen Johnson. If an athlete is inactive for two years, they will be removed from the Athlete List.

## STAFFING

- Discipline Director – Laureen Johnson
- Para Dressage Technical Advisor and Head of Coach Development– Michel Assouline
- Para Dressage Team Physiotherapist – Joanna Frantz
- Team Veterinarian – Kim Snyder

