



# Kentucky

# Three-Day Event

Kentucky, United States

APRIL 23 - 26, 2026

CCI5\*



Philanthropic Partner of US Equestrian

## **THIS PLAYBOOK IS PRODUCED BY THE USEF EVENTING DEPARTMENT.**

FEI – Fédération Équestre Internationale  
USEF – United States Equestrian Federation  
USET – United States Equestrian Team Foundation  
USADA – United States Anti-Doping Agency  
EEI – Equestrian Events Inc.  
KHPF – Kentucky Horse Park Foundation

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# CCI5\*-L: DEFENDER KENTUCKY THREE DAY EVENT

## US EQUESTRIAN PLAYBOOK

### INTRODUCTION

The aim of the Playbook is to give those that are attending the Defender Kentucky Three-Day Event (USA) CCI5\*-L an understanding of the event and the logistics that go with making the trip to Lexington, Kentucky. As a CCI5\*-L. Please note that the individual Athletes competing will not receive funding, apparel, Team Staff support, or expense reimbursements.

As with any CCI5\*-L, Kentucky will have its challenges and differences from past and other 5\* events. The emphasis must be on ensuring athletes, horses, and grooms can perform their very best. A performance environment should be maintained and always keep in mind that even as a non-Team competition, you are still representing the USA on home turf.

The competition venue is approximately 60 minutes south of Cincinnati and 60 minutes east of Louisville. This event does host additional levels including the CSI5\* for Jumping alongside the CCI5\*L and CCI4\*-S. Please review the published [FEI Schedule](#) for the available divisions and their restrictions.

We are continually receiving updates and new information so their playbook can never cover all the details. The primary point of contact for the Defender Kentucky Three-Day Event is Equestrian Events, Inc. and their contact information can be found [here](#).

This playbook contains helpful information for attending this Event. Please also familiarize yourself with the [FEI Schedule](#) and remember to check in at the show office upon arrival for the most up-to-date information.

**PLEASE READ THIS PLAYBOOK AS IT CONTAINS IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT TRAVEL PLANNING, CLIMATE, AND ACCOMMODATIONS.**

Please contact Christina if you have any questions, observations, or suggestions as to how we can optimize the support of the athletes, grooms, and horses.

Good luck to all!

*Christina Vaughn*

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## ENTRIES

**An FEI Entry is required to compete at the Defender Kentucky Three-Day Event.** Athletes must submit the FEI Entry in order to be entered into the FEI Entry System to compete as an individual at any FEI competition, whether in the U.S. or abroad. The FEI Entry process is managed by US Equestrian Athlete Services.

Entries directly with the competition will also need to be completed. See the FEI schedule for complete information.

## PRE-TRAVEL INFORMATION

### VACCINATIONS

In accordance with the CDC and USOPC recommendations, we advise that all Athletes, grooms, and traveling USEF support staff consider getting the new COVID vaccine now available against new strains as well as the seasonal flu vaccine. These vaccines can be administered at the same time. This is NOT a USOPC or USEF requirement, but it is highly recommended to protect our athletes, grooms, and all Team members. Please note it takes approximately two (2) weeks to maximize immunity.

## TRAVEL PLANS

### EQUINE TRANSPORTATION

**Flights:** Dutta Horse Transport Inc. is the USEF preferred vendor for horse flights within the continental United States.

- [Website](#)
- Phone: +1 (914) 276 3880
- Phone: +1 (914) 276 3880
- Email: [info@timdutta.com](mailto:info@timdutta.com)

**Ground Transportation:** Johnson Horse Transport is the USEF preferred vendor for ground shipping within the continental United States.

- [Website](#)
- Phone: (610) 488-7220
- Email: [elizabeth@JohnsonHorseTransportation.com](mailto:elizabeth@JohnsonHorseTransportation.com)

**Local shippers include:**

- [Sallee Horse Vans](#)
- [Brook Ledge Horse Transportation](#)

**Hay/Bedding:** Please refer to the [FEI Schedule](#) for hay/bedding available at the venue.

## HUMAN TRANSPORTATION

All athletes, grooms, and owners are responsible for booking their own travel itinerary. Below is a list of recommended airports to Lexington.

### Bluegrass Airport (LEX)

- 12.6 miles (approximately 20 minutes) from the competition venue.

### Cincinnati & Northern Kentucky International Airport (CVG)

- 71.7 miles (approximately 1 hour) from the competition venue.

### Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport (SDF)

- 73.8 miles (approximately 1 hour) from the competition venue.

## HUMAN ACCOMMODATION

There are many local accommodation options. Below is a non-extensive list of nearby hotels. Recommendations from the event can also be found [here](#). It is the traveling individual's responsibility to book their accommodation.

Hotel	Website	Distance
Fairfield Inn & Suites Lexington North	<a href="#">Click here</a>	4.9 mi
Clarion Hotel Conference Center North	<a href="#">Click here</a>	5.3 mi
Embassy Suites by Hilton Lexington/UK Coldstream	<a href="#">Click here</a>	5.5 mi
Marriott Lexington Griffin Gate Golf Resort & Spa	<a href="#">Click here</a>	5.6 mi
Hilton Downtown	<a href="#">Click here</a>	8.8 mi
21C Museum Hotel Lexington	<a href="#">Click here</a>	9.0 mi
Lexington Marriott City Center	<a href="#">Click here</a>	9.0 mi

## CAR SERVICE INFORMATION

**Public Transport:** The U.S. has very limited public transportation systems and therefore there is no public transport option to the competition venue. It is best advised to utilize rental vehicles. Within the center of Lexington, there is limited public transportation available.

**Taxi:** Taxis use meters calculated by distance and time.

**Rental Vehicles:** For automatic vehicles, it is recommended to book a rental car with a large rental agency.

## USA EVENTING GUIDE TO TRAVELING OVERSEAS

To view the USA Eventing Guide to Traveling Overseas click [here](#).

## ACCREDITATION

Please review the [FEI Schedule](#) for the most up to date information on available accreditations. Owners and support team members will need to work directly with their athlete to finalize accreditation.

## APPAREL

USEF does not provide human or horse apparel for CCI5\* events. The U.S. Equestrian Horse & Human Apparel Policies for eventing can be found [here](#).

## HOSPITALITY

Hospitality options offered for the Defender Kentucky Three-Day Event can be found [here](#). Owners that are listed on a Horse's entry with the competition will receive an email about hospitality directly from the competition.

In addition, USEF will host a U.S Eventing Owners Hospitality event. The exact date and time will be announced closer to the competition date. U.S. Eventing Owners are kindly asked to RSVP and these communications will be sent by USEF via email. More information, on owners hospitality events hosted by USEF can be found [here](#).

## TICKETS & PARKING

All spectators must purchase tickets. Information on tickets, including how to purchase, can be found [here](#).

**Grounds Admission** tickets give access to the Grounds of the Kentucky Horse Park, Museum, Sponsor Village, The Hill, Trade Fair, and include a parking fee. Grounds Admission tickets do **not** include reserved seats. Pricing can be found [here](#).

## RESERVED SEATING

To watch the competition in the stadium, you **must** buy a Reserved Stadium Seat in addition to a Grounds Admission ticket. Pricing can be found [here](#). Owners with appropriate accreditation may watch their horse compete from the kiss and cry at the in-gate.

## PARKING

Parking is included in the General Admission tickets and a shuttle is provided. Preferred Parking Passes are available and can be purchased [here](#).

**Preferred Parking:** A limited number of preferred parking passes are available. It is recommended to order these early. This parking pass is for all four days to park in the Preferred Parking areas. The preferred parking passes will be mailed in March by USPS Priority Mail.

## VENUE

The Defender Kentucky Three-Day Event is located at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, Kentucky. The venue will have the usual first-aid stations, a mixed zone where interviews can be held, a sports information desk, medical facilities, doping control facilities and Wi-Fi access.

There are many shopping opportunities including a Trade Fair and food and beverage options located throughout the venue.

The venue address is **4089 Iron Works Pike, Lexington, KY 40511**

**Entering the Venue:** Parking information including a full venue map can be found [here](#).

## STABLES

Stable boxes are 3.5m x 3.5m. Stabling is permanent with doors and water and electricity are provided. The stables are in the process of being rebuilt.

## TACK ROOMS

Tack rooms are available upon request when completing the stabling form. It is the Athlete's responsibility to coordinate with their entry.

## MAP

All maps including a grounds overview, shopping opportunities, and cross country can be found [here](#).

## COMPETITION SCHEDULES

The full schedule for the Defender Kentucky Three-Day Event can be found [here](#).

## TEAM STAFF

Eventing Team Staff are available for Pathway Program members. These individuals will be contacted directly with more information.

## SAFE SPORT, CODE OF CONDUCT, & CLEAN SPORT

Similar to any USEF licensed Event, SafeSport, the USEF Code of Conduct and Clean Sport must be abided by at all times.

Click [here](#) for SafeSport Information

Click [here](#) for USEF Code of Conduct

Click [here](#) for Clean Sport Information

## PRESS & MEDIA

### SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can be a great advantage for the athletes, but it can also be detrimental to the environment. Please familiarize yourself with the policies below.:

The FEI Social Media policy can be found [here](#).

The USEF Social Media policy can be found [here](#).

If you have any questions about the utilization of social media during the event, please contact Sr. Director Social Media & Sport Communications, Carly Weilminster ([cweilminster@usef.org](mailto:cweilminster@usef.org)).

## HOSPITALS & EMERGENCY SERVICES

Name	Address	Phone
Albert B. Chandler Hospital	800 Rose St, Lexington, KY 40536	+1 (859) 323-5000
UK HealthCare	1000 S Limestone, Lexington KY 40536	+1 (859) 257-1000
UK Good Samaritan Hospital	310 S Limestone, Lexington, KY 40508	+1 (859) 226-7000
CHI Saint Joseph Health – Saint Joseph East	1 St Joseph Dr, Lexington, KY 40504	+1 (859) 313-1000

### American Emergency Services – 911

### INCIDENT MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

In general, Lexington, KY is a safe area for its residents and visitors. However, security perception changes greatly by district. If you have any doubts or need to report an incident, you can rely on the Police who are constantly patrolling the streets. The Kentucky Horse Park also has the Kentucky Horse Park Mounted Police.

Responsible care should be exercised when traveling throughout Lexington. There is a normal level of crime, but it varies by district. In the higher-income areas frequented by tourists, petty theft is the most common concern. Travelers should keep valuables out of sight and be aware of their surroundings. Avoid isolated areas when on foot, especially after dark. It is recommended to only use a trusted taxi or an app-based taxi service. Do not hail a taxi on the street.

Assailants usually target victims for their smartphones, wallets, or purses. If confronted by someone with a weapon, it is best not to resist.

It is best to use ATMs inside banks instead of ATMs that are more accessible to passers-by and all banks advise customers to cover ATM keypads with their hands when entering codes. When

making credit card transactions, travelers should expect the vendor to use a credit card reader in their presence.

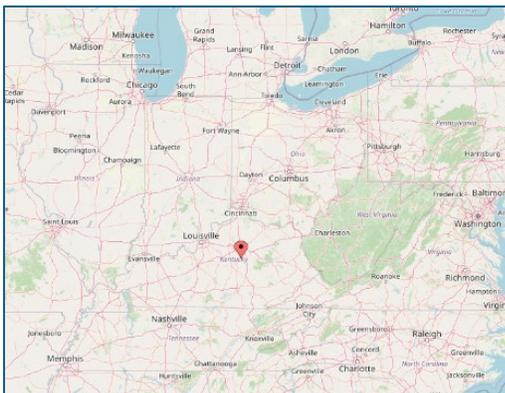
Security is the responsibility of everybody. However, security concerns must not be allowed to prevent Athletes from concentrating on preparing and competing their horses. Good security is the application of common sense.

The key to good security is vigilance. Be aware of what is happening around you and always pay attention to anything that appears unusual or out of place. This includes people who appear nervous about their surroundings.

- Make a copy of your passport or real ID and travel documents and leave the original in a safe place.
- Always travel in groups.
- Do not overtly wear expensive jewelry.
- Keep your phone hidden.
- Do not carry excessive amounts of cash or credit cards if you do not need them.
- If you are in a vehicle in standstill traffic with the windows rolled down, keep phones and other possessions low and away from windows and be mindful of people walking through the traffic.
- Do not approach unattended bags, cases or packages – report them.
- Do not accept packages from anyone, the contents of which are unclear.
- Do not advertise where you are staying.
- If you are out in the evening and you become aware of increased police activity, leave the area immediately.
- If you see an incident involving the police, do not get involved. Do not play the good Samaritan.

## TELEPHONE NUMBER FOR THE AMERICAN POLICE – 911

## ABOUT LEXINGTON



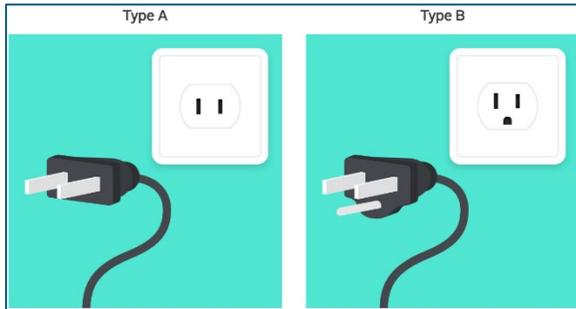
Named the “Horse Capital of the World,” Lexington is home to 320,154 people. Lexington is home to many horse farms and Thoroughbred racetracks including Keeneland and of course the Kentucky Horse Park. Lexington is also home to 18 renowned bourbon distilleries and known for its diverse dining scenes. More information about Lexington can be found [here](#).

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## LANGUAGE

English is the official language and most widely spoken language in Kentucky, which 93% of the population speak.

## ELECTRICAL



Power in America operates on a 110-120 volt current and a 60 hertz frequency. Electricity will be supplied through a Type A (flat two-prong), or Type B (flat two-prong with one round prong).

## TELEPHONES, WI-FI, AND INTERNET ACCESS

Cellphone reception at the Kentucky Horse Park especially during the Defender Kentucky Three Day Event is very limited. AT&T typically receives the strongest signal throughout the Park and Verizon is the most limited. Contact your phone provider for more information on Sim Cards and International Date Plans.

## WEATHER

Average weather for April

- High Temperature: 60°F
- Low Temperature: 45°F
- Rainfall: 11.4"
- Humidity: 76%

**Suggested Clothing:** Although it is the start of Spring, it is not uncommon for cold mornings and moderate rainfall. It is recommended to bring layers and at least one waterproof jacket.

## FOOD & LOCAL RESTAURANTS

American cuisine is heavily influenced by both European and Latin American dishes. Similar to most areas of the U.S., Lexington and surrounding areas has a wide variety of different cuisines available. Many of the traditional dishes are a mixture of native and non-native ingredients complemented with mostly seafood. Beef and chicken are the most popular meats however seafood and pork are often available as well.

Some popular dishes include:

- Benedictine
- Bourbon balls
- Mint julep
- Burgoo

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- Kentucky Hot Brown
- Spoonbread
- Beer cheese

There are many local restaurant options and below is a non-extensive list.

Restaurant	Address	Distance
Red State BBQ	4020 Georgetown Rd, Lexington, KY 40511	2.8 mi
Local Feed	214 S Water St, Georgetown, KY 40324	6.3 mi
Tony's	Victorian Square Shoppes, 401 W Main St, Lexington, KY 40507	8.9 mi
Corta Lima	101 W Short St, Lexington, KY 40507	8.9 mi

## LOCAL BUSINESS HOURS

**Office hours** are Monday through Friday from approximately 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**Banks** tend to be open between 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Shopping centers** tend to be open from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Depending on the shop, the hours may vary. It is not uncommon for a store to open later and close earlier on select days of the week such as Sunday.

## GETTING AROUND THE CITY

There are apps that can be utilized in the city of Lexington to request a vehicle such as Uber, and Lyft to name a few.

The advised and safest method of travel is by taxi or car arranged by a hotel, restaurant, or USEF.

## CURRENCY AND EXCHANGE

The United States Dollar (USD) is the official currency of the United States. The symbol for the USD is \$. There are many different currency exchange services available in Lexington such as Kentucky Currency Exchange and Peoples Exchange Bank.

Currency slang includes but is not limited do:

- Dollar(s) – “Buck(s)”
- \$1,000 – “a grand”

## CREDIT CARDS

Major credit cards are widely accepted. Use of debit cards is widespread, although many stores impose a minimum per debit card purchase, and service charges may apply.

Money can be exchanged at the airport, exchange houses or banks.

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## TIPPING

**Restaurants:** Tipping is customary at sit-down restaurants in the U.S. at a 15% - 20% rate.

**Transport:** Tipping taxi drivers is a standard practice in the U.S. A common tip is 15% to 20%.

**Hotels:** It's up to you whether you tip cleaning staff or room service and again it depends on the overall quality of service.

## TRAVELERS CHECKS

Traveler's checks are not commonly used in America. It is best to use an ATM card at the many ATM locations available in Lexington in the absence of cash.