

**2026 USEF Pony Finals presented by Marshall + Sterling
Rules and Regulations**

Hunter Show Committee

Competition Steward: Cindy Reid
Competition Manager: Hugh Kincannon
USEF Representative: Jennifer Day

Medal Show Committee

Competition Steward: Cindy Reid
Competition Manager: Hugh Kincannon
USEF Representative: Ashleigh Russo

Jumper Show Committee

Competition Steward: Cindy Reid
Competition Manager: Hugh Kincannon
USEF Representative: Erin Keating

The following rules supplement the United States Equestrian Federation (“USEF”) rules that govern the USEF Pony Finals presented by Marshall + Sterling (“Pony Finals”). The USEF rules can be found at www.usef.org. Championship specifications and selection procedures can be found at www.ponyfinals.org. All decisions of the Show Committees are final, binding, and not subject to further appeal of any kind.

General Rules for All Exhibitors

1. Riders, trainers, parents, and participants must behave in a manner befitting a national championship and exhibit honesty, integrity, and good sportsmanship.
2. It is the responsibility of the exhibitor to ensure they are an active member in good standing with USEF and USHJA at the time of qualification and at the beginning of and through the conclusion of Pony Finals, no exception.
3. It is the responsibility of the exhibitor to ensure the pony is actively recorded with USEF and USHJA and has a valid microchip and measurement card at the time of qualification and at the beginning of and through the conclusion of Pony Finals, no exception.
4. To verify the identity of a pony, all ponies in the schooling areas, exercise areas, or lunging areas must have their show number attached to the pony or the individual riding or handling the pony at any time on the competition grounds. Any pony without its correct number will be asked to leave the area.
5. Alcoholic beverages on competition grounds are prohibited except when provided by competition management at official events hosted by the competition.
6. Paddocks will not be available for use at the Kentucky Horse Park during Pony Finals. Ponies and horses are not permitted to be turned out in any paddocks at any time during the week of Pony Finals (August 3-9, 2026). A paddock is defined as any enclosed space aside from stalls where a human does not have hold of the pony or horse. Violation of this rule will result in elimination, no exception.
7. Any violation of GR838 will result in elimination and does not preclude the Federation from seeking further penalties set forth in Chapter 7 of the Rules.

Arrival Requirements for All Ponies

8. Ponies that are not on the grounds for the Kentucky Summer Classic on Sunday, August 2, are not allowed to arrive before 8:00AM EST on Monday, August 3, no exception.
9. Ponies are required to be stabled on the competition grounds in accordance with the following schedule, no exceptions:

GREEN PONY SMALL LARGE REGULAR PONIES	12:00 PM 12:00 PM	MONDAY, AUGUST 3 MONDAY, AUGUST 3
PONY JUMPERS	7:00 AM	TUESDAY, AUGUST 4
SMALL REGULAR PONIES	8:00 AM	TUESDAY, AUGUST 4
GREEN PONY MEDIUM & LARGE	8:00 AM	WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5
MEDIUM REGULAR PONIES	8:00 AM	THURSDAY, AUGUST 6
PONY MEDAL PONIES	7:00 AM	SATURDAY, AUGUST 8

10. Beginning at noon on Monday, August 3, ponies that have arrived on competition grounds are required to remain on competition grounds until they have finished competing in all sections in which they are entered. Violation of this rule will result in elimination, no exceptions.
11. Adults are prohibited from riding any ponies (competing or non-competing) on competition grounds between 11:59 PM EST on Sunday, August 2, and the conclusion of the Pony Medal on Sunday, August 9. Violation of this rule will result in elimination, no exceptions.
12. Riders must be declared for the pony hunter sections no later than the deadlines stated in point #9, no exceptions. Ponies with undeclared riders will not be permitted to compete in Pony Finals. Rider changes are not permitted after the deadlines in Paragraph 9 without the permission of the show committee.
13. Ponies must be declared for the Pony Medal final by 4:00 PM EST on Saturday, August 8. After this declaration deadline, only the Pony Medal Final rider is permitted to ride the pony. Riders may only change mounts for the Pony Medal Final in the case of illness or injury to the declared pony and must obtain approval from the show committee following examination of the pony by the competition veterinarian.

Warm-Up Rules – Hunter and Medal Ponies

14. Warmups will be charged in the show office at \$45 per round. There are no limitations on the number of warm up rounds an exhibitor may sign up for in the outdoor rings.
15. Warmups in the Walnut Ring will be restricted to ponies competing in a hunter section at Pony Finals.
16. Medal warmups will only be available for exhibitors entered and declared for the Pony Medal. Pony Medal riders will be limited to one round and may choose to jump any height (2'3", 2'6", 3'0") for their Medal warm up round.
17. Use of prohibited and/or dangerous jumps, bamboo offsets or poling is not allowed.
18. Any handlers displaying unsafe lunging practices will be asked to leave lunging areas.

Hunter/Medal Specific Rules

19. Any pony which does not meet the qualification criteria outlined in the 2026 Pony Hunter National Championship specifications will not be permitted to compete in the hunter sections at USEF Pony Finals under any circumstances, no exceptions.
20. Ponies that have previously competed in the hunter section at Pony Finals will not be permitted to compete in the green pony section per HU140.6e, *"A pony that is green eligible may only compete in the Green Pony Hunter section one time at the USEF Hunter Pony Championship. If the pony competes in the Green Hunter Pony section at this competition it must be the pony's first time competing at the USEF Hunter Pony Championship."*

21. Any rider who does not meet the qualification criteria outlined in the 2026 Pony Medal Championship specifications will not be permitted to compete in the 2026 USEF Pony Medal Final under any circumstances, no exceptions.
22. After the times listed in the schedule below, the same junior exhibitor is required to ride (school, hack, warm-up, and compete) the hunter pony in all phases of the competition. No other individuals may ride the pony until the pony has completed all phases of the competition. If a rider is unable to continue to compete, the rider and/or trainer must request permission for a rider change from the Show Committee.

GREEN SMALL PONY	12:00 PM	MONDAY, AUGUST 3
LARGE REGULAR PONY	12:00 PM	MONDAY, AUGUST 3
SMALL REGULAR PONY	8:00 AM	TUESDAY, AUGUST 4
GREEN MEDIUM & LARGE PONY	8:00 AM	WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5
MEDIUM REGULAR PONY	8:00 AM	THURSDAY, AUGUST 6

Violation of the above rules (19-22) will result in elimination, no exception.

23. Ponies must be ridden in designated supervised schooling areas only. Please refer to the schedule and to any posted updates.
24. Competition Management may designate an area of the cross-country course for supervised riding. This is limited to flat work only.
25. Coaching from the rail during any hunter, jumper, or equitation phase of the competition is prohibited and may result in a score of a zero.
26. Responsible Riding will be enforced. Any action against a pony by a competitor in the ring, deemed excessive by the judge, may result in elimination from the class and/or issuance of a Recorded Warning or Yellow Warning Card. Excessive actions include but are not limited to excessive speed, riding out of control, repeated extremely long distances to jumps or a series of dangerous jumps, excessive or improper use of the whip, spurs, and/or reins. The judge's decision is final.

Violation of the above rules (23-26) could result in elimination at the discretion of the show committee.

Hunter/Medal Ponies for Sale or Lease

27. Sale/Lease Trial Areas: Competing and non-competing ponies can be tried in any of the ticketed warmup rings, except that non-competing ponies may not be ridden in the Walnut Ring. Competing and non-competing ponies may also be tried in any ring designated as exercise rings.
28. Hunter Ponies: A pony that is competing in the hunter division only and is for sale or lease may be tried by any junior rider in the sale/lease trial areas before the deadlines noted in point #22. The pony may also be tried after the pony has completed all phases of its hunter section.
29. Pony Medal Ponies: A pony that is competing in the Pony Medal Final only and is for sale or lease may be tried by any junior rider in the sale/lease trial areas before Saturday, August 8 at 4:00pm EST. The pony may also be tried after the Pony Medal Final if management has verified that the pony has been eliminated from further testing, or the Medal is complete in its entirety.
30. Ponies Competing in BOTH Hunters and Medal Final: A pony that is competing in a hunter section and the Pony Medal Final and is for sale or lease may be tried by any junior rider in the sale/lease trial areas before the deadlines noted in point #22. The pony may also be tried after the pony has completed all phases of its hunter section but before the deadline for the Pony Medal Final declaration of 4:00pm EST on Saturday, August 8. The pony may also be tried after the Pony Medal Final if management has verified that the pony has been eliminated from further testing, or the Medal is complete in its entirety.

31. Non-Competing Ponies: Ponies not competing in Pony Finals for sale or lease may be tried in the sale/lease trial areas by junior riders only.

Jumper Specific Rules

32. Athletes wishing to be considered for the Pony Jumper Championships must complete and submit an application online at athletes.usef.org and pay the requisite application fee no later than June 15, 2026, at 5:00PM EST.
33. Pony jumpers must only be ridden by their pony jumper competition riders beginning at **7:00 AM** on Tuesday, August 4, 2026, and until the pony has finished competing in all phases of the pony jumper championships.
34. Jumps in the schooling area may not exceed the fence height of the pony jumper class in progress by more than 10cm.
35. Athletes are eligible to compete with only one (1) pony in each jumper category at the Championships.
36. Please note that athletes competing in the Pony Jumper Championships may compete in the Pony Hunters, and the Pony Medal. However, the pony jumper may not cross enter into the Pony Hunters but may enter the Pony Medal.
37. All ponies wishing to compete in the Pony Jumper National Championships must be presented at the Veterinary Inspection (jog) on Tuesday, August 4th, and Wednesday August 5th (larges only).
38. Ponies not presented at the Veterinary Inspection (jog) will not be permitted to compete.
39. Responsible Riding will be enforced. Any action against a pony by a competitor in the ring, deemed excessive by the judge, may result in elimination from the class and/or issuance of a Recorded Warning or Yellow Warning Card. Excessive actions include but are not limited to excessive speed, riding out of control, repeated extremely long distances to jumps or a series of dangerous jumps, excessive or improper use of the whip, spurs, and/or reins. The judge's decision is final.
40. Draw reins and/or German martingales may not be used on Jumper Ponies at any time.

Elimination Procedure

Elimination is at the discretion of the Show Committee. Eliminations will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

- a. Ponies that are eliminated prior to beginning any of the phases of Pony Finals will not be permitted to compete in any phases of Pony Finals.
- b. Ponies that are eliminated prior to completing all phases of Pony Finals are subject to forfeiture of any placing(s) earned in a phase prior to receiving elimination. Eliminated ponies will not be eligible to continue competing in the remaining phases of Pony Finals.
- c. Ponies that are eliminated after the pony has completed all phases of Pony Finals are subject to forfeiture of any placing(s) earned prior to elimination.
- d. Ponies that are eliminated from a specific phase due to not completing the phase, or having been eliminated otherwise per the judge's discretion, are permitted to continue competing in the remaining phases of the competition. (This includes but is not limited to unsoundness, two refusals over fences, irresponsible riding, etc.).