



MEMORANDUM

To: Applicants for 2026 FEI Dressage World Championships U.S. Dressage Team

Date: 24 March 2026

From: Laura Roberts, Managing Director of Dressage

Re: Observation Events for the 2026 FEI Dressage World Championships U.S. Dressage Short List

Dear 2026 FEI World Championship U.S. Dressage Team Applicants,

Per the Selection Procedures for the 2026 FEI Dressage World Championships U.S. Dressage Team (click [here](#)) (“Selection Procedures”), after the conclusion of the initial Qualifying Competition period (May 17th, 2026) **up to** eight (8) athletes will be named to a Short List. Athlete/horse combinations named to the Short List will be required to compete in Observation Event(s).

Short List combinations will be required to submit a competition plan to the Selectors for approval. The Selectors will consult with the Chef d’ Equipe when reviewing competition plans. Competition plans must include a minimum of (1) one of the following designated Observation Events listed below:

Rotterdam CDI4* (NED)	June 18-21, 2026
Hagen CDIO4*-NC / CDI4* / CDI3* (GER)	July 1-5, 2026
Falsterbo CDIO5*-NC / CDI3* (SWE)	July 8-12, 2026

Additional CDI or CDN competitions may be approved as build-up or follow-up competitions to the above events and must be included in the submitted competition plan. Competition plans may be amended with the approval of the Selectors.

“Home Visits” (see definition below) may be conducted with each Short List athlete/horse combination. If a Home Visit is requested, the athlete must comply with the request. Athletes may have their own coach, veterinarian, and farrier present at their own expense for any examination of horses.

An athlete named to the Short List may request special consideration for Team selection without competing in the required number of Observation Events by submitting a written request prior to or during the Observation Event to the Selectors, who will approve or disapprove the request based on these factors:

- An athlete/horse combination that has demonstrated “Proven Ability” (See definition on page 13 of the selection procedures) to succeed at CDI competitions;
- Previous international experience of the athlete and/or horse;
- The circumstances, facts, and in the case of illness or injury to a horse or athlete, documentation by the Team Veterinarian or physician(s) approved by USEF; and/or
- Unforeseen circumstances which create a logistical emergency.

If an athlete’s request is approved by the Selectors, an additional athlete/horse combination may be named to the Short List to compete in the Observation Events.

In exceptional circumstances, additional applicant athlete/horse combinations may be added to the Short List (possibly exceeding eight (8) athletes) that have not completed the required Qualifying Competitions. These combinations may be invited to compete at the Observation Events if the scores are reflective of a combination that could assist in the overall Team performance in the Observation Event and/or Event. In reviewing the possibility of adding the combination to the Short List, Selectors will use the criteria in Section I.C.1, in addition to the combination’s scores achieved over the last six (6) months in FEI Dressage competitions, greater weight will be given to the trend in scores in the most recent three months.

Please note that an invitation to the Observation Events is not a guarantee that an athlete/horse combination will be named to the Team for the Event.

If USEF does not receive invitations for all combinations named to the Short List to compete at Observation Events, the Chef d'Equipe, in consultation with the Selectors, will recommend athletes for designated Observation Events, including any CDI/Os, subject to the approval of the USEF Board of Directors or an Ad Hoc Selection Group approved by the Board of Directors. Additionally, if an Observation Event is found unsuitable for selection purposes following the publication of the FEI Definite Schedule, the Chef d'Equipe, in consultation with the Selectors, may recommend an additional Observation Event or may recommend athletes for designated Observation Events subject to approval of the USEF Board of Directors or an Ad Hoc Selection Group approved by the Board of Directors.

The Chef d'Equipe, in consultation with the athlete and Selectors, may request that the athlete and horse combination attend additional Observation Events. If this request is made by the Selectors, they will articulate their reasoning for making the request in writing to the athlete. Failure to abide by the Chef d'Equipe's recommendation may result in the removal of the athlete and/or horse from consideration for the Team.

HOME VISITS – Visits with the Chef d'Equipe, Team Veterinarian (or a member of the Veterinary Panel), and the USEF Managing Director of Dressage where veterinary evaluations are conducted and training is observed. Additionally, key performance indicators and targets are agreed upon. Selectors, the USEF Dressage High Performance Pathway Development Advisor, and/or guest trainers may be invited to attend Home Visits.

PROVEN ABILITY – An athlete/horse combination that has met at least one of the following criteria:

- i) Represented the US at the 2026 FEI World Cup Final earning a minimum of a 76% in the FEI Grand Prix Test.
- ii) Earned recent results (minimum of a 76% in the FEI Grand Prix, or FEI Grand Prix Special Tests in 2025/2026 at CDI5*, CDI4*, CDI-W or CDIO3*/4*/5* events).

STATE OF PREPAREDNESS – Athlete/horse combinations overall state of readiness to perform successfully at International Dressage Competition, not just limited to health and soundness of the horse.

FEI Nominated Entry (July 6, 2026) - Following the conclusion of the Qualifying Period but no later than the closing date for the FEI Nominated Entry, and based upon the procedures set forth herein, the Selectors, in consultation with the Chef d'Equipe and Team Veterinarian, will recommend at least four (4) athletes and four (4) horses and up to the maximum number of athletes and horses able to be nominated under FEI Rules for the Event subject to the approval of the USEF Board of Directors or an Ad Hoc Selection Group approved by the Board of Directors. The FEI Nominated Entry will be forwarded to the FEI by no later than the FEI Nominated Entry date

FEI Definite Entry (July 27, 2026) - Following the conclusion of the Observation Events but no later than the closing date for the FEI Definite Entry for the Event, the Selectors, in consultation with the Chef d'Equipe, will evaluate the athletes and horses submitted on the FEI Nominated Entry and nominate to the FEI, as required, the Team composed of four (4) Athletes and four (4) Horses (per FEI Dressage Regulations [26th edition, effective 1st January 2023], Articles 412) subject to the approval of the USEF Board of Directors or an Ad Hoc Selection Group approved by the Board of Directors. The Selectors may also recommend up to two (2) reserve athlete/horse combinations and/or reserve horses that may be required to travel with the Team for the Mandatory Final Training (see Section XI).

USEF will assist Short List athletes in finding training bases in Europe for the Observation Event period. Clear guidelines regarding funding/logistical support for Short List will be published at a later date. Additionally, details regarding the mandatory veterinary evaluation (for all Short List horses) and the final training camp/pre-export (required for Team & Reserve(s)) will be published to Short List athletes per the Selection Procedures.

The schedule for the Dressage portion of the 2026 FEI Dressage World Championships is as follows (subject to change):

- July 31 – August 8, 2026 – Final Training Gathering (Mandatory)
- Monday, August 10, 2026 – First Horse Inspection
- Tuesday, August 11-Wednesday, August 12, 2026 – FEI Grand Prix Test (Team Competition)
- Friday, August 14, 2026 – FEI Grand Prix Special Test (Individual)
- Saturday, August 15, 2026 – Second Horse Inspection & Grand Prix Freestyle Test (Individual Freestyle)

If you have any questions regarding the above information or the development of the Selection Procedure for the 2026 FEI Dressage World Championships, please do not hesitate to contact Laura Roberts (Managing Director of Dressage) at (859) 225-6986 or lroberts@usef.org.