



2026 USEF/NCEA Junior Hunter Seat Medal Final Specifications

The 2026 USEF/NCEA Junior Hunter Seat Medal Final (“Final”) Specifications (“Specifications”) published herein are effective April 28, 2026, unless stated otherwise.

1. Eligibility to Compete-Riders

- a. Rider Membership. Open to Junior Active Members of the Federation. Rider must be an active competing member in good standing with the Federation and an active USHJA member at time of qualification and championship.
- b. Riders are not required to complete a USEF/NCEA Medal Program application in order to compete in the qualifying classes but must complete a USEF/NCEA Medal Program application **within 10 calendar days the final day of the qualifying competition in order for points to count. No exceptions.**
 1. Riders must indicate on their USEF/NCEA Medal Program Application which ranking list they wish to accumulate points for (East and West).
- c. Any rider in their final junior year is not eligible to compete in any qualifying classes held at a competition with a start date after August 20th of that competition year.
- d. The winner of any of the USEF/NCEA Junior Hunter Seat Medal Finals is no longer eligible to compete in USEF/NCEA Junior Hunter Seat Medal classes.

2. Eligibility to Compete-Horses

- a. All horses competing in USEF/NCEA Junior Hunter Seat Medal qualifying classes must comply with USEF identification rules in place at the time and be properly identifiable. All horses must obtain a Registration Number from USHJA in order for the rider to accumulate qualifying points.
- b. All horses competing in USEF/NCEA Junior Hunter Seat Medal qualifying classes and Final must provide a microchip number that verifies the animal’s identity in order for the rider to accumulate points. The microchip must be compliant with EQ103.
- c. At least one owner of record of all horses competing in USEF/NCEA Junior Hunter Seat Medal qualifying classes and Final must be an active competing member in good standing of the Federation or have paid the show pass fee.
- d. The trainer listed for all horses competing in USEF/NCEA Junior Hunter Seat Medal qualifying classes and Final must be an active competing member in good standing.

3. Qualifying Criteria

- a. The qualifying period for the 2026 USEF/NCEA Junior Hunter Seat Medal Finals is August 21, 2025-August 20, 2026. Points from qualifying classes will count based on the start date of the competition.
- b. The top 100 riders from each ranking list (East and West) will be invited to compete in the Finals.
- c. Points will be awarded using the following chart as base points and multiplying each placing by the number of riders that completed the course:

Placings	Base Points
1 st	10
2 nd	6
3 rd	4
4 th	2
5 th	1
6 th	1/2

Classes that are split using the “California Split” method will determine the number of riders by taking the total number that completed the course and dividing by the number of resulting sections (rounding up if the result is not a whole number).

4. **Class Conditions**

- a. The USEF/NCEA Junior Hunter Seat Medal Final will be a three-phase competition (Over Fences, Flat, and Bracket).
- b. Conventional Hunter Seat Equitation style tack is required per EQ106.5a.
- c. Phase One-Over Fences: To be shown over a course of at least ten (10) hunter or jumper style fences at 3’3” in height, spread not to exceed fence height. A buzzer will be sounded to alert the rider that they have 45 seconds remaining until they must jump the first fence. The course will be limited to a maximum of two combinations, with one combination being an oxer to a vertical. Triple combinations are not permitted. At least two changes of direction are required. Water obstacles and liverpools are not permitted. An open numerical system of scoring must be used for the fences phase. Two refusals will result in elimination.
- d. Phase Two-Flat: The top 20% or top ten scoring riders, whichever is greater, will return for the flat phase. An open numerical system of scoring must be used for the flat phase. The riders will be asked to perform 2 out of 3 of the following movements: shoulder in, haunches in, or leg yield both directions of the ring. Lateral movements must be performed at the sitting trot. **Riders must compete on the same horse for the over fences phase and flat phase, no exceptions.**
- e. Phase Three-Bracket: The top four riders, as determined by the combination of the fences and flat phase (each counting equally), will return for the bracket phase. These four riders will enter the bracket phase on a clean slate and will not carry forward their scores from the previous rounds.
 - i. Bracket Formation: The fourth and first place rider will be paired together to create Bracket A. Both riders in Bracket A will ride a horse (both riders ride the same horse) previously mounted by a rider in Bracket B over the Bracket Course. The second and third place rider will be paired together to create Bracket B. Both riders in Bracket B

will ride a horse (both riders ride the same horse) previously mounted by a rider in Bracket A over the Bracket Course.

- ii. Determination of Bracket Horses: The horses ridden over the Bracket Course will be determined based on whether either rider in the newly assigned bracket has ridden the horse in the previous 12 months (based on recorded ownership and leases with the Federation). If both available horses have been ridden by either or both of the riders in the assigned bracket, the highest placing horse will be assigned to the bracket. The competition manager will continue to go down the order of placings until a horse is identified that neither rider has ridden in the previous 12 months.
 - iii. Tack and Equipment: Each rider in the bracket phase will be able to use their own stirrups and leathers, however the remainder of the tack and equipment must stay with the assigned horse.
 - iv. Bracket Course Order of Go: Riders will mount their horses and compete over the Bracket Course in reverse order of placing with fourth and third place riders going first and second and first place riders going last.
 - v. Bracket Phase Warm-Up: Each rider will be allowed four minutes to familiarize themselves with their new horse. They will be allowed two minutes under saddle and two minutes to jump a maximum of four jumps: two verticals and two oxers with a maximum of 3' feet in height and spread. Warm-up time to be kept by a designated timekeeper.
 - vi. Bracket Course: The shortened courses will consist of 8 fences from the initial over fences phase, with a maximum of one double combination. The course must be a different route without changing any of the jumps. Fences for the bracket phase will be set at 2'9"-3'0" in height, with height not exceeding spread. All distances may be adjusted accordingly.
 - vii. Bracket Judging: Riders will be judged against the other rider in their bracket (i.e. one rider from each Bracket will compete in the Championship Bracket Phase). If both riders from either bracket do not successfully complete their rounds, there will be no Championship Bracket Phase. Placings for the riders who do not successfully complete the Bracket Course will be based on scores from Phase One.
 - viii. Championship Bracket Phase: The top scoring riders of each bracket will move forward into the championship round to determine a champion and reserve champion rider. Riders will be paired with one of the two remaining horses from the four Bracket riders' horses, that was not ridden in the earlier rounds of the Bracket Phase. Riders will repeat the same warm-up process and course as earlier in the Bracket Phase.
- f. Placings: Fifth through Tenth place will be awarded based on the total combined score from the over fences and flat phase (each counting equally). In all cases, ties will be broken by the score from Phase One over fences. Fourth and third place will be determined by the scores of the first course of the Bracket Phase. Second and First place will be based solely on the Championship Bracket Phase scores.

Example of Bracket Phase:

Round III -

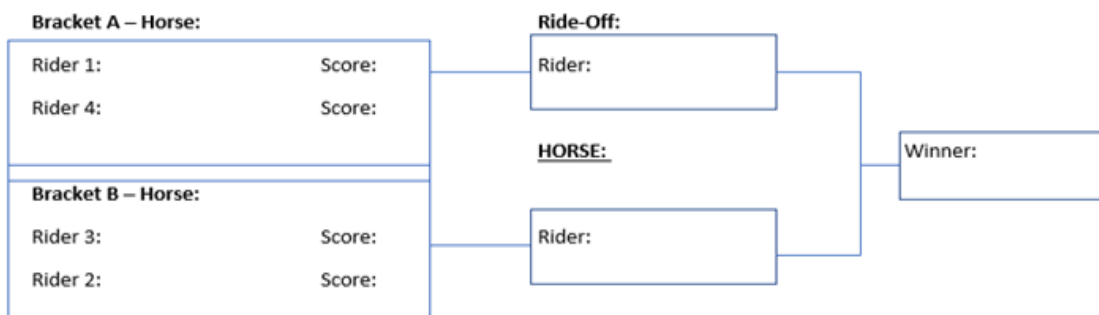
BRACKET A - The First and Fourth place riders will compete over a course of 8 fences riding the horse of the Second or Third place rider. Riders will compete on the same horse.

BRACKET B - The Second and Third place riders will compete over a course of 8 fences riding the horse of the First or Fourth place rider. Riders will compete on the same horse.

Winners from Bracket A & Bracket B will compete for Champion and Reserve on the same horse using a horse of one of the top four riders that they **have not yet ridden**. Fifth place rider's horse will be used as an alternate.

Order of Go:

1. Rider 4 from Bracket A (4th highest score) _____
2. Rider 3 from Bracket B (3rd highest score) _____
3. Rider 1 from Bracket A (highest score) _____
4. Rider 2 from Bracket B (2nd highest score) _____



These Specifications are based on the USEF rules and regulations as presently known and understood. Any change in the Specifications caused by a change in USEF rules and regulations will be distributed to the affected participants immediately. The Specifications are based on the latest information available to USEF. However, the Specifications are always subject to unforeseen, intervening circumstances, and realistically may not have accounted for every possible contingency. Changes in Specifications are subject to approval by USEF. For questions concerning these Specifications, please contact the Hunter Department at hunterdept@usef.org Qualifying for this Final will be conducted under USEF Rules except where outlined otherwise herein.