

2026

JUMPING



PATHWAY PROGRAM





In recent years, the U.S. Jumping Teams have shown strong consistent performances across all categories – elite, development and youth.

Since 2004, U.S. Jumping has headed the Olympic Jumping Team Medal table with an impressive 5 medals over the last six Games while the nearest competitors have a total of 2 medals. Additionally, since 2014 the U.S. Teams that have won medals at World Championships and Olympic Games have included an athlete making their first appearance on a Team at that level.

The Jumping Program seeks to develop athletes and horses starting with the Youth Programs through the Development Program and finally the Elite Program. This Pathway provides the crucial experiences necessary in order to be able to ultimately deliver on the worlds stage when medals are on the line.

ELITE PROGRAM

The Elite Program is competition based and primarily targets the Olympic Games and World Championships. Other important targets depending on the year are World Cup Finals, Nations Cup Finals and Pan American Games. League of Nations (LLN) and other 5* Nations Cups are the backbone of the Program year in year out.

Invitations to 5* Nations Cups are becoming ever more challenging but the Program continues to maximize opportunities and has gained the respect of Organizers globally which is critical when seeking invitations. The Selection Methodology for CSIO's, when not part of a Championship selection process, utilizes the Rolex/USEF Ranking list to select three (3) applicant athletes and the remaining two (2) athletes are discretionary choices by the Chef d'Equipe in order to provide up and coming athletes and horses experience at the CSIO5* level. For a complete list of planned CSIOs for the US Jumping Team in 2026 please visit usef.org/jumping

2026 is a World Championship year as well as a home World Cup Finals. The Championships will be held in Aachen, Germany August 19-23 and the World Cup Finals will be held in Fort Worth, Texas April 9-12. For more information on these events please visit usef.org/jumping.

Additionally, the Program delivers the Gold Standard when it comes to the team that supports the team. From planning and logistics, to veterinary advice and support, to equine and human physio the support team is made up of industry experts and works hand in hand with the grooms, the athletes and the athletes' home teams. The aim is to create a performance focused environment which is calm, and welcoming to new athletes and grooms but laser focused on ensuring the athlete/horse combinations can maximize their performance on the field of play.



DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

CSIO3* Teams

The 3* Nations Cups play a vital role in the development of U.S. jumping athletes, serving as a steppingstone on the pathway to higher-level international team competition. The CSIO3* Tours are designed to provide athletes and horses with essential team experience while fostering the next generation of talent in the U.S.

3* Nations Cups are primarily targeted at athletes who have delivered consistent clear rounds at 1.50m or higher. They are also an important opportunity for senior athletes with younger horses that are aiming to develop for future 5* or championship-level teams.

The water jump is compulsory in all 3* Nations Cups. It is crucial that athlete/horse combinations have prior experience competing over the open water.

Athletes are encouraged to compete in multiple 3* Nations Cups to gain invaluable team experience, which is key to advancing successfully to 5* team competitions. These experiences help build skills that are essential at the highest levels of international competition.

By participating in the CSIO3* Tours, athletes are better prepared for the challenges of 5* Nations Cups and the demands of international senior teams.

Similar to the CSIO5*, securing invitations to European CSIO3* is a challenge and we are constantly working to ensure that U.S. receive invitations. Please visit usef.org/jumping for the CSIO3* schedule.

Funding and Grants are available at varying levels for athlete/horse combinations selected to represent the U.S. at specific CSIOs and Championships. For more information please visit usef.org/jumping.



YOUTH PROGRAM

Youth Programs are the foundation of the U.S. Jumping athlete pathway. They serve as a fundamental starting point for athletes, offering structured opportunities from the initial stages on ponies to international Young Rider team competition.

USEF Pony Jumper National Championships Lexington, KY | August 4-8

The USEF Pony Jumper Championships provide an opportunity for Junior pony athletes to compete against their peers over multiple days of Jumping competition. A Team Championship and an Individual Championship are offered. Fence heights will be varied according to specific height categories.

The USEF Pony Jumper Championships are offered to youth athletes on ponies ranging from small to large ponies. The championships are held across three phases including; Phase One: Individual qualifier, Phase Two: two round team competition, and Phase Three: Individual Final.



USEF Show Jumping Talent Search Finals

East | Gladstone, NJ | October 2-4
West | Thermal, CA | December 3-6

The Talent Search Program offers qualifying classes throughout the country, culminating in an East and West Final. The aim of the program is to emphasize form follows function. The Finals are held in three phases and a ride off, including a flat phase where athletes are required to demonstrate a series of exercises on the flat such as shoulder in, shoulder out, extended and collected gaits, and the counter canter. Athletes then move onto the gymnastics phase executing collected and extended lines preparing their horses for the jumping competition. Phase three concludes with a jumper style course with an open water jump and a time allowed. The top ten athlete/horse combinations from cumulative scores achieved over the three phases return for Phase IV a modified winning round. Phase IV will be held over a shortened course and will be judged. The judges will be looking for a rider who can combine speed with short turns, accuracy, an efficient track while maintaining control, classical riding, and the horse's ability to jump clear. The time taken to complete the round will be considered as a factor in the judges' scoring. Faults will be scored as four points deducted from the final score for each rail down. Although Phase IV will be timed, time and faults are NOT the sole deciding factors.

USEF Horsemastership Training Series Wellington, FL | January 1-4

The USEF Horsemanship Training Series is designed to identify and develop the next generation of top U.S. Equestrian Team talent through instruction from experts in a variety of aspects of horsemastership including intensive in person workshops with top high performance athletes and support staff. Athletes selected demonstrate high potential to represent the U.S. on senior teams. Athletes are invited to participate based on results from pathway championships and select wild card athletes.



**USEF Junior Jumper National Championships/
Prix des States | Harrisburg, PA | October 8-10**

The USEF Junior Jumper National Championships/ Prix des States provide an opportunity for U.S. Junior athletes to compete against their peers over multiple days of competition. The Championship features both the Prix des States Team Competition, with Teams fielded by Zone, and an Individual Competition. Athlete/horse combinations compete throughout three phases including the individual qualifier, team competition, and the individual final. Fence heights will be set at a maximum of 1.45m.



FEI North American Youth Championships | Traverse City, MI | July 29 - August 2

The FEI Jumping North American Youth Championship for Children, Pre-Junior, Junior, and Young Rider categories provides an exciting opportunity for riders in these age groups to compete against their peers in a Championship format similar to that of that of international senior Championships. Competition in each age category is held over the course of multiple days and features both a Team Competition, with Teams fielded by Zone, and an Individual Competition.

The categories are as follows:

- Children's Championship (NACHC): athletes FEI ages 12 - 14, fences up to 1.25m
- Pre-Junior Championship (NAPJC): athletes FEI ages 14-16, fences up to 1.30m
- Junior Championship (NAJC): athletes FEI ages, 14 - 18, fences up to 1.40m
- Young Rider Championship (NAYRC): athletes FEI ages 16 - 21, fences up to 1.50m

FEI Youth Nations Cup Finals | Kronenberg (NED) | September 9-13

Held each autumn in Europe, the FEI Youth Nations Cup Finals brings together the top youth athletes and teams from around the world. In order to qualify, the U.S. must earn their quota spot by finishing first or second place in the team competition of the junior or young rider category at the current year's North American Youth Championships.

How will the 5 Member Team be Selected?

- Up to the top three (3) U.S. Athletes/Horse combinations will be selected, provided they are on the podium (1st, 2nd, 3rd) in the Final Overall Standings of the respective Young Rider or Junior age category at NAYC.
- Two (2) athlete/horse combinations will be recommended to the Team by the Chef d'Equipe. Participation at NAYC is not a requirement for Discretionary Selection, however, performance at NAYC is strongly considered.
- If any of the top three (3) U.S. Athlete/Horse combinations are not on the podium, selection for this position will revert to Discretionary Selection.

The U.S. has a history of success at the Youth Nations Cup Finals, with notable achievements in recent years. The U.S. Junior and Young Rider Teams have secured four first place finishes and two podium finishes in the last six years against highly competitive European teams. These achievements reflect the commitment to the U.S. Jumping Athlete Pathway.

THE PROGRAM & PATHWAY TEAM

Lizzy Chesson • Managing Director Jumping
Robert Ridland • Jumping Chef d'Equipe
Erin Keating • Director of Development Programs
Anne Kursinski • Development Chef d' Equipe
DiAnn Langer • Youth Technical Advisor

Dr. Heather Sherman • Jumping Team Veterinarian
Janus Marquis • Jumping Equine Physiotherapist
Jennifer Mitchell • Team Human Physiotherapist
Chuck Jones • Team Farrier
Dr. Mark Hart • Team Physician

USEF STAFF

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