



# **RULES & GUIDELINES**

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# MISSION & PURPOSE

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The goal of the USEA Young Event Horse (YEH) Program is to identify young horses that possess the talent and disposition which, with proper training, can excel in the uppermost levels of eventing. While the ultimate aim is to identify the future four- and five-star horses, many fine event horses which will excel at the lower levels may also be competing.

The YEH Program gives owners, breeders, and trainers the opportunity to showcase the potential of their 4- and 5-year-old horses while encouraging the breeding and development of top-level event horses for the future. Classes focus on education and preparation of the event horse in a correct and progressive manner. Owners, trainers, and breeders will gain useful feedback from expert judges through both the scoring and the comments about their young horses.

YEH competitions will begin with a dressage test, which focuses on the quality of the horse's gaits and rideability appropriate to the horse's age, followed by a short show jumping section, giving the horses the opportunity to show their carefulness and scope. This test will be immediately and directly followed by a cross-country section. This will give the horses a chance to showcase their boldness and demonstrate to the judges the horses' ability to travel across the country. When galloping between the jumps, the horse should show purpose, balance, and rideability consistent with the development of an upper level prospect. The intent of the jumping section of the YEH is to assess a horse's current ability as well as potential for the future. The horse is not to be "tricked" or "tested," but should be given the opportunity to show its athletic ability and gallop, as well as skills in assessing and negotiating the course as a whole. It is the responsibility of the designer of these courses to provide adequate questions for the horses to demonstrate their ability, as well as ensure no horse will be disheartened after participating in a YEH class.

## DIVISIONS

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YEH competitions offer classes for 4-year-old and 5-year-old horses. Horses are considered to be one year older on January 1 each year regardless of birth month.

- 4-year-old classes are for horses attaining 4 years of age in the current calendar year.
- 5-year-old classes are for horses attaining 5 years of age in the current calendar year.

## REQUIREMENTS TO COMPETE:

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A full competing USEA membership is required for the rider of the horse.

In order to maintain complete records, all horses competing in YEH competitions must be registered with the USEA at least at the Limited Registration Level. Registration will insure that the horses' full pedigree and competition results will be maintained. A copy of any breed registry papers should be included with the USEA horse registration application. The same rider must exhibit the horse in both the dressage and jumping phases, but at the championships, a separate handler may show the horse in the conformation phase.

**Foreign Horses:** Foreign owned or ridden horses are eligible to compete in championships if USEA-registered as above and qualifying scores are achieved at USEA YEH qualifiers.

**Championships:** Qualified horses will be allowed to participate at only one championship venue per year. Horses must earn a score of 75 percent or higher at one qualifier to qualify for the championships. In the case of a tie, a tie-break will be determined by the higher jumping score. Horses may try for that qualification at any number of qualifiers. There is a possibility that not all qualified horses can be accommodated at a particular venue; accepted entries may be based on the highest qualifying scores. Qualifying scores may be checked on the YEH qualified horse list on the USEA website.

# CLASS FORMAT:

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At qualifying events, young horses will complete two sections:

- 1) **Dressage**, worth 30% of the total final score
- 2) **Jumping Test/Gallop/General Impression**, worth 70% of the total final score

At championships, young horses will complete three sections:

- 1) **Conformation/Type**, worth 10% of the final total score
- 2) **Dressage**, worth 20% of the final total score
- 3) **Jumping Test/Gallop/General Impression**, worth 70% of the final total score

## TIME SCHEDULE:

At qualifying YEH competitions, there will be no conformation phase. Dressage will be run first allowing about 8-10 minutes per horse, and the jumping/galloping phase will run after the dressage is completed, also allowing about 8-10 minutes per horse. Organizers should allow a minimum of 45 minutes between dressage and jumping phases for each horse. At championships, dressage will be immediately followed by the conformation phase, and the jumping/galloping phase will be run last.

## EXERCISING & WARM-UP:

**DRESSAGE:** Dressage will take place in a regulation dressage arena. Management may permit schooling at specified time(s) in or around the dressage arena for YEH competitors. Saddlery rules for each phase will apply to the warm up areas as well.

**JUMPING:** Jumping warm-up will include three show jump obstacles: cross rail, vertical, and oxer, and one or two inviting cross-country obstacles.

# DRESSAGE:

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Horses will perform a special modified dressage test judged on overall collective impressions, not by each individual movement. The horse will be scored on the quality of the walk, trot, and canter, as well as rideability. There are two dressage tests for each level: one for qualifying competitions and one for the championships, which are available in the documents section of the USEA website or on the YEH page.

A large (20 X 60 meters) dressage arena is greatly preferable for YEH, because the additional space allows a clearer demonstration of the quality of the horses' gaits. However, a small arena (20 X 40 meters) is permitted at qualifying competitions. At championships, a large arena is required.

Normal eventing dressage ring procedures will prevail as specified in the *USEF Rules for Eventing* with the following exceptions:

1. Horses are not eliminated for errors in the test. Riders may have a caller for the dressage test with permission of the organizer. Callers are not permitted at championships.
2. A horse which leaves the ring (all four feet out of the ring) is not eliminated and should be allowed to continue the test whenever possible. The judge may penalize the horse under the rideability score, if the exit was judged to be due to the horse being out of control, at the judge's discretion.

# CONFORMATION (CHAMPIONSHIPS ONLY):

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Each horse will be stripped of all tack except the bridle and shown in hand to the judge. Horse must be shown in a snaffle bridle. Handlers are to stand their horse up in an open stance for inspection by the judge, who will assess conformation and type. The horse is judged on potential for soundness, speed, and stamina. Handlers will be asked to walk and trot the horse in a straight line for soundness and correctness. Color, size, and gender should not be a factor in the horse's score, however, it should be noted that very heavy horses will probably not have enough speed and stamina for the top levels.

The site for judging conformation should be level, with a straight strip at least 20 meters long. The footing should be dry and firm on a hard surface that is suitable for jogging, ideally on pavement. If on grass, it must be mowed to no more than a uniform two inches high. YEH conformation is judged on a straight line.

# JUMPING/ GALLOP:

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The jumping phase will incorporate a course of five show jumping fences immediately followed by 10 cross-country fences. This allows for a smooth transition from a show jumping pace to a more forward cross-country pace. The horses will then go directly into the gallop section after jumping the last cross-country fence. This should be approximately 150 meters, flat or on an uphill grade.

In qualifying competitions, each obstacle will be scored as a single effort even if it is part of a combination. At Championships, every complete combination will be scored as a single effort. This score will reflect how the horse handles the entire question. In this way, Championships will then be able to have a longer course with more efforts.

In both qualifying and Championship competitions, horses are permitted to walk through the water complex and may walk up to any spooky looking jumps for at least 30 seconds before their round. The organizer may designate a time (30-45 minutes) to allow all riders to walk their horses (mounted or unmounted) around the course, through the water, and sniff any or all jumps. Horses are not permitted to jump any fences. An official must be present to ensure all rules are followed. If any fences are jumped, the rider and horse will be eliminated.

## **JUMP COURSE:**

The jumping courses should be very straightforward, inviting, and age appropriate for the youngsters designed to educate and develop confidence. The courses may include a combination of no less than two strides. All oxers must be ascending. Both show jumping and cross-country courses should begin with a very inviting fence. The last show jumping fence should be ascending to encourage a more forward pace on landing while the last cross-country fence should also be ascending and preferably a steeplechase design to encourage a gallop on landing.

Besides solid fences, the cross-country must include at least two of the following: water, ditches, (may include a simple trakehner or ditch and rail) bank or mound. Corners, chevrons, and skinnies of less than 8 feet are not allowed. The standards of the jumping courses will progress throughout the year, increasing in height and difficulty in order to educate and prepare horses for the YEH Championships in the Fall.

If the YEH competition is held in conjunction with a recognized horse trial, in which some of the YEH horses are competing, the course designer should make every effort to create a unique course, so the YEH horses do not gain a significant advantage over horse trial entrants (e.g. jumping fences in the opposite direction or entering the water in a different location).

### **JUMP SPECIFICATIONS:**

All ages will jump a total of 15 obstacles—5 show jumps, and 10 cross country obstacles. Early season competitions will use lower heights to prepare horses for more demanding courses after June 30.

Fences may be up to 2'11" (Novice specifications) for 4-year-olds and up to 3'3" (Training specifications) for 5-year-olds. At Championships, 4-year-olds may have up to four Training level fences and 5-year-olds up to four Preliminary level fences.

It is the responsibility of the organizer or their designated course designer to ensure the course meet the YEH requirements and safety. Judges should walk the courses prior to starting to be sure it is appropriate for the level and time of year.

### **4-YEAR-OLDS:**

#### **January through June:**

Minimum 2'3" to maximum 2'11" (Starter to Novice heights). No jumps should be under the minimum height. At least one should be at maximum height. Jumps in combination should be set at a minimum of three strides in show jumping and four strides in cross-country.

#### **July through November:**

Minimum 2'7" to maximum 3'3" (Beginner Novice to Novice heights). Jumps in combination should be set at two strides in show jumping and three strides on cross-country.

#### **Championships:**

Minimum 2'11" to maximum 3'3" (Novice to Training heights). A two stride combination will be required in show jumping. On cross-country a Training level combination may be used. A total of four fences on the entire course should be at 3'3". All should be inviting with a good profile and location. There may be one larger option fence in show jumping and a more complex option on cross-country.

### **5-YEAR-OLDS:**

#### **January through June:**

Minimum 2'7" to maximum 3'3" (Beginner Novice to Training heights). No jumps should be under the minimum height. At least one should be set at the maximum height. Jumps in combination should be set at two strides for show jumping.

#### **July through November:**

Minimum 3' to maximum 3'3" (Novice to Training heights). No jumps should be under minimum height and at least one should be at maximum height. Jumps in combination in both show jumping and cross-country should be a minimum of two strides.

#### **Championships:**

Minimum 3'3" to maximum 3'7" (Training to Preliminary heights). A two-stride combination will be required in show jumping. A total of four fences on the entire course should be at 3'7". All should be inviting with a good profile and location. There may be one larger option fence in show jumping and a more complex combination option on cross-country.

# DRESS & SADDLERY:

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## **DRESS:**

Dress code is relaxed. ASTM/SEI approved helmets are mandatory for all phases. Braiding is not required at qualifying competitions for any phase, although it is recommended in dressage. Braiding is required at championships for dressage and conformation.

**Dressage:** Collared shirt with sleeves, breeches, and boots. Spurs and whip per dressage phase in *USEF Rules for Eventing* are permitted.

**Conformation:** as for Dressage, or collared shirt with sleeves, and khaki pants, protective shoes, or boots. ASTM/SEI approved helmet required.

**Jumping:** Cross-country attire with safety vest and medical armbands or bracelets. Spurs and whip per cross-country phase in *USEF Rules for Eventing* are permitted.

## **SADDLERY:**

**Dressage/Conformation:** Only snaffle bridles per dressage phase in *USEF Rules for Eventing* may be used in dressage and conformation. No boots or bandages are to be worn in dressage or conformation.

**Jumping:** Boots and martingales are optional for jumping. Equipment allowed for cross-country in the *USEF Rules for Eventing* may be used, but where harsher items are employed the judge may use discretion to penalize this in general impression and/or rideability.

# JUDGING REQUIREMENTS:

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YEH competitions should have two judges to run efficiently. At least one of them must be on the list of approved YEH judges, which can be viewed on the USEA website at [www.useventing.com/events-competitions/young-event-horse/yeh-judges-list](http://www.useventing.com/events-competitions/young-event-horse/yeh-judges-list)

Dressage and conformation (championships only) phases may be judged by qualified individuals who are not listed as YEH judges, if they are approved in advance by the USEA. YEH judges may also be assisted by knowledgeable eventing professionals, but these individuals will not score the actual performance. There must always be at least one approved YEH judge officiating the jumping phase. The person judging dressage may thus proceed while the second judge is judging the jumping/galloping. See chart below for suggestions for possible appropriate judges for the different phases.

<b>Dressage</b>	<b>Conformation (at championships only)</b>	<b>Jumping and Galloping</b>
YEH Judge or USEF/ FEI Dressage Judge or USEF/FEI Eventing Judge	YEH or FEH Judge or a Registered Sport Horse Breeding Judge	Main judge MUST be a YEH judge from USEA list. An additional jumping may be used as a consultant, and can be a four-star or five-star rider, Level III or IV USEA ICP Certified Instructor, or top YEH trainer. They should meet with the YEH judge prior to the start of the competition to discuss YEH guidelines and score sheets.

# OTHER GUIDELINES:

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All horses participating must be issued a bridle number, which they should wear at all times when exercising or competing.

Any unruly horse of any gender or age which endangers its rider/handler, other horses, their rider/handlers, the judges, or the ring crew may be dismissed by the judge.

YEH horses are subject to drug testing and must be made available for testing if requested by officials or testing veterinarians. USEF national drug rules will apply at all YEH venues..

Certified medical personnel should be present on the grounds when a YEH competition is taking place. A veterinarian may be on call.

A fall of rider or horse in any phase will incur elimination.