



2025 USHJA International Hunter Derby Championship Specifications

Effective for the 2025 IHD Championship
Changes from 2024 in bold, italics, and underlined.

I. Eligibility and Entry Fee

- A. All horses that are enrolled in the USHJA IHD program during the current competition year will be eligible to compete in the USHJA IHD Championship.
- B. Pre-Entry Fee is \$1,000. A minimum of 80% of each entry fee and 60% of all enrollment fees received between December 1, 2023, and August 1, 2024 will be added back to the total prize money. \$250 of the Pre-Entry Fee is non-refundable, regardless of when/if an entry scratches.
- C. Post-Entry Fees are \$1,000 plus a late fee of \$3,000 (equaling \$4,000), paid after the closing date of entries. Post-Entry Fees are 100% non-refundable. 100% of the Post-Entry Fees are added to the Championship prize money total.

II. Championship Policies

- A. Soundness – horses are required to trot a circle on a loose rein at the end of each round of the over fences performance. Horses may be asked to return to the ring and trot another circle at the judge's discretion.
- B. All horses competing in the IHD Championship must be on the competition grounds 24 hours prior to the start of the Classic Hunter Round.
- C. All horses will be monitored and must remain on the competition grounds until the horse is finished competing in the IHD Championship. Any horse that leaves the premises prior to completing its participation in the IHD Championship is disqualified.
- D. Beginning 24 hours prior to the Classic Hunter Round, all horses must be ridden in the designated IHD schooling areas and riders must wear their actual competition number while mounted. Designated IHD schooling areas will be posted in the horse show office. Horses may be longed in designated longeing areas.
- E. Rider Change Policy – if a rider is unable to continue to compete on a horse in any round of the competition, the rider and/or trainer must request permission from the IHD Championship Ground Jury to change riders before the start of the next round of competition. The decision of the IHD Championship Ground Jury is final and binding and not subject to further appeal of any kind.
- F. Horse Eligibility Policy – in the event that a horse-and-rider combination qualified for Tier I Handy, Tier II Handy, or the Derby Challenge is unable to compete, the next highest scoring horse-and-rider combination will move up in the order to make every effort that the determined number of horses start in each section.
- G. Formal attire is required (see HU107).
- H. The following meetings must be held prior to the start of the Classic Hunter Round
 1. Officials Meeting must be attended by the IHD judges, course designer, steward, Championship liaison, and competition manager to review the specifications, judging system, and to walk the course.
 2. Riders Meeting will be held to answer any questions regarding the course, judging system and class specifications.
- I. The USHJA shall designate a knowledgeable technical person, other than a member of competition management or one of the class judges, to serve as the Championship Competition



Liaison for the USHJA IHD Championships. The Liaison will be present during both phases of the class and available to competitors and officials, to assist in answering questions and resolving disputes that may arise pertaining to the Championship which are not resolved through the IHD Championship Ground Jury.

III. **IHD Championship Ground Jury**

- A. The IHD Championship Ground Jury will consist of the Competition Manager or Licensee, the Championship Liaison, at least two representatives from the USHJA IHD and Incentive Task Force, one Steward, and one Judge. All individuals must be present at the Championship and are Senior Active or Life members of USHJA and USEF. Ground Jury members may not have a horse or rider competing in the Championship. The Ground Jury will hear any questions raised during the Championship regarding the conduct of the competition. The decision of the Ground Jury is final and binding and is not subject to further appeal of any kind.

IV. **Course Requirements**

A. Jumps in ALL Rounds

1. Obstacles must simulate those reminiscent of the hunt field and the course must offer a variety of Derby jumps with different appearances such as: natural post and rail, stone wall, white board fence of gate, cook, aiken, hedge, oxer, brush, logs, natural foliage.
2. Natural obstacles such as banks and ditches are allowed.
3. A minimum 2” difference is required for the back element of an obstacle.
4. Ground lines are not to exceed 18” in depth from the vertical plane of the jump. For appropriate jumps, no groundline is necessary. The Ground Jury shall have full authority over what is considered “appropriate” and “necessary”.
5. The jumpable portion of any obstacle must be a minimum of eight feet on its front face.
6. Flat cups may only be used for obstacles involving logs and/or in accordance with Federation rules.
7. **The top rail of all obstacles must rest in a cup, except where walls with moveable bricks are used.**

B. Classic Hunter Round

1. A minimum of 10 obstacles must be offered.
2. Classic round must have at least 20% of the course set at 3’9”. The remainder of the course must be set higher.
3. The course must include four higher height option fences set at a minimum of 4’ and a maximum of 4’9” in height on a track with a similar degree of difficulty. The number of higher height option fences cannot exceed four.
4. At least two changes of direction.
5. At least one in-and-out.
6. At least one bending line.
7. At least one line with an unrelated distance.
8. At least one fence with a long approach.

C. Tier I and Tier II Handy Round and Derby Challenge

1. A minimum of eight obstacles must be offered.
2. Handy round must have at least 20% of the course set at 3’9”. The remainder of the course must be set higher.

3. The course must include four higher height option fences set a minimum of 4' and a maximum of 4'9" in height, on a track with a similar degree of difficulty. The number of higher height option fences cannot exceed four.
 4. The course should simulate riding over hunt country and must include a minimum of three of the following handy options, such as: tight turn options, different tracks, clever options for jump approaches, pen type obstacles, hand gallop a jump, trot a lowered obstacle not to exceed 3' in height, execute a walk fence while mounted not to exceed 12" in height. Leading a horse over an obstacle and opening and/or closing a gate(s) while mounted or not mounted is **not** permitted. Gimmicky options are not appropriate.
- D. Jump Off Round(s)
1. A minimum of eight obstacles must be offered.
 2. Fences must be set at 3'9" to 4' in height, exception option fences.
 3. There will be no high options for the Jump Off Round.
 4. The course should simulate riding over hunt country and must include a minimum of two of the following handy options, such as: tight turn options, different tracks, clever options for jump approaches, pen type obstacles, hand gallop a jump, trot a lowered jump not to exceed 3' in height, execute a walk fence while mounted not to exceed 12" in height, and/or halt. Leading a horse over an obstacle and opening and/or closing gate(s) while mounted or not mounted are **not** permitted. Gimmicky options are not appropriate.

V. **Judges**

- A. Each judge must be an R-licensed Hunter judge that must be in good standing with the Federation and USHJA.

VI. **Judging System**

- A. The Classic Hunter Round shall be judged and numerically scored on quality, movement, jumping style, manners, and way of going. *Pace and brilliance are to be rewarded.* In addition to this base score, each judging panel must award an Option Bonus Score consisting of one additional point for every higher height option fence jumped. These two scores must be announced separately and then added together to determine each horse-and-rider combination's score for this round from each judging panel. The scores of all the judging panels will be added together to determine the total score of each horse-and-rider combination for each round.
- B. The Tier I and Tier II Handy Round and the Derby Challenge shall be judged on jumping style and efficiency while maintaining style and form, way of going, and overall flow. *Pace and brilliance are to be rewarded.* A horse/rider may not jump decorations or other obstacles in order to create a shorter track. In addition to this base score, each judging panel must award an Option Bonus Score consisting of one additional point for every higher height option fence jumped **and a Handy Bonus Score on a scale of 0-5 to award handiness in the round.** These **three** scores must be announced separately and then added together to determine each horse-and-rider combination's score for this round from each judging panel. The scores of all the judging panels will be added together to determine the total score of each horse-and-rider combination for this round.
- C. The Jump Off Round(s), if required, shall be judged and numerically scored on quality, movement, jumping style, manners, and way of going. *Pace and brilliance are to be rewarded.* A horse/rider may not jump decorations or other obstacles in order to create a shorter track. In



addition to this base score, each judging panel must award an Option Bonus Score consisting of one additional point for every higher height option fence jumped. These two scores must be announced separately and then added together to determine each horse-and-rider combination's total score for this round from each judging panel. The scores of all panels will be added together to determine the total score of each horse-and-rider combination for this round.

- D. The total scores of each horse-and-rider combination from the Classic Hunter Round and the Tier I Handy Round will be added together to determine their final score. These scores will determine the final overall standings for the IHD Championship results.
- E. The total scores of each horse-and-rider combination from the Classic Hunter Round and the Tier II Handy Round will be added together to determine their final score. These scores, plus the scores of Tier II entries competing in the Tier I Handy, will determine the final overall standings for the Tier II IHD Championship results.
- F. The total scores of each horse-and-rider combination from the Derby Challenge will determine their final overall Derby Challenge score and placing.
- G. A judging assistant must be present during all phases of the competition. The duties of the judging assistant include notifying the judging panels if a rail comes down and when a horse jumps the higher height option fences. The judging assistant is not required to be a licensed official and is not responsible for the scoring of the judging panels. A competition staff member may fill this role.
- H. The Option Bonus Score of one additional point for each higher height option fence jumped must be awarded even if there is a refusal, rail down or loss of good jumping style at that higher height option fence, provided that the horse-and-rider combination does jump the higher height option fence.

VII. Rider Ranking System – Tier I and Tier II

- A. Tier I Riders are eligible to compete in and receive placings and prize money in the overall IHD Championships by competing in the Tier I Handy Round, and the Derby Challenge.
- B. Tier II Riders are eligible to compete in and receive placings and prize money in the overall IHD Championships by competing in the Tier I Handy Round, the overall Tier II IHD Championship by competing in the Tier II Handy Round, and the Derby Challenge. Any Tier II entry qualified for the Tier I Handy Round will compete in that round and their score will also carry forward to the Tier II standings.
- C. 20% of the total prize money for the IHD Championships will be awarded to the overall Tier II standings.
- D. The number of entries determines the exact payout percentages.

VIII. Competition Format

- A. The IHD Championships will be held over two days and consists of the Classic Hunter Round, Handy Round – Tier I and Tier II, and the Derby Challenge. If required, a Jump Off Round will be held to break ties for overall first place after the Handy Round or Derby Challenge.
- B. USHJA and competition management reserves the right to amend the schedule and/or format based on the individual host event.
- C. The Classic Hunter Round will be held the first day and consists of all eligible and entered horses present for this event.



- D. Tier I Handy Round consists of a minimum of the top 20 horses, including ties and regardless of rider Tier, based on scores from the Classic Hunter Round. At the sole discretion of the USHJA, more than the top 20 horses may be invited to return for the Handy Round.
- E. Tier II Handy Round consists of a minimum of the top 20 Tier II entries, including ties, based on scores from the Classic Hunter Round. Tier II entries that are eligible to compete in the Tier I Handy will compete in that round and their scores will carry forward to the Tier II standings. Positions in Tier II Handy Round left vacant by Tier II entries qualified for Tier I shall not be filled by other Tier II entries.
- F. Tier I and Tier II Jump Off Rounds, if required, up to the top six horses in their respective section may be invited back for a shortened Handy Round.
- G. The Derby Challenge consists of any entries that are not otherwise qualified for Tier I or Tier II Handy Round. Any horse-and-rider combination qualified for either Tier I or Tier II is not eligible to compete in the Derby Challenge. There will be no horse substitutions.
- H. The Derby Challenge Jump Off Round, if required, consists of the entries tied for first place in the Derby Challenge.

IX. Orders of Go

- A. The Classic Hunter Round order of go will be determined using a random draw.
- B. The Tier I and Tier II Handy Round order of go will be determined by the scores from the Classic Hunter Round, with the lowest score returning first and the highest score returning last.
- C. The Derby Challenge order of go will be determined by random draw.
- D. In the case of multiple horses being ridden by the same rider, the order may be adjusted so that there will be a minimum of five horses (if available), separating multiple rides. To adjust the order for multiple rides, the horse with the lowest score will move up as far as possible in the order before a second horse is dropped down and so on. Riders with multiple horses must ride their lowest scoring horse before additional horses with higher scores. All horses must be ridden according to the posted order for each round.

X. Tie Breaking Procedures

- A. In the Classic Hunter Round, horses tied for cutoff scores will remain tied and advance to the Tier I or Tier II Handy Round.
- B. All ties for overall IHD Champion and overall Tier II IHD Champion may compete in a Jump Off Round. If both exhibitors agree NOT to jump off, the exhibitors will be named co-winners. Prize money will be split evenly, and ties entrants must determine the distribution of awards amongst themselves. If one of the tied exhibitors declines to jump off, that exhibitor must sign a forfeiture agreement which will be provided at the time of the jump off.
- C. All ties for other than first place in Tier I and Tier II standings will remain tied. Prize money will be split evenly and tied entrants must determine the distribution of awards amongst themselves.
- D. All ties for the Derby Challenge first place may compete in a Jump Off Round. If both exhibitors agree NOT to jump off, the exhibitors will be named co-winners. Prize money will be split evenly, and ties entrants must determine the distribution of awards amongst themselves. If one of the tied exhibitors declines to jump off, that exhibitor must sign a forfeiture agreement which will be provided at the time of the jump off.



- E. All ties for other than first place in the Derby Challenge standings will remain tied. Prize money will be split evenly, and tied entrants must determine the distribution of awards amongst themselves.

XI. Prize Money, Awards, and Bonus Points

- A. Awards will be given to the overall IHD Champion and placings determined by Tier I Handy Round, as well as overall Tier II IHD Champion and placings determined by Tier II entries in both Handy Rounds.
- B. Total prize money will consist of \$100,000 plus 80% in add-back money from entry fees, 60% of all annual enrollment fees received between December 1, 2023 and August 1, 2024, and 100% of the Post Entry Fee monies.
- E. 80% of the total prize money will be awarded to the overall IHD Championship standings. A minimum of 20 places shall be awarded prize money. The number of entries determines the exact payout percentages.
- F. 20% of the total prize money will be awarded to the overall Tier II IHD Championship standings. A minimum of 20 places shall be awarded prize money. The number of entries determines the exact payout percentages.
- C. In addition, a total of \$10,000 will be awarded to the top twelve horses in the Derby Challenge and will be distributed as follows:

1 st place	30%	7 th place	4%
2 nd place	22%	8 th place	3%
3 rd place	15%	9 th place	2%
4 th place	10%	10 th place	1%
5 th place	6%	11 th place	1%
6 th place	5%	12 th place	1%

- D. All prize money will be paid within 30 days of the competition.
- E. In order for IHD Championship points/money to be awarded, riders must complete the USHJA Exhibitor Declaration Form. If the Exhibitor Declaration Form is not completed and submitted to the horse show office either at the time of entry or at least one hour prior to the start of the class, horses will not receive bonus points/money for the IHD Championship. Riders may only declare Hunter sections for National HOTY points/money.
- F. National bonus points will be awarded to each horse’s respective section as declared at the time of entry. Only Juniors and Amateurs may declare for the applicable Junior or Amateur Owner section. Horses declare in Open Sections will also be awarded the value of their money won for the declared Hunter section (exception: Green Conformation Hunter 3’6” and High Performance Conformation Hunter). National bonus points may not be credited toward the HOTY awards for Green Conformation Hunter 3’6” or the High Performance Conformation Hunter.

Place	Classic Round	Handy Round	Overall
1 st	150	200	400
2 nd	140	185	370
3 rd	130	170	340
4 th	120	155	310
5 th	110	140	280
6 th	100	125	250
7 th	90	110	220

8 th	80	100	200
9 th	70	90	180
10 th	60	80	160
11 th	55	70	140
12 th	50	60	120
13 th	45	50	100
14 th	40	45	90
15 th	35	40	80
16 th	30	35	70
17 th	25	30	60
18 th	20	25	50
19 th	15	20	40
20 th	10	15	30

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