



**2025 USHJA NATIONAL HUNTER DERBY REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP  
SPECIFICATIONS**

**Changes from 2024 marked in bold italic and underlined.**

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## **I. Membership and Participation Requirements**

- A. Riders, Owners and Trainers must be current Active members of USEF and USHJA before the start of the championship. (see GR202)
- B. Horses must be recorded with the Federation and registered with USHJA to participate in the championship.
- C. **Exception:** Foreign residents and horses and ponies in good standing with their National Federation are eligible to compete in this class but will not receive points unless they follow I.A. and I.B.
- D. The same horse may not compete in the USHJA National Hunter Derby Regional Championship and the International Hunter Derby at the same competition.
- E. Horses entered in this class are not required to show in any other classes at the horse show.
- F. Riders are limited to competing no more than four (4) horses in the championship, however, a competition may choose to further limit the number of horses a rider can compete to three (3) horses, as long as the competition notifies the USHJA sixty (60) days in advance of the date of the class and such limitation is printed in the prize list.
- G. In accordance with HU174.14 the same horse-and-rider combination must compete in both rounds of the National Hunter Derby Championship.
- H. Horses may not be cross entered in multiple sections of the National Hunter Derby Regional Championship.
- I. Attire: Refer to HU107 in the USEF Rule Book for current specifications.

## **II. Judging System**

- A. Each section may have the option of having either one (1) or two (2) panels of judges. Each panel will consist of two (2) judges sitting together. One (1) judge on each panel must be a **USEF** “R” judge, the other judge on each panel may be either a **USEF** “R” or “r” judge. Each panel will provide one (1) score for each round. See “E” for calculating the Overall Score.
  - 1. All judges must be Federation licensed and in good standing with the Federation and USHJA.
  - 2. No guest cards will be granted for this competition.
  - 3. The judges will be hired by the host competition manager.
- B. No panel may award the same base score to any two (2) competitors in any one (1) round.
- C. The first round shall be judged on performance, hunter pace, jumping style, quality and substance, and movement. After the judges base score is given, one (1) point will be added for each high option fence jumped. The Option Bonus Score of one additional point must be awarded even if there is a refusal, rail down or loss of good jumping style at that higher height option fence, providing that the horse-and-rider combination does jump the higher height option fence. (Two points per panel, four point maximum.)
- D. The second round shall be judged on performance, hunter pace, jumping style, quality and substance, movement, handiness, and brilliance of pace. Handiness is defined as ground saving movement without adversely affecting performance or style. Brilliance of pace is defined as a faster pace than ordinary, without sacrificing performance or style. Handiness is taken into account in the judges’ base score. After the judges’ base score is given, one (1) point will be added for each high option fence jumped. The Option Bonus Score of one (1) additional point must be awarded even if there is a refusal, rail down or loss of good jumping style at that higher height option fence, providing that the horse-and-rider combination does jump the higher height option fence. (Two points per panel, four point maximum.)
- E. Overall Score - The final score from each round (3’0” with 3’5” options) will combined to obtain the overall total for each horse.

### **III. Tie Breaking Procedures**

- A. No panel may award the same base score to any two competitors in any one round unless a competitor's score is below the cut-off score.
- B. Any ties in all rounds will be broken by the base score (before adding height bonus points) of that round.
- C. All ties for overall first place in the class will compete in a jump-off round. In the case of unsafe conditions preventing a jump-off from being held, the tie will be broken using the second round base score (before adding height bonus points).
- D. Ties for other than first place in the overall standings will be broken using the second round base score (before adding height bonus points).
- E. Prior to the start of the class, if two (2) judging panels are used, one(1) panel must be designated as the tie breaking panel for the first round and another panel must be designated as the tie breaking panel for the second round. The tie breaking panel for the first round will also be designated as the tie breaking panel for the jump-off round.

### **IV. Schooling**

- A. During the two (2) rounds of the National Hunter Derby, all horses entered must be ridden in official horse show schooling areas unless Management designates a specific schooling area for National Hunter Derby horses. Riders must wear their horse's Derby competition number while mounted. Additionally, competition numbers should be designated a specific color or visible colored dots on standard show numbers, to better assist stewards in distinguishing National Hunter Derby Championship competitors. This includes horses entered simultaneously in another class, if any. Entered horses ridden or schooled elsewhere on the competition grounds or NOT wearing their Derby competition number will be eliminated from competing in the Derby and the entry fee will be forfeited.

### **V. Order of Go**

- A. The order of go must be posted a minimum of three (3) hours prior to the start of the class. If the Regional Championship class is the first class of the day the order of go must be posted the day before, up to one (1) hour after the show office closes.
- B. In the case of multiple horses being ridden by the same rider, every effort will be made so that there will be a minimum of eight (8) horses (if available) separating multiple rides. All horses must be ridden in the sequence that appears on the jumping order in the first round of the competition. In the second round horses will return in reverse order of their first round scores (lowest to highest). Due to multiple rides or rider conflicts, any rider may elect to move up in the order. Should a jump-off occur, horses will return in the same order in which they competed in the second round.
- C. The draw may be performed by hand or competition management may host a computer draw.

### **VI. Competition Format**

- A. The USHJA National Hunter Derby Regional Championship will be composed two (2) rounds: Classic Hunter Style Round and Handy Hunter Round. If required, a Jump-off Round will be held.
  - 1. The National Hunter Derby Championship Classic Hunter Style Round consists of the entered horses present for this event. These horses will compete over a Classic Hunter Course.
  - 2. The National Hunter Derby Championship Handy Hunter Round consists of a minimum of the top twenty (20) horses, including horses tied for 20th, from the Classic Hunter Style Round. These horses will compete over a Handy Hunter Course.

3. Jump-off Rounds, if required, consist of the horses tied for first place. These horses will compete over a Handy Hunter Course. All other ties will be broken according to the tie-breaking procedures.
- B. If needed, Competition Management is permitted to schedule the USHJA National Hunter Derby Regional Championship over two (2) days.

## **VII. Competition Requirements**

- A. The USHJA National Hunter Derby Regional Championship will be offered as three (3) separate sections. One (1) National Hunter Derby Regional Championship *section* will be an Open class, one (1) National Hunter Derby Regional Championship section will be restricted to Amateurs, and one (1) National Hunter Derby Regional Championship section will be restricted to Juniors.
1. If there are fewer than twelve (12) entries in either section (National Hunter Derby restricted to Amateurs and National Hunter Derby restricted to Juniors), the two (2) sections must be combined. When combined, the total minimum \$7,500 prize money must be divided between the two (2) remaining sections, offering \$3,750 for each section.
  2. If there are fewer than twelve (12) entries in either section, once the Amateurs and Juniors have been combined, (National Hunter Derby Open and National Hunter Derby restricted to Juniors and Amateurs), the two (2) sections must be combined. When combined, the total minimum \$7,500 prize money must be offered.
  3. Competition management is not permitted to restrict entries in any section.
- B. Competition management will provide colored competition back numbers or visible colored dots on standard show number specific to National Hunter Derby Championship competitors to aid Stewards identifying competitors in the schooling areas.
- C. Competition management will remit complete results including prize money awarded to USHJA and USEF within ten (10) days of the conclusion of the competition.
- D. Competition Management will collect and remit to USHJA the \$25 per horse entrant fee.
- E. The National Hunter Derby is a featured class of the horse show, and must be presented as such with regard to arena size and location, jump quality, decorations, footing and ring preparation, lighting, etc. The ring used must have spectator seating, a quality sound system, and a dedicated announcer with no other duties during the Derby.
- F. It is important for Management to make sure that the pointing and scoring system is fully understood by spectators. USHJA requests that announcers announce scores using their own style, but containing the following information in a clear manner:
1. First Round  
"The judges score an 84. An additional four points will be awarded for the four higher option fences that were taken, giving our entry a final score of 88 for this round."
  2. Second Round  
"The judges score an 82 for this round. An additional four points will be awarded for the four higher option fences that were taken, giving our entry a final score of 86 for this round."  
Handiness is taken into account in the judges' base score. The overall score should be announced clearly following the second round score.
- G. USHJA will supply ribbons and coolers. Competitions are responsible for all other awards. However, the USHJA reserves the right to supplement awards.

## **VIII. Course Requirements**

- A. The course diagrams for each round must be posted a minimum of three (3) hours before the start of the first round. The course for second round must be posted a minimum of three (3) hours prior. Copies of the courses must also be available for distribution.

- B. Dotted lines are prohibited in both the first and second rounds of any National Hunter Derby Regional Championship.
- C. Jumps in ALL Rounds
  - 1. Obstacles must simulate those reminiscent of the hunt field and the course must offer a variety of classic jumps with different appearances such as: natural post and rail, stone wall, white board fence or gate, coop, aiken, hedge, oxer, brush, logs, natural foliage.
  - 2. Natural obstacles such as banks and ditches are not allowed.
  - 3. A minimum of 2” difference is required for the back element of all oxers.
  - 4. Ground lines are not to exceed 18” in depth from the vertical plane of the jump. For appropriate jumps, no ground line is necessary.
  - 5. The jumpable portion of any fence must be a minimum of eight (8) feet on its front face.
  - 6. The top element of all jumps must be in cups except for walls with movable bricks.
  - 7. Flat cups may only be used for log fences and in accordance with Federation rules.
  - 8. Distances will not be adjusted for ponies.
  - 9. Fence height 3’0”
  - 10. There must be four (4) option fences set at 3’5”. If there is a difference in difficulty between any two (2) tracks containing height options, the higher options should include the more inviting, less difficult track.
- D. Classic Hunter Style Course (First Round)
  - 1. A minimum of ten (10) obstacles must be offered in the Classic Hunter Round.
  - 2. At least one (1) in and out.
  - 3. At least one (1) bending line.
  - 4. At least one (1) line with an unrelated distance.
  - 5. At least one (1) long approach.
- E. Handy Hunter Course (Second Round)
  - 1. A minimum of eight (8) obstacles must be offered in the Handy Hunter Round.
  - 2. The course should simulate riding over hunt country and must include a minimum of two (2) 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 2’0” in height, halt and/or back. Leading over an obstacle and opening and/or closing a gate(s) while mounted or not mounted is not permitted. Gimmicky options are not appropriate.
- F. Jump-Off Round
  - 1. A minimum of eight (8) obstacles must be offered in the jump-off round.
  - 2. The course should simulate riding over hunt country and must include a minimum of two (2) handy options.
  - 3. The Jump-Off round cannot replicate the first or second round courses.

## **IX. Awards Presentations**

- A. Competition management may offer additional awards for the Overall Champion of each Section:
  - 1. Owner
  - 2. Rider
  - 3. Trainer
- B. The Overall Champion from each section will be presented with a bridle ribbon, cooler and a sponsor award, if available.
- C. Ribbons will be awarded to the top twelve (12) placings for each phase, and top twenty (20) for overall placings.

**X. Prize Money and Entry Fee**

- A. A minimum of \$7,500 in prize money must be offered per championship, \$2,500-per section. When two (2) sections are combined, a minimum of \$3,750 in prize money must be offered per section.

<b>Section</b>	<b>Prize Money Per Section</b>
Junior	\$2,500
Amateur	<u>\$2,500</u>
Open	\$2,500
<b>Total Prize Money:</b>	\$7,500

In the event the Junior and Amateurs combine:

<b>Section</b>	<b>Prize Money Per Section</b>
Junior & Amateur	\$3750
Open	<u>\$3750</u>
<b>Total Prize Money:</b>	\$7,500

In the event all sections combine:

<b>Section</b>	<b>Prize Money Per Section</b>
Open (Junior, Amateur & Open)	\$7,500
<b>Total Prize Money:</b>	\$7,500

- B. An additional \$50 ‘add back’ fee will be paid per horse, in addition to the entry fee, to further supplement the prize money in their specific section.
- C. Payouts within each section will follow the model listed below.
- D. The entry fee must not exceed 10% of the prize money offered in the class. *(This does not include the additional prize money generated by the add back fees)*
- E. Prize money must be paid to a minimum of twelve (12) places as follows:

1st – 30%	5th – 6%	9th – 3%
2nd - 22%	6th – 5%	10th – 2%
3rd – 13%	7th – 4%	11th – 2%
4th – 8%	8th – 3%	12th - 2%

- F. Competitions wishing to offer additional prize money above the minimum required and pay additional placings must print the information in the prize list and notify the USHJA of the final prize money distribution. If a change in prize money and placings occurs after the prize list is printed, the competition must follow all USEF rules regarding changes to the prize list (See GR904). The prize money awarded to each placing below 12<sup>th</sup> place must not exceed the amount awarded to 12<sup>th</sup> place.
- G. If there are fewer than twelve (12) entries in the class, prize money must be paid according to the breakdown in Point Section X.E, through the last placing entry. Any remaining prize money not awarded due to fewer than twelve (12) entries may be split and awarded equally to all entrants that place in the class.
- H. The top twelve (12) overall riders must ride for ribbons in order to receive prize money.

#### **XI. National & Zone HOTY Points and Awards**

- A. In order for National Hunter Derby ***National and*** Zone HOTY points to be awarded, **riders must complete a USHJA Exhibitor Declaration Form prior to the conclusion of the competition.**
- B. Points accrued by horses shown by Professionals may be awarded to the declared Green Hunter 3'0", Green Hunter 3'3" Performance Hunter 3'3", Small Hunter, 5 year old, 6 year old, 7 year old Young Hunter Sections.
- C. Points accrued by horses shown by Juniors or Amateurs may be awarded to the declared Green Hunter 3'0", Green Hunter 3'3" Performance Hunter 3'3", or the applicable Children's, Pony, Adult Amateur, Amateur Owner 3'3", Small Hunter or Junior Hunter 3', 5 year old, 6 year old, 7 year old Young Hunter Sections.
- D. The money won and points won in the USHJA National Hunter Derby will only be awarded towards a declared Hunter section for HOTY points if a horse competes in the declared section a minimum of one (1) time during the competition year.
- E. For USHJA Awards purposes, a computer ranking system tracks the money won by horse and rider, both nationally and by zone.

#### **XII. Other**

- A. The following meetings must be held prior to the start of the class:
  - 1. Officials Meeting must be attended by the Judges, Course Designer, Steward 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.

**XIII. USHJA Contact Information**

Please contact one of the following USHJA representatives, if questions arise pertaining to the USHJA National Hunter Derby Regional Championship that cannot be answered by the Show Steward or Management based on the class specifications provided.

David Warner – USHJA Sport Programs Coordinator (859) 217-6740

Traci Brooks- Chair of the National Hunter Derby Task Force (310) 600-1967

Britt McCormick- USHJA President (972) 467-6008

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