PLATINUM PERFORMANCE/USHJA INTERNATIONAL HUNTER DERBY CHAMPIONSHIP

2027/2028 USHJA International Hunter Derby Championship Specifications

Effective for the 2027 and 2028 IHD Championship

Changes from 2025 in bold, italics, and underlined.

I. Enrollment

A. Horses must be enrolled in the USHJA International Hunter Derby Program (Program) and appear on the USHJA International Hunter Derby Enrolled List (Enrolled List) to compete in the USHJA International Hunter Derby Championship (Championship).

B. **It is the exhibitor's responsibility to enroll their horse in a timely manner to be eligible to participate.**

C. Horses may only be enrolled online at www.ushja.org.

D. The annual USHJA International Hunter Derby Program Enrollment Fee (Enrollment Fee) is $450.

E. Enrollments open on December 1 of each competition year.

F. The Enrollment Fee is non-refundable and non-transferable.

II. Membership Requirements

A. Horses must be registered with USHJA and recorded with USEF to participate.

B. Riders, Owners and Trainers must be current active members of USHJA and USEF to participate.

C. Horses may be ridden by a Junior, Amateur or Professional.

D. There is no limit to the number of horses a rider may compete.

III. Entry Requirements and Entry Fees

A. All horses that are enrolled in the Program will be eligible to compete in the Championship. ***It is the exhibitor's responsibility to ensure the horse is enrolled correctly.***

B. Entry Fees paid prior to the closing date of entries is $***1,500***.

1. $***1,250*** of the Entry Fee is refundable provided the entry scratches prior to the close of entries.
2. $250 of the Entry Fee is non-refundable, regardless of when an entry scratches.

C. ***Late*** Fees for horses entered after the closing date of entries ***will pay additional $1,500. Late*** Fees are 100% non-refundable.

IV. Championship Policies

A. All horses competing in the Championship must be on the competition grounds 24 hours prior to the start of the USHJA International Hunter Derby Classic Hunter Round (Classic Hunter Round).

B. Beginning 24 hours prior to the start of the Classic Hunter Round:

1. All horses will be monitored.
2. All horses must remain on the competition grounds until finished competing in the Championship.
3. Any horse that leaves the competition grounds prior to finishing competing in the Championship will be disqualified.
4. Horses must wear their actual competition number at all times.
5. Riders must wear the horse's actual competition number while mounted.
6. All horses must be ridden in the designated Championship schooling areas only.

7. Designated Championship schooling areas will be posted in the horse show office.
8. Horses may be lunged in designated Championship lunging areas only.

C. Rider Change Policy
   1. 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 USHJA International Hunter Derby Championship Ground Jury (Ground Jury) to change riders. The substitute rider must be the same Tier or lower as the original rider.
   2. The decision of the Ground Jury is final and binding and not subject to further appeal of any kind.

D. Horse Eligibility Policy
   1. If a horse and rider combination that is qualified for the USHJA International Hunter Derby Handy Round (Handy Round), USHJA International Hunter Derby Tier II Handy Round (Tier II Handy Round), or the USHJA International Hunter Derby Challenge (Derby Challenge) is unable to compete, the next highest scoring horse and rider combination will move up in the order.

E. 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 USHJA International Hunter Derby Championship Competition Liaison (Liaison) for the 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 Ground Jury.

F. At least one Officials Meeting will be held prior to the start of the Classic Round
   1. The Judges, Course Designer, Steward, Liaison and the Competition Manager will attend the Officials Meeting.
   2. The purpose of the meeting is to review the Championship Specifications, the Judging System and to have the opportunity to walk the Course.

G. At least one Riders Meeting will be held prior to the start of the Classic Round
   1. Riders, Judges, Course Designer, Steward, Liaison and the Competition Manager will attend the Riders Meeting.
   2. The Riders Meeting will provide an opportunity to answer any questions regarding the Course, Judging System and Specifications

H. Formal attire is required (see HU107).

V. Rider Ranking System – Tier I, Tier II

A. Tier I and Tier II Riders
   1. A Tier I Rider is any rider standing 40th or higher on the USHJA International Hunter Derby Money Won List (Money Won List) from the 2025 Competition Year.
   2. Any riders that are previous winners of the Championship are also considered Tier I Riders.
      a. Previous winners of the Championship will be included on the USHJA International Hunter Derby Tier Eligibility List (Eligibility List) as Tier I Riders.
      b. Previous winners of the Championship will be included on the Tier I Eligibility List *in addition* to the top forty (40) riders on the Money Won List.
   3. All remaining riders entered and competing in the Championship will be considered Tier II riders.

B. Eligibility and Awards
   1. Tier I Riders are eligible to qualify for the Handy Round only.
   2. Tier II Riders are eligible to qualify for either the Handy Round or the Tier II Handy Round.
   3. Tier I and Tier II Riders that do not qualify for either the Handy Round or the Tier II Handy Round are eligible to enter the Derby Challenge.
   4. The overall Championship awards are determined by the total scores of all riders, regardless of Tier, from the Classic Hunter Round and the Handy Round.
   5. The overall Tier II Championship awards are determined by the total scores of all Tier II riders from the Classic Hunter Round, and either the Handy Round or the Tier II Handy Round.

VI. Competition Format

A. The Championship will be held over two days.
B. The Championship consists of the Classic Hunter Round, the Handy Round, the Tier II Handy Round, the Derby Challenge and if required, a Jump Off Round.
C. The Classic Hunter Round will be held the first day and is open to all eligible horses that are entered.
D. ***The IHD Championship Team Competition will be held concurrently with the Classic Hunter Round. See Appendix A for Team Competition specifications. (CLICK HERE)***
E. The Handy Round will consist of a minimum of the top twenty (20) horse and rider combinations based on their total scores from the Classic Hunter Round.
   1. Any horse and rider combinations that are tied for the last qualifying position with their total scores from the Classic Hunter Round will remain tied and be qualified to compete in the Handy Round.
   2. At the sole discretion of Show Management and the USHJA, more than the top twenty (20) horse and rider combinations may be invited to return for the Handy Round.
F. The Tier II Handy Round will consist of a minimum of the top twenty (20) Tier II Riders, based on their total scores from the Classic Hunter Round.
   1. Tier II Riders that have qualified to compete in the Handy Round will compete in the Handy Round but not in the Tier II Handy Round.
   2. Any Tier II Riders that are tied for the last qualifying position with their total scores from the Classic Hunter Round will remain tied and be qualified to compete in the Tier II Handy Round.
   3. Positions in the Tier II Handy Round left vacant by Tier II entries qualified for and showing in the Handy Round will not be filled by other Tier II entries.
   4. At the sole discretion of Show Management and the USHJA, more than the top twenty (20) horse and rider combinations may be invited to return for the Tier II Handy Round.
G. The Derby Challenge
   1. Any horse and rider combinations not qualified for either the Handy Round or the Tier II Handy Round may enter the Derby Challenge.
   2. Any horse and rider combinations qualified for either the Tier I or Tier II Handy Round are not eligible to compete in the Derby Challenge.
   3. There will be no horse substitutions.
H. Championship Awards

1. After the Classic Hunter Round ribbons will be presented to a minimum of the top twelve (12) horse and rider combinations from that round.
2. ***After the Classic Hunter Round awards presentation, the Team Competitions awards will be presented to the top three (3) teams from that round.***
3. After the Handy Round ribbons will be presented to a minimum of the top twelve (12) horse and rider combinations from that round.
4. After the Tier II Handy Round ribbons will be presented to a minimum of the top 12 horse and rider combinations in that round.
5. The overall Championship awards are awarded based on the total scores from the Classic Hunter Round and the Handy Round.
6. The overall Tier II Championship awards are awarded based on the total scores of all Tier II riders from the Classic Hunter Round and either the Handy Round or the Tier II Handy Round.
7. After The Derby Challenge ribbons will be presented to the top 12 horse and rider combinations based on their Derby Challenge Scores.

I. Jump Off Round
1. After the Handy Round, if required, a Jump Off Round will be offered to any horse and rider combinations tied for first place for the overall Championship awards.
2. After the Handy Round, if required, a Jump Off Round will be offered to any horse and rider combinations tied for first place for the overall Tier II Championship awards.
3. All other ties will remain tied.

J. Show Management and the USHJA reserve the right to amend the schedule and/or format based on the individual host event.

VII. Orders of Go

A. The Classic Hunter Round order of go will be determined using a random draw.
B. The Handy Round and Tier II Handy Round orders 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.
1. 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.
2. Riders with multiple horses must ride their lowest scoring horse before any additional horses with higher scores.
3. Riders with multiple horses must ride their horses in order based on their scores from low to high.

E. All horses must be ridden according to the posted order for each round.

VIII. Judging System

A. All Judges must be USEF "R" licensed judges in good standing with the Federation and the USHJA
B. A Judging Assistant must be present during all phases of the competition.

1. The duties of the Judging Assistant include notifying the judging panels if a rail comes down and/or when a horse jumps the higher height option fences.
2. The Judging Assistant is not required to be a licensed official and is not responsible for the scoring of the judging panels.
3. A competition staff member may serve as a Judging Assistant.

C. **The Classic Hunter Round** will be judged on quality, movement, jumping style, manners, and way of going with ***pace and brilliance to be rewarded***.

A. Using the open numerical judging system each judging panel will award a base score only using half and full point increments for the Classic Round. Duplicate scores are allowed.
   1. In addition to this base score, each judging panel will award an Option Bonus Score for each round.
      a. The Option Bonus Score will consist of one additional point for every higher height option fence jumped.
      b. The Option Bonus Score 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.
         i. In order for the Option Bonus Score to be awarded for this higher height option fence the horse and rider combination must ultimately jump the higher height option of that fence.
         ii. If the horse and rider combination ultimately jump the lower height option of that fence instead of the higher height option the Option Bonus Score will not be awarded.
   2. These two scores must be announced separately and then added together to determine each horse-and-rider combination's score for the Classic Hunter Round from each judging panel.
   3. The scores of all the judging panels will be added together to determine the total score for each horse and rider combination for the Classic Hunter Round.

D. **The Handy Round, the Tier II Handy Round and the Derby Challenge** shall be judged on jumping style, efficiency while maintaining style and form, way of going, and overall flow ***with pace and brilliance to be rewarded***. A horse and rider combination may not jump decorations or other obstacles to create a shorter track.
   1. Using the open numerical judging system each judging panel will award a base score only using half and full point increments for the Handy Round. Duplicate scores are allowed.
   2. In addition to this base score, each judging panel will award an Option Bonus Score for each round.
      a. The Option Bonus Score will consist of one additional point for every higher height option fence jumped.
      b. 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.
         i. In order for the Option Bonus Score to be awarded for this higher height option fence the horse and rider combination must ultimately jump the higher height option of that fence.
         ii. If the horse and rider combination instead ultimately jump the lower height option of that fence the Option Bonus Score will not be awarded.
   3. Each judging panel will also award a Handy Bonus Score

a. The Handy Bonus Score is to reward handiness in a round.
b. The Handy Bonus Score will be based on a scale of zero (0) to five (5) with five (5) representing the highest level of handiness.

4. These three (3) 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.
5. The scores of all the judging panels will be added together to determine the total score of each horse and rider combination for Handy Round, Tier II Handy Round or the Derby Challenge Round.

E. Jump Off Rounds, if required, shall be judged on jumping style, efficiency while maintaining style and form, way of going, and overall flow. ***Pace and brilliance are to be rewarded***. A horse and rider combination may not jump decorations or other obstacles to create a shorter track.
1. Each judging panel will award a base score for each round using the open numerical judging system.
2. The scores of all panels will be added together to determine the total score of each horse-and-rider combination for this round.
3. The total score of each horse and rider combination from the Jump Off Round will be used to determine final awards.
4. There will be no Option Bonus Score or Handy Bonus Score in a Jump Off Round.

F. Soundness
1. Judges have the authority to disqualify a horse due to unsoundness ***or any horse welfare issue*** at any time during the competition
2. Horses are required to trot a circle on a loose rein at the end of the over fence's performance.
3. Horses may be asked to return to the ring and trot another circle at the judge's discretion.

IX. Tie Breaking Procedures

A. All ties for overall Championship and overall Tier II Championship will have the option to compete in a Jump Off Round.
1. If all tied exhibitors agree NOT to jump off, the exhibitors will be named co-winners. Prize money will be split evenly and tied exhibitors will determine amongst themselves how to distribute awards that are available at the time of presentation.
2. If there are two exhibitors that are tied, and one exhibitor declines to jump off, that exhibitor will be declared Reserve Champion. All exhibitors will be presented with a forfeiture agreement for their signature at that time.
3. If there are more than two exhibitors that are tied and some, but not all of those exhibitors wish to jump off, a Jump Off Round will be held.
   a. The exhibitors involved in the Jump Off Round will be placed according to their total scores from the Jump Off Round.
   b. Any exhibitors that decline to jump off will remain tied for the remaining places. All exhibitors will be presented with a forfeiture agreement for their signature at that time.

B. All ties for other than first place in the Championship and the Tier II Championship standings will remain tied.
1. Prize Money will be split evenly.
2. Duplicate ribbons and coolers (if applicable) will be ordered and distributed.
3. Entries that remain tied will determine amongst themselves how the awards that are available at the time of presentations will be distributed.

C. All ties for first place in the Derby Challenge will have the option to compete in a Jump Off Round.
   1. If all tied exhibitors agree NOT to jump off, the exhibitors will be named co-winners. Prize money will be split evenly and tied exhibitors will determine amongst themselves how to distribute awards that are available at the time of presentation.
   2. If there are two exhibitors that are tied, and one exhibitor declines to jump off, that exhibitor will be declared Reserve Champion. All exhibitors will be presented with a forfeiture agreement for their signature at that time.
   3. If there are more than two exhibitors that are tied and some, but not all of those exhibitors wish to jump off, a Jump Off Round will be held.
      a. The exhibitors involved in the Jump Off Round will be placed according to their total scores from the Jump Off Round.
      b. Any exhibitors that decline to jump off will remain tied for the remaining places. All exhibitors will be presented with a forfeiture agreement for their signature at that time.

D. All ties for other than first place in the Derby Challenge standings will remain tied. Prize money will be split evenly, and tied exhibitors will determine amongst themselves how to distribute awards that are available at the time of presentation.

E. All ties in the Classic Hunter Round, the Handy Round and the Tier II Handy Round will remain tied.
   1. Prize Money will be split evenly.
   2. Duplicate ribbons and coolers (if applicable) will be ordered and distributed.
   3. Entries that remain tied will determine amongst themselves how the awards that are available at the time of presentations will be distributed.

F. In the Classic Hunter Round, horse and rider combinations tied for the cutoff score will remain tied and advance to the Handy Round or the Tier II Handy Round.

X. Course Requirements

A. Jumps in ALL Rounds
   1. Obstacles must simulate those reminiscent of the hunt field.
   2. The course must offer a variety of Derby style jumps with different appearances such as: natural post and rail, stone wall, white board fence or gate, coop, aiken, hedge, oxer, brush, logs, or natural foliage.
   3. Natural obstacles such as banks and ditches are allowed.
   4. A minimum 2” difference is required for the back element of an obstacle.
   5. The jumpable portion of any obstacle must be a minimum of eight feet on its front face.
   6. Jump Cups
      a. The top rail of all obstacles must rest in a cup (Exception: Walls with moveable bricks).
      b. Flat cups may only be used in accordance with Federation rules.
      c. Flat cups may be used for obstacles involving logs.

B. Classic Hunter Round
   1. A minimum of 10 obstacles must be offered.
   2. Fence Heights
      a. The minimum fence height for any fence is 3’9”.
      b. 20% of the course must be set at 3’9”.
      c. The remainder of the course must be set higher.

3. The Classic Hunter Round course must include four higher height option fences.
    a. Higher height option fences must be set at a minimum of 4' and a maximum of 4'9" in height.
    b. The higher height option fences must be set on a track with a similar degree of difficulty as their counterpart.
    c. There may be no more than four higher height option fences.
4. The Classic Hunter Round course must include:
    a. At least two changes of direction.
    b. At least one in-and-out.
    c. At least one bending line.
    d. At least one line with an unrelated distance.
    e. At least one fence with a long approach.

C. Handy Round, Tier II Handy Round, and Derby Challenge
1. A minimum of eight obstacles must be offered.
2. Fence Heights
    a. The minimum fence height for any fence is 3'9". (Exception: Trot Fences)
    b. 20% of the course must be set at 3'9".
    c. The remainder of the course must be set higher.
3. The course must include four higher height option fences.
    a. Higher height option fences must be set at a minimum of 4' and a maximum of 4'9" in height.
    b. The higher height option fences must be set on a track with a similar degree of difficulty as their counterpart.
    c. There may be no more than four higher height option fences.
4. The course should simulate riding over hunt country.
5. The course must include a minimum of three of the following handy options: tight turn options, different tracks, clever options for jump approaches, pen type obstacles, a hand gallop jump, a trot jump not to exceed 3' in height, a walk fence (while mounted) not to exceed 12" in height and/or a Halt. Leading a horse over an obstacle and opening and/or closing a gate(s) while mounted or not mounted is not permitted.
6. Gimmicky options are not appropriate.

D. Jump Off Round
1. Any Jump Off will have a specific handy course.
2. A minimum of eight obstacles must be offered.
3. Fences must be set at 3'9" to 4' in height.
4. There will be no high options for the Jump Off Round.
5. The course should simulate riding over hunt country.
6. The course must include a minimum of two of the following handy options: tight turn options, different tracks, clever options for jump approaches, pen type obstacles, a hand gallop jump, a trot jump not to exceed 3' in height, a walk fence (while mounted) not to exceed 12" in height, and/or a Halt. Leading a horse over an obstacle and opening and/or closing gate(s) while mounted or not mounted are not permitted.
7. Gimmicky options are not appropriate.

XI. Prize Money

A. There will be guaranteed minimum prize money of $100,000.

B. Total Prize Money is comprised of:
   1. Add back money of 80% of all Entry Fees.
   2. Add back money of 100% of all ***Late*** Fees.
   3. Add back money of 60% of all Annual Enrollment Fees received between December 1, and August 1 ***of the current competition year***.

C. 80% of the total prize money will be awarded to the overall Championship awards.
   1. A minimum of 20 places shall be awarded prize money.
   2. The number of entries determines the exact payout percentages.

D. 20% of the total prize money will be awarded to the overall Tier II Championship awards.
   1. A minimum of 20 places shall be awarded prize money.
   2. The number of entries determines the exact payout percentages.

E. A total of $10,000 will be awarded to the top twelve horses in the Derby Challenge.

F. Prize money percentages will be calculated on the gross amount and will be distributed as follows:

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

G. All prize money will be paid within 30 days of the competition.

XII. Money Won and Bonus Points

A. For Championship points and/or money won to be awarded, riders must complete the USHJA Exhibitor Declaration Form (Exhibitor Declaration Form).
   1. 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 and/or money won for the Championship.
   2. Riders may only declare Hunter sections for National HOTY points and/or money won.

B. National bonus points and/or money won will be awarded to each horse's respective section as declared at the time of entry.
   1. Horses declared in Open Sections will be awarded both National bonus points and the value of their money won for the declared Hunter section.
   2. National bonus points and/or money won may not be credited toward the HOTY awards for Green Conformation Hunter 3'6" or the High Performance Conformation Hunter.
   3. Only Juniors and Amateurs may declare for the applicable Junior or Amateur Owner section.

Place	Classic Round	Handy Round	Overall
1st	150	200	400
2nd	140	185	370
3rd	130	170	340
4th	120	155	310
5th	110	140	280
6th	100	125	250
7th	90	110	220
8th	80	100	200
9th	70	90	180
10th	60	80	160
11th	55	70	140
12th	50	60	120
13th	45	50	100
14th	40	45	90
15th	35	40	80
16th	30	35	70
17th	25	30	60
18th	20	25	50
19th	15	20	40
20th	10	15	30

XIII. Ground Jury

A. The Ground Jury will consist of the Competition Manager or Licensee, the 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 be 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.

XIV. Contact Information

A. If questions arise pertaining to the USHJA International Hunter Derby Program that cannot be answered from the class specifications provided, one of the following USHJA representatives must be contacted to resolve any questions regarding the judging procedures or class specifications:

Jennifer Tingle, Assistant Director of Sport, USHJA	(859) 225-6703
Rachel Kennedy, Co-Chair, International Hunter Derby & Incentive Task Force	(443) 878-8146
Colleen McQuay, Co-Chair, International Hunter Derby & Incentive Task Force	(940) 367-3030

Any deviations from the class specifications are not permitted without the express written permission from USHJA prior to the printing of the prize list.

In all sport or education related matters, where there are either discrepancies or deficiencies in the specifications, procedures or any unforeseen circumstances related to a USHJA property, the President and Executive Director will consult with the Task Force/Committee Chair (if applicable), the Officers of the USHJA and USHJA legal counsel (if applicable) before making any final decisions.