



2026 USHJA PONY HUNTER DERBY CLASS **SPECIFICATIONS**

Effective for competitions starting December 1, 2025, to November 30, 2026
Changes from 2025 marked in bold, italics and underlined.

I. Membership and Participation Requirements

- A. Riders, owners, and trainers must be current Active members of the Federation and USHJA to participate in this class.
- B. Ponies must be registered with USHJA to participate in this class.
- C. Ponies must have a valid measurement card or form issued by the Federation.
- D. Riders must be a junior to be eligible to compete in the USHJA Pony Hunter Derby.
- E. **Exception:** Foreign residents and ponies in good standing with their National Federation are eligible to compete in this class.
- F. Points earned will only count for any USHJA Pony Hunter Derby standings or awards if the rider, owner and trainer are current Active members of the Federation and USHJA, and the pony is registered with USHJA.
- G. Riders may compete on a total of four ponies but no more than two of any one size.
- H. Rider age and pony size: See HU141 for current Federation policy. Any rider under the age of 18 years may compete on any pony that is eligible for the Green Pony Hunter section.
- I. The prize list may specify that in order to be eligible to compete in a Pony Hunter Derby, a pony must compete in one or two classes at the same competition.
- J. In accordance with HU170.14 the same pony-and-rider combination must compete in both rounds of the Pony Hunter Derby.
- K. Attire: Refer to HU107 in the Federation Rule Book for current specifications.

II. USHJA Year-End Awards

- A. For USHJA year-end awards purposes, a computer ranking system tracks both money won as well as the points earned by pony and rider in each zone as well as nationally. Awards will be presented at the conclusion of the competition year.
 - 1. In order for points earned to be applied toward USHJA standings and awards, a minimum of-six (6) entries must complete the first round, regardless of competition Channel.
 - 2. Year-End Points will be awarded for the overall placings as follows:

1st– 50	7th– 15
2nd– 40	8th– 10
3rd– 35	9th– 7
4th– 30	10th– 5
5th – 25	11th– 3
6th– 20	12th– 1

III. Order of Go

- A. The order of go must be posted a minimum of one hour prior to the start of the class.
- B. In the case of multiple ponies being ridden by the same rider, every effort will be made so that there will be a minimum of eight ponies (if available) separating multiple rides. All ponies must be ridden in the sequence that appears on the jumping order in the first round of

the competition. In the second-round ponies 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, ponies 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.

IV. Judging System

- A. The judging panel will provide one score and the scores from each round will be added together to obtain the overall total for each pony. This overall total score will determine the final overall standings for the class.
- B. The Classic Hunter Style Round shall be judged and numerically scored on quality, movement, jumping style, manners and way of going. Pace and brilliance are to be rewarded.
- C. The Handy 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.
Handiness is taken into account in the judges' base score. Jumping decorations to utilize a shorter track is **NOT** permissible.
- D. The Jump-Off Round, 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. **Handiness is taken into account in the judges' base score.** Jumping decorations to utilize a shorter track is **NOT** permissible.
- E. Soundness will be judged on the closing circle at the end of the Classic round. No jog is required at the conclusion of the Handy round.
- F. Hunt and Go Format

**Please note this Hunt and Go is judged differently than the International and National Hunter Derby Hunt and Go.*

Alternatively, the Hunt and Go option may be utilized in lieu of the traditional format. The Hunt and Go format will consist of two (2) phases, one (1) Classic Hunter and one (1) Handy Hunter. The phases will be jumped consecutively. All participants will complete both the Classic and the Handy portions even if penalties (rails, refusals, etc.) are incurred. Major penalties (falls, 3 refusals, off course, etc.) will result in elimination.

1. Standard Hunt and Go Format

- a. The Classic Hunter Round, consisting of five to seven (5-7) fences, shall be judged on quality, movement, jumping style, manners and way of going.
- b. After the completion of the classic round horses will pick up their pace and pass through a set of markers to begin their handy portion of the class. Riders are not permitted to walk or pause between rounds. The Handy Hunter Round, consisting of five to seven (5-7), shall be judged on quality, movement, jumping style, manners and way of going. Pace, brilliance, and a shorter track are to be rewarded. A horse/rider may not jump decorations or other obstacles in order to create a shorter track.
- c. Two (2) judges are required to judge the class. Each judge will be designated either the Classic Hunter Phase or the Handy Hunter Phase. Each will provide a single score for their designated phase. The scores from each judge will be added together to determine the total score and placement.
- d. A judging assistant may be present during all phases of the competition. The duties of the judging assistant include notifying the Judges if a rail comes down. 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.

- e. For the Hunt and Go Format it is recommended that the judge designated to the Handy Hunter phase be the tie breaker.

V. Tie Breaking Procedures

- A. The judging panel may not 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. Unless the prize list states that more than 12 entries are to return for the second round, only the top 12 ponies from the first round are eligible to return for the second 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 score.
- D. Ties for other than first place in the overall standings will be broken using the second-round score.

VI. Awards Presentation

- A. Judges are required to pin to 12th place (plus two reserve placings).
- B. All riders in the top 12 overall (or their designated representative if not available) must ride for ribbons in order to receive prizemoney.
- C. Although not required, a show may choose to award separate ribbons for the first and second round if so stated in the prize list.
- D. Competition management may offer additional awards. (e.g., highest placing junior owner, highest placing pony per size - small, medium, large, highest placing rider competing on only one entry in the class.)

VII. Prize Money and Entry Fee

- A. Prize money must be paid to a minimum of 12 places as follows:

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

1. Competitions wishing to offer additional prize money above the minimum required (including any add-back money if applicable) 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 Federation rules regarding changes to the prize list (See GR904). The prize money awarded to each placing below 12th place must not exceed the amount awarded to 12th place.
- B. If there are less than 12 entries in the class, prize money must be paid according to the breakdown in Section ***IX.A*** through the last placing entry. Any remaining prize money not awarded due to less than 12 entries may be split and awarded equally to all entrants that place in the class.
- C. A minimum of \$1,500 prize money must be offered per class at Channel I (Premier and National) competitions and competitions that have been approved for a Special Competition classification.
- D. A minimum of \$500 prize money must be offered per class at Channel II (Regional)
- E. A competition may choose to offer add-back prize money in addition to the prize money offered, however, the minimum required prize money must be guaranteed. If add-back prize money is offered, this must be stated in the prize list.
- F. The entry fee, including the per pony entrant fee, cannot exceed 10% of the prize money offered.

VIII. Competition Requirements

- A. A USHJA Pony Hunter Derby may be offered at Federation Licensed Channel I and Channel II competitions, or competitions that have been approved for a Special Competition classification.
- B. Competition Management will collect and remit to USHJA the \$35 per pony entrant fee at Channel I (Premier and National) competitions and competitions that have been approved for a Special Competition classification, and the \$25 per pony entrant fee at Channel II (Regional) competitions.
- C. No more than one Pony Hunter Derby may be held during a given competition and that class may not be split by pony size.
- D. Competition management will remit complete overall results, including prize money awarded, to USHJA and the Federation within 10 days of the conclusion of the competition.
- E. For all classes, competition management is required to provide copies of the course to riders a minimum of one hour prior to the start of the course walk and is encouraged to have them available for spectators.
- F. The Pony Hunter Derby is a featured class of the competition, 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.
- G. Competition management cannot run a Pony Hunter Derby and a Pony Hunter Classic at the same show unless the Derby is run on a separate day from the Classic.

IX. Judging Requirements

- A. Each class must have a minimum of two judges. All judges will sit together and provide one score.
- B. One judge must be an R judge; the other may be either an R or r judge.
- C. All judges must be Federation licensed and in good standing with the Federation and USHJA.
- D. No guest cards will be granted for this competition.

X. 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 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 16" in depth from the vertical plane of the jump. For appropriate jumps, no groundline is necessary.
 - 5. The jumpable portion of any fence must be a minimum of eight feet on its front face.
 - 6. Flat cups may only be used for log fences and in accordance with Federation rules.
 - 7. Fence heights: Small Pony - 2'3"; Medium Pony- 2'6"; Large Pony 2'9"- 3'0". One hundred percent of fences must be set at the appropriate height per pony size.
- B. Classic Hunter Style Course (First Round)
 - 1. A minimum of ten obstacles must be offered in the Classic Hunter Round.
 - 2. At least one in and out.
 - 3. At least one bending line.
 - 4. At least one line with an unrelated distance.
 - 5. At least one long approach.
- C. Handy Hunter Course (Second Round)
 - 1. A minimum of eight 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 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.

3. Unless the prize list states that more than 12 entries are to return for the second round, then only the top 12 ponies from the first round are eligible to return for the second round.

D. Jump-Off Round

1. A minimum of eight 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 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.

XI. USHJA Contact Information

- A. **Any deviations from the class specifications are not permitted without the express written permission from USHJA prior to the printing of the prize list.**
- B. 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.
- C. Please contact one of the following USHJA representatives if questions arise pertaining to the USHJA Pony Hunter Derby that cannot be answered by the Show Steward or Management based on the class specifications provided.

Sara Murray-Smith- USHJA Sports Program Coordinator

(859) 225-6735

Britt McCormick - USHJA President

(972) 467-6008

Patricia Roberts- Pony Task Force Chair

(713) 683-8636

The USHJA Pony Hunter Derby and the related format and specifications are the sole properties of the USHJA and may only be held, conducted or used upon the terms and conditions specified by the USHJA. USHJA reserves the right to change language in documents related to the conduct of the USHJA Pony Hunter Derby as necessary for the purposes of consistency and clarity. Any deviations from the class specifications for the USHJA Pony Hunter Derby are not permitted without the express written permission from USHJA prior to the printing of the prize list. For any rules not specified above, please refer to the current Federation Rule Book.

