



## **2026 USHJA Amateur Hunter Championships Specifications**

### **I. Membership Requirements**

- A. Horses must be actively recorded with the Federation and registered with USHJA at the time of qualification, as well as on or before the first day of the Championship (see GR1102 and GR1108).
- B. Riders, Owners, and Trainers must be current Active members in good standing of the Federation and USHJA at the time of qualification and on or before the first day of the Championship.
- C. Horses must have a valid microchip.

### **II. Qualifying**

- A. **The qualifying periods includes competitions with start dates of:**
  - 1. **East Coast: August 3, 2025 - May 10, 2026**
  - 2. **West Coast: September 15, 2025 - September 20, 2026**
- B. **Low Adult Amateur Hunter 2'6", Adult Amateur Hunter 3', Amateur Owner Hunter 3'3", and Amateur Owner Hunter 3'6" qualify by winning a Championship or Reserve Championship in a Channel I (National or Premier) or Channel II (Regional) rated section.**
- C. If a horse qualifies for one height section, then they must compete in that one section. Qualifying is non-transferable between sections.
- D. Horses that are Champions or Reserve Champions in their respective fence height sections at the previous year's Championship may return to compete in that same fence height section without qualifying.
- E. If a horse qualifies in more than one height section, then they must choose one section to compete in. A horse may only compete in one height section at the Championship.
- F. Qualified horses may only compete in one location or the other but not both in any one year.

### **III. Rider Entry Restrictions**

- A. Each amateur exhibitor may only compete one entry in each section that they are eligible to compete in **both locations**.
- B. Amateur Owner Hunter 3'6" and 3'3":
  - 1. All classes are conducted under USEF rules for Amateur Owner Hunters (HU137).

2. Riders may cross enter between the Amateur Owner 3'3" and/or the Amateur Owner 3'6" sections (HU137.5)
- C. Adult Amateur Hunter 3':
  1. Riders entered in Adult Amateur Hunter sections may not compete in any other class, the week of the Championship, in which obstacles exceed 3'5" (exception: Equitation, Jumper classes 1.20m and lower, Amateur Owner Hunter classes, and the USHJA International Hunter Derby).
  2. Riders competing in the Amateur Owner Hunter sections may compete on one different horse in the Adult Amateur Hunter section.
- D. Low Adult Amateur Hunter 2'6":
  1. Riders may not cross enter into any class or section at the same competition where the fences exceed 2'9" (Exception: 3' Equitation Classes)

#### IV. Championship Special Requirements

- A. Each horse competing in the Amateur Hunter Championships must pay a \$100 nomination fee that will be remitted to USHJA by the Competition Management.
- B. Horses are required to be stabled on the competition grounds a minimum of 12 hours before the start of their respective fence height section.
- C. Commencing 12 hours prior to the start of their respective fence height section and continuing until through competing, only the competition rider may ride his/her entry. These riders must wear their competition number at all times anywhere on the grounds while mounted.
- D. Failure to comply with these rules will result in elimination if deemed appropriate by an appeals jury which will be compiled of one of the competition's Federation Stewards, a member of the USHJA staff, and the competition manager.

#### V. Competition Format

- A. The Championship will be conducted in three separate phases:
  1. Low Adult Amateur 2'6", Adult Amateur 3' Hunter, **Amateur Owner Hunter 3'3", and Amateur Owner Hunter 3'6"**: Under Saddle to count 20%, **Classic** Round to count 40%, and a **Handy Hunter** Round to count 40%.
    - a. **Low Adult Amateur 2'6" and Adult Amateur 3' Hunter**: Each horse's phase score will be used to pin both for overall awards and age group awards (18-35, 36-49, and 50+).
    - b. **Amateur Owner Hunter 3'3" and 3'6"**: **Each horse's phase score will be used to pin both for overall awards and age group awards (18-35 and 36+).**
- B. To determine the overall and age group winner, scores will be calculated by the total of the combination of all three phases after the percentages of each phase have been calculated.

1. Under Saddle. To be shown at a walk, trot, and canter both ways of the ring. Horses are to hand gallop one direction, halt, **back three (3) steps, and walk forward**. Light contact with the horse's mouth is required. Judged on performance and soundness. Manners and suitability to be emphasized.
  - a. In the Under Saddle phase, horses shall be judged in groups of twelve or less. Each horse shall be judged and given a numerical score of 0-100 based on its performance in the group.
2. Classic Round: The course must include at least ten obstacles, have two changes of direction, and at least one combination. **Exception: The Low Adult Amateur 2'6" Classic will not include combinations.** There shall be one single oxer on the course that shall be ridden at the gallop. Emphasis shall be placed on "brilliance" for this round. Entries will be given a numerical score of 0-100.
3. Handy Hunter: Obstacles should simulate those found in trappy hunt country.
  - a. Please see HU112.6 for Handy Hunter course specifics. To be judged on jumping style, tidiness and efficiency while maintaining style and form, way of going, and overall flow. Entries will be given a numerical score of 0-100.
4. Soundness. All horses are required to trot a circle on a loose rein at the end of each over fences performance. Horses may be asked to return to the ring and trot another circle at the judge's discretion.
5. The same amateur exhibitor is required to show an entry in all phases of the Championship.
6. Exhibitors will be eliminated after two cumulative refusals **per round**.
7. If a horse/rider combination does not complete a phase or is eliminated from that phase, that horse will receive a score of "0" for that phase but may continue on to compete in the remaining phases of the Championship. A horse with a total score of "0" for a phase is not eligible for an award for that phase but is eligible for an overall award.

## VI. Judging

- A. See GR 1304 for Judging restrictions. There will be a total of three judges for the Amateur Owner 3'3" and Amateur Owner 3'6" Hunter sections, and a total of two judges for the Low Adult Amateur 2'6" and Adult Amateur 3' Hunter sections. All judges will be seated separately and provide an independent, numeric score from 0-100 for each entry during each phase. The average of the independent scores will be the entry's score for that phase and will be announced. Prior to each phase, each entry's score in the previous phase(s) will be announced. The total overall score for each entry is announced after they complete the last phase.
  1. All ties will be broken based on the score of the judge that is designated as

judge number one for each phase of the Championship. If a tie still exists for the overall standings, the score from the Classic Round (**all sections**) will break such a tie.

**VII. Awards and Horse of the Year (HOTY) Points**

- A. Phase awards will be awarded 1st-10<sup>th</sup> based on overall results for each of the following sections: Low Adult Amateur 2’6”, Adult Amateur 3’ Hunter, Amateur Owner Hunter 3’3” and Amateur Owner Hunter 3’6”. Additionally, within each section 1<sup>st</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> placings will be awarded in the following age groups:
  - 1. Low Adult Amateur Hunter 2’6 and the Adult Amateur Hunter 3’ will be split and pinned in the age groups: 18-35, 36-49, and 50+.
  - 2. Amateur Owner Hunter 3’3” and 3’6” will be split and pinned in the age groups: 18-35 and 36+.
- B. The overall Championship awards Champion-**20<sup>th</sup>** and is determined by the cumulative scores of the horse and rider combinations in a section (Low Adult Amateur 2’6”, Adult Amateur 3’ Hunter, Amateur Owner Hunter 3’3” or Amateur Owner Hunter 3’6”) throughout each phase, regardless of rider’s age group. Prize money will only be awarded to the competitors who placed Top **12** in the overall championship results. HOTY points will not be awarded to the overall championship results, but according to the age group championship results.
- C. Each Age Group Championship awards Champion-**20<sup>th</sup>** and is determined by the cumulative scores of horse and rider combinations ridden in each age group of a section. HOTY points will be distributed to the competitors who placed Top 10 in each of the age group championship results. Prize money will not be awarded for the age group overall Championship results.
- D. National and Zone HOTY points will be awarded to the rider’s home zone in each phase of the age group Championship results as listed below. In classes that have less than 10 entries, the point values will be one-half of what is listed below. **Points won will count regardless of how many entries compete.**
- E. All Horse of the Year points and money won will go to Channel I.
- F. HOTY points for individual phase placings are as follows:

<b>Placing</b>	<b>Under Saddle</b>	<b>All Over Fences</b>
1 <sup>st</sup>	100	250
2 <sup>nd</sup>	90	225
3 <sup>rd</sup>	80	200
4 <sup>th</sup>	70	175
5 <sup>th</sup>	60	150
6 <sup>th</sup>	50	125
7 <sup>th</sup>	40	100
8 <sup>th</sup>	30	75
9 <sup>th</sup>	20	50
10 <sup>th</sup>	10	25

- G. HOTY points for overall placings are as follows:

Champion	500
Reserve Champion	300
3 <sup>rd</sup>	200
4 <sup>th</sup>	150
5 <sup>th</sup>	100
6 <sup>th</sup>	90
7 <sup>th</sup>	80
8 <sup>th</sup>	70
9 <sup>th</sup>	60
10 <sup>th</sup>	50

**VIII. USHJA Contact Information**

- A. 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.
- B. Please contact one of the following USHJA representatives if questions arise pertaining to the USHJA Amateur Hunter Championships that cannot be answered by the Show Steward or Management based on the class specifications provided.

Sara Murray-Smith- USHJA Sport Program Coordinator (859) 225-6735  
Tracey Weinberg- Joint Amateur Task Force Chair (410) 627-3913  
Britt McCormick- USHJA President (972) 467-6008

*The USHJA Amateur Hunter Championships 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 Amateur Hunter Championships as necessary for the purposes of consistency and clarity. Any deviations from the class specifications for the USHJA Amateur Hunter Championships 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 USEF Rule Book.*

