

USDF FALL EXECUTIVE BOARD (EB) MEETING

Houston, TX – December 4, 2024

This document is edited for posting on the USDF website and is not the official or complete version of the minutes of this meeting.

Members Present:

George Williams, President	Kevin Reinig, Vice President
Lorraine Musselman, Treasurer	Debra Reinhardt, Secretary
Bettina Longaker, Region 1 Director	Debby Savage, Region 2 Director
Charlotte Trentelman, Region 3 Director	Anne Sushko, Region 4 Director
Heather Petersen, Region 5 Director	Noah Rattner, Region 6 Director
Regina Antonioli, Region 7 Director	Helen van der Voort, Region 8 Director
Bess Bruton, Region 9 Director	Susan Mandas, Activities Council Director
Sue McKeown, Technical Council Director	Anne Snipes Moss, Administrative Council Director

Members Absent: None

Staff Attending: Stephan Hienzsch, Melissa Schoedlbauer, Krystina Wright, Kathie Robertson, Ross Creech

Guest in attendance: None

The meeting commenced at 8:05 a.m. CST.

Determination of quorum, roll call and conflicts of interest

Approval of agenda

Heather Petersen moved and Kevin Reinig seconded **to approve the agenda with the following addition: North American Youth Championships (NAYC) selection of chefs as #16 and before the equitation item, and discussion of the addition of the P&P proposal from Peter Rothschild will be done under item #9.** No discussion. 15 approved, 0 disapproved, and no abstentions. Motion carried.

Recognition of approved EB minutes and e-mail votes

The approved e-mail votes and minutes were recognized.

President's remarks

State of USDF

Regarding membership numbers and other statistics in our EB books:

I don't plan to go into all of the details. I believe the USDF is relatively strong. While membership numbers haven't grown as we might have hoped, they also haven't really changed significantly over the last five years. With the growing cost of owning horses, fewer and fewer boarding stables, the lack of availability or access to entry level riding schools in most parts of the country, with the declining number of youth participating in all sports in general, and a whole host of other challenges, it is a difficult time to grow membership. In fact, the Department of Health and Human

Services finds many barriers keep kids from playing sports. At the top of their list are many that will sound familiar to the equestrian community:

- Lack of access to facilities or programs
- Cost
- Social pressure
- Time constraints
- Lack of interest or knowledge

We are not alone; other countries are experiencing similar issues. That doesn't mean we should give up. It's a great sport; horses give us a lot and teach us a lot.

The other challenges we face - welfare and well-being:

The Paris Olympics brought a lot of attention to dressage. On the plus side, Snoop Dogg and Martha Stewart put a very positive spotlight on dressage. The overall quality of the top combinations was extremely impressive, perhaps the best ever and, of course, a venue to die for! The highlight for us was our US Para Dressage Team and their slew of medals, including the team gold!

Unfortunately, on the negative side, dressage came under extreme scrutiny and pressure during the Olympics as well. That scrutiny is not going to end anytime soon, especially as we prepare for LA. Horse welfare and well-being must be on everyone's mind nowadays. We have to work together to make sure as a sport we deserve the so called "social license to operate". We have to look inward as well as outward. While we may never change the opinions of the diehard group opposed to horses being used for sport, there is a much, much larger group of "undecideds" with whom we have the possibility of making a good impression of dressage, and equestrian sport, in general. I recommend that we conduct ourselves, and most importantly live our lives, in a manner that leaves them with a positive impression.

The Dressage Foundation (TDF) initiative:

On today's agenda is what I believe is a very important proposal, and that is the creation of a USDF Education Program Fund within TDF. Being on the board of TDF, the one thing I learned that surprised me the most is that when USDF asks TDF for financial support for things like the USDF FEI Youth Clinics or the Young Rider Graduate Program, TDF does not have a general fund from which it can draw the money. This means that it is currently depleting a fund that was set aside for new initiatives. This fund will run out of money very soon. Ever since learning this three years ago, I have been in conversation with Beth Baumert and Jenny Johnson about how we could jointly solve this particular problem. Stephan and I have worked with Jenny and Beth over the last several months to create the documents that are in the meeting packets.

TDF's Board approved the documents at their board meeting in October. It's important that if we are to do a fund within TDF, we do it now as it will take time to build the fund to a functional level. It is also important to note that TDF will soon be moving into the next phase of their Capital Fundraising campaign. That means that as they speak to prospective donors, the USDF Fund will be one of the funds on the list in their presentations. It may sound odd that some people will want to give to TDF while others may prefer to give directly to USDF. I believe this gives us the best of both worlds. Hopefully, you have read the material provided and we can answer your questions regarding the details when we get to it on the agenda.

New NAYC Chef d' équipe policy:

Another item on the agenda has to do with the chefs d' équipe for the NAYC. As I mentioned earlier in the year, through Hallye Griffin and Laura Roberts, the USEF informed me that since the NAYC is a FEI Continental Championship and our athletes are officially representing the US internationally, starting in 2025 the USEF, as the NGB and FN, wants to harmonize how the chefs in jumping and dressage are appointed. Kathie Robertson, Sarah Delehanty and I have been working on several documents; one is an "external" memo regarding the selection of chefs, another lengthier document describes the role and responsibilities of a chef, and the third is an "internal" memo that outlines the process of how the USDF puts forward recommendations for the chef positions to the USEF for final approval and the actual naming of chefs.

USDF affiliate for para dressage:

In my President's report at the Board of Governors (BOG) meeting I will be putting forward the following motion to the BOG:

Motion: For USDF to become the official Para Dressage Affiliate to the United States Equestrian Federation and fulfill associated roles and duties as such.

If it is approved, there will be one minor bylaw change request that will be part of the Bylaws Committee report.

The USDF has put forward our appointees to the next USEF Para Equestrian Sport Committee. In addition, we have named ten outstanding individuals to the newly formed USDF Para Committee. As of today, we have nine who have accepted so far and are looking forward to help advance para dressage on the local, regional and national level.

A huge thank you to all of the task force members for their work on this project!

US Dressage Finals move to the World Equestrian Center (WEC):

This may become a topic of interest at this convention. Two things are important to keep in mind. The move from the Kentucky Horse Park (KHP) to the WEC in Wilmington, OH was simply based on survey results where respondents mentioned concerns about the weather and the negative impact it can have on their US Dressage Finals experience. Second, this is a separate issue from potentially moving the Finals west. The process for doing that goes back to the 2015 BOG motion which requires the four regional directors from the western regions to come forth with a proposed site and dates. I would suggest if the interest is there, then the four regional directors meet after the 2025 Finals for further discussion.

Emphasis on education:

When I chose to put my name in for one last stint as president of the USDF it was primarily to focus on the importance of education and USDF's ability to provide education on many levels.

I'm happy to report that the education department has grown over the last three years. We now have a staff of six dedicated to education. This includes the education of licensed officials. The highlight is the Judging Education Initiative which was launched early this year.

The longer-term project has been the reimagining of the USDF Instructor Certification Program. We started this about six years ago with initial surveys targeting "general membership", certified instructors, and 18-25 year olds for feedback on their experiences and impressions with the USDF Instructor Certification Program. This was followed by the creation of a task force, which in turn

put forward recommendations on how we could improve what I would call a *USDF flagship program*.

Unfortunately, COVID delayed our ability to implement many of the recommendations. However, in 2023 we were able to run a pilot program in Utah. In 2024, three more programs were held, one each in NE, WI, and CT. Hopefully by now, many of you have heard of the recently launched Professional Development Program. I know it's a slightly confusing name, which we're working on clarifying, but it includes an excellent educational session that is open to all members, amateur and professional.

The USDF is continually working on providing more online educational content with the recommended goal of creating online educational courses.

Lastly, the USDF has been working with the USEF to be able to provide our faculty, staff, and FEI level certified instructors access to a fantastic multi-sport coaching program put on by the US Center for Coaching Excellence. So far it has been well received by the thirteen individuals who have attended the program.

Final comments:

I'm almost done! I have served on the USDF Executive Board for twenty of the last twenty-four years. The first eight years as vice president and a total of twelve as president. The journey started innocuously enough. Natalie Lamping asked me if I would be willing to chair a small council, the USDF Competitors Council. That was about 36 years ago. The time has gone by more quickly than I'd like. All of it has been fun and rewarding. I want to thank all of you on the EB. You have been a terrific group to work with. I believe we have accomplished a lot, weathered a few storms, but it hasn't been boring. USDF is a unique institution. Its success is equally dependent on volunteers and paid staff. I owe a huge thank you to both the many volunteers and the dedicated staff. You've made my job relatively easy, which is why I could stick with it for so long. I'm going to miss working with all of you!

Executive Director's remarks

Welcome to all! Thank you to George for his service, leadership and expertise.

Staff:

Connie Huy and Sarah Garn could not make the trip due to unforeseen personal circumstances. Ross is stepping in for Sarah's governance and board duties, and Melissa Schoedlbauer, as Member Services Director, is taking over Connie's role as onsite convention logistics manager. Going forward, as part of a departmental and staff restructuring that we have been transitioning to over the past year, overall convention administration responsibilities will live in the member services department as opposed to the operations department.

Convention logistics and daily schedules:

Meeting rooms are on first and second floors. Liberty Hall is across the walk way. There is a welcome reception on Thursday and party on Friday along with some other meetings. The convention agenda will be e-mailed about 5 am every morning and is also available on the website.

Candidates:

The current officer candidates are Kevin Reinig for president, and for treasurer, Lorraine Musselman is expected to be nominated from the floor. Steven Schubert has withdrawn his candidacy.

The Region 2, 4, 6, and 8 Directors are all incumbents and unopposed.

With the resignation of Region 7 Director Carol Tice, a special election will be held. Interim Region 7 Director Regina Antonioli is the only nominee.

Convention:

Convention core attendance for 2024 is only up slightly from last year, 275 versus 250. This is surprising only in that one might expect the warmer climate of Houston and good airport access would be a bigger draw. However, since our return to a live convention post-COVID, the core attendance numbers have not changed much regardless of location. The Salute Gala and Awards Banquet registration is in the 200 range, about the same as last year and well below what we were seeing pre-COVID.

Discussion: The expense of coming to the convention is becoming very high. The idea of having a day rate or education only was suggested.

The 2025 convention will be held at the Lexington Hyatt Regency in Lexington, KY, December 3 – 6. The hotel rate is \$155.

The 2026 convention is to be determined and evaluated at the spring meeting.

US Dressage Finals:

In 2024, competitor participation was slightly up over 2023. We had 376 horses compete in the US Dressage Finals classes as compared to 355 in 2023. There were 602 rides as compared to 560 in 2023.

Travel grants in the amount of \$28,800 were paid out in 2024. Seven horse/rider combinations will receive the \$1400 grant, and nineteen horse/rider combinations will receive the \$1000 grant.

To date over 3,000 unique individuals have viewed the US Dressage Finals on USEF Network, with 10,000 unique class views.

The US Dressage Finals will be moving in 2025. A contract with the WEC in Wilmington, OH has been signed for the dates of October 30-November 2. This is one week earlier than the historical Finals dates. The last allowed date for a regional championship to be held in 2025 is the first weekend in October, the 4th and 5th, which is also one week earlier than in the past. This allows for enough time between the last potential regional championship qualifier and the Finals.

The press release announcing the move to the WEC Wilmington distributed a few weeks ago has been widely picked up by the media and has been one of our most viewed posts on social media ever. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, but some have expressed disappointment and have raised the question of "why not move further west as promised"?

A reactive response was drafted, which the EB was provided a copy, to be used as needed when the question is raised. This may come up during the convention and you are welcome to utilize the essence of the drafted response.

Discussion: The four western regional directors have met regularly. These regional directors and Kevin Reinig last met in 2022 and came to the same conclusion that moving west wasn't in the best interest for the Finals or for USDF at that time. They plan to meet again in 2025 after the first US Dressage Finals at the WEC. It is also recognized that some facilities have significantly improved since previous site inspections and should be reevaluated.

Education activities:

In 2024, the USDF hosted or supported 124 live and virtual education opportunities and provided 46 online learning modules.

Throughout the year, we have been working with BlackHorseOne during all judge's clinics and we are moving forward with the final implementation stages of the Judge Education Initiative.

During this convention, the membership will be introduced to the BlackHorseOne technology already used in judge training and education. Web based education utilizing the technology is being developed and will provide new learning opportunities for members in 2025

The 2025 Adequan®/USDF FEI-Level Trainers Conference will be held January 20-21, in Loxahatchee, FL at High Meadow Farm. The presenters are USEF Dressage Chef d' équipe Christine Traurig and Monica Theodorescu, Germany's dressage team trainer. As always, EB members are welcome to attend at no charge.

Plans are being finalized for the USDF Young Rider Graduate Program. The program will be held January 18-19, in West Palm Beach, FL, with twenty-five attendees. Eighteen prominent speakers have committed to contribute their expertise on a wide range of topics.

Membership report and trends:

Participation and horse registration have not grown. We need to retain and service our core members.

Employee retention credit:

\$135,000 in unbudgeted revenue was recently received from the IRS, which was a COVID related program incentivizing businesses to retain employees. USDF applied for this in 2023.

Treasurer's report

October 2024 - Actuals versus Budget

Statement of Financial Position

Current assets as a whole are down 16.5% from this time last year. The majority of this difference is in the cash line, which is down just under 32%. Cash has been trending down over time. It also fluctuates and tends to be lower at this time of year. The offset is mostly in accounts receivable, (which is up due to sending the invoices for ads in the *Member Guide* and *USDF Connection*) with the remainder spread among the other current asset line items.

Investments are up significantly (over 19%). Stock and bond values are fluctuating, partially due to questions surrounding the election results. (October 31st is only a few days shy of the presidential election). Interest income is over budget on a whole.

Fixed assets are slightly down due to depreciation.

Liabilities: Accounts payable is a negative amount due to checks being printed early and these financial statements being run prior to everything being entered to get them in the EB book. The accounts payable has been cleared out. Deferred revenue and accrued compensation are up. Compensation is basically vacation and fluctuates. Deferred revenues are sponsors that have been moved out in November.

Discussion: The dues increase has only started to impact the budget October 1st. The \$135,000 that Stephan mentioned will go into current assets and is not reflected in this report.

Statement of Activities

We are at a current Net profit of \$25,999 after we take out the gain/loss on investments and depreciation versus a budgeted profit of \$71,679. Most of the departments are under budget for revenues. Investments, Finals, and youth programs are ahead of budget. On the Expense side, we are under budget except for championships, merchandise, and Finals, which are over budget. The “administrative expenses” (staff related expenses) under each department statement are generally under budget. This is due mostly to position vacancies at various times of the year and staff allocation between departments.

I’ll go through individual departments rather than each line on this page since it is just a summary of the departments.

Convention: Revenues are under budget as of October due to timing. Registrations are ahead of budget, banquet and sponsors are under. Most expenses, other than staff, will not show up until December when the bills are received.

Championship Programs: Revenue in total is slightly under budget, mostly due to qualified ride fees. Sponsorships are over by 22%, and qualified ride fees are under budget by just over 15%.

Expenses: Postage and prizes are higher than budgeted due to inflation. Prize money is over the total annual budget. This is a combination of increased costs plus timing of prize money distribution. Prize money was paid out earlier this year.

Grant expenses are low due to timing; the second checks haven’t been mailed out yet.

Discussion: So much of USDF resources are spent sending things back and forth to and from show sites and USDF. The expense to the show to mail/ship items back are costing over \$500. The office will investigate the possibility of a solution and allow events to keep things, hold over to cut down on shipping, and even have banners made locally to the show.

Competition Services:

Revenues are slightly under budgeted amounts as a whole. Most of this is due to all breed change fees and rider award processing fees. This is a timing issue. It is offset by competition recognition fees, which are ahead of budget.

Administrative expenses are slightly under budget due to staff vacancies for part of the year and allocations. Year-end awards are under budget due to timing.

Education Services:

Revenues are under budget in several areas due to timing.

Judge Education Initiative – Expenses from sessions during convention and revenue funding will be requested in January.

Licensed officials (LO) events – Events held in November, December, and March

Certified instructor (CI) test fees – Exams are scheduled for January-April

Instructor fees (annual renewal fees for CI's) is low due to timing; generally comes in between November and March.

Instructor faculty education – More GMOs cover the costs of seminars and professional development; scheduled for spring.

Expenses generally followed revenues. Telephone is a standard budget item and has not been used. (more Zoom meetings, etc.)

GMO grants – In 2024, nine grant applications were received, four were approved, four denied, and one pending. One has already been approved for 2025.

Administrative:

Revenues are below budget, mostly in Circle of Friends, partially due to timing. Contributions come in with membership renewals and at calendar year-end.

Administrative line is under due to staff vacancy.

Travel is over due to increase travel by Stephan for regionals and NAYC.

Employment ads are due to staff vacancies.

HVAC maintenance is over budget due to some necessary repairs.

Audit expense is due to timing. The audit was just completed and will be billed and paid in November/December.

Dues and subscriptions is high due to items not budgeted for. The FY 25-26 budget has been adjusted for these.

Professional services is high due to national fundraising licenses.

Investment service charge is based on the value of the investments.

Event processing – C-Vent has not been paid yet for convention registration.

Investments:

Investments are significantly ahead of budget as of October 31. This is partially due to interest income being ahead of budget. The other part is a significant unrealized gain at this point in time. The market is fluctuating at least partially based on the anticipation of the election results.

Membership:

Revenues are below budget in all categories. This is mostly due to timing. Renewals generally start in earnest in November. Horse registrations are below budget. Non-member rider fees are below budget; this is kind of what we want since we want people to become a member versus do a non-member fee at shows. Expenses are relatively normal.

Merchandise:

Revenues – Merchandise sales are below budget, but sales from Finals are not yet in these numbers.

Expenses – Some items are under budget. The others are pretty close to target.

Publications:

Revenues – Ad revenues are under budget in most categories. Some of this is due to timing, but there is a trend down in ad revenues as well. In house ads are ads in *USDF Connection* used by departments for clinics and other USDF programs.

Expenses – Printing and mailing of *USDF Connection* and the *Member Guide* is due to timing. They are mailed in November and later.

US Dressage Finals:

It's very early to review as the Finals occur in November and accounting information comes in through December. Total Revenues are under budget. This includes the transfer in of the Deferred Revenues from last year's profit. Revenues are not allocated to correct line items yet as detail has not been received. Revenue from the show management has all been entered into entry fees; some of this should be in other line items (stabling, VIP, etc.). Most expenses are not in yet and they will show up in November and December.

Youth Programs:

Revenues are ahead of budget due to timing of "funding" (USEF and TDF) received. Youth endowment is not transferred until later; timing.

Expenses – Equipment/Facility fees – wrong line item on budget (YRGP versus clinic) – this should be added to the Clinic Equipment /Facility fees line item.

Budget – FY 25-26

We went over this in detail at the last EB meeting where we voted to send it to the BOG. No changes have been made to the budget since then, so I do not see a need to go over it again unless there are specific questions.

Actual/Budget Comparison

This section was included because of a request at last year's BOG. This is a line by line comparison of actuals versus budget.

Revenues were below budget for most line items with the exception of Championship Programs, Competition and Investments: Revenues came in ahead of budget as a total only because of the performance of our investments.

Expenses were also below budget except for the annual convention and merchandise.

When you take the investment line item out of the equation, you see the organization had a net loss of \$188,758. This points to the timeliness of the increases in dues/fees approved last year.

Annual Budget/Actual Analysis

On a year to year basis USDF actuals are generally favorable to the budget, but FY 23-24 came in at a net loss of \$188,758 after investments and depreciation (non-cash) items are removed.

Salary and Benefit Analysis per Budget

We have moved from thirty-one staff and four contract positions to thirty-two staff and four contract labor positions for the upcoming budget. All line items have a slight increase to reflect this change.

Investments

Our return on investments is approximately 6% for the total portfolio for the twelve months ending September 30, 2024. This is on a quarterly basis up through September 2024.

Wealth Management – Fiscal Year-End Analysis

Total Investment fund balance on March 31, 2024 was \$8,028,361, up from March 2023. The five year change in value is an increase of \$1,473,738. This is a 22% increase.

National Endowment

Breakdown of portfolio and current yield by quarter.

Council reports – At-Large Directors (ALDs)

Activities Council – Sue Mandas, Activities Council ALD

Expresses concerns raised by her chairs regarding communication. The Adult Programs Committee, when they did survey, one of the main pieces of feedback was about 40% of respondents do not utilize Facebook. While she doesn't have an answer, she thinks we need to find another way to get the word out. Targeted e-mails get a more positive response and seemed effective. Pre-convention meetings are another example where people didn't seem aware.

Administrative Council – Anne Moss, Administrative Council ALD

She has one east coast based committee, the Historical Recognition Committee. She would like to get west coast member onto the committee. Bylaws has done a lot of work this year with the addition of para dressage and the concept of a non-participating GMO, in addition to Peter Rothchild's proposed changes. We need to find a better way to get GMO delegates coming to the convention. Good news is the online voting for PM delegates was up this year.

Technical Council - Sue McKeown, Technical Council ALD

One person attended every pre-convention meeting, Rebecca Harris from Region 7 and she needs to be recognized at the BOG. Para dressage will be added assuming the motion gets approved at the BOG. For the Freestyle Committee, being represented by the Judges Committee has been a smooth transition with no negativity. Para will be the new committee being added for next year, pending BOG approval.

Committee reports – updates and Q&A – Liaisons

National Youth Programs Committee – This year, the youth outreach clinics finally got a foothold to move things forward as four to five were held this year. Region 6 had so much response that a second clinician was added, held in conjunction with the FEI Youth Clinic. Enthusiasm for next year seems to be trending the same way.

Working Group and Task Force reports

- Outreach, Awareness, and Inclusion (OAI) Task Force – Ross Creech, Liaison: Two new members will be put forward in a future meeting.
- Non-Member Fee Task Force – Sue McKeown, Chair
This task force was developed based on change in USEF Non-Member (can only show as non-member once per year). USDF decided to see how things played out over a year, and were asked to also evaluate the issue of double shows (two competitions, one weekend – same venue/judges/etc.). There was some concern from USEF that USDF should not be allowed to do this as it was forcing competitors to pay more (two office fees, etc.). The other question was CDIs, is there an interest around the country or is it just basically FL and CA? The task force conducted a survey and results have been provided in handout. There was a 21% response rate, with all regions and most states and age groups represented in the respondents. Questions were set up specifically to be able to be cross-referenced, which was done manually by staff for this survey. While the SurveyMonkey subscription didn't include this analysis, it should be considered for use in future surveys. Three conclusions:
 - 1) Non-member Issue – “If I have to buy USEF membership, I may as well buy a USDF membership.” However, USEF is twelve months from date of purchase, where USDF is a set membership year with a set expiration. However, no negative impact was identified with new USEF policy and don't see an issue.
 - 2) Double shows – Do you like? Why don't you show? – Less than 2% cited finances as a double show concern. (Overall, show scheduled showed 12% concern about finances)
 - 3) CDI – Split on whether interested or not, but keep in mind that some people don't see that achievement as a realistic possibility and may have impacted responses.

Sue feels the taskforce has accomplished its designated tasks and asked to be disbanded.

Helen van der Voort moved and Bess Bruton seconded **to approve disbanding the Non-Member Fee Task Force**. No discussion.14 approved, 0 disapproved, and Sue McKeown abstained. Motion carried.

- Rule Advisory Working Group – Kathie Robertson, Liaison
Anne Sushko moved and Charlotte Trentelman seconded **to approve the Standard Proposed Rule Changes effective 12/1/2025 that USDF RAWG recommends to disapprove**.
DR 121.1 Tracking #042-24
DR 121.1 Tracking #051-24
DR 121.3 Tracking #029-24
DR 121.11 Tracking #035-24
DR 124.2 Tracking #020-24
GR411.1 Tracking #052-24
GR821.1 Tracking #054-24
GR843 Tracking #046-24

No discussion.15 approved, 0 disapproved, and no abstentions. Motion carried.

Heather Petersen moved and Noah Rattner seconded **to approve the Standard Proposed Rule Changes effective 12/1/2025 that USDF RAWG recommends to approve.**

GR202.1 Tracking #057-24

GR127.3 Tracking #038-24

GR310.3 Tracking #056-24

GR1006.5 Tracking #028-24

No discussion. 15 approved, 0 disapproved, and no abstentions. Motion carried.

Anne Sushko moved and Heather Petersen seconded **to approve Extraordinary Proposed Change Proposals effective date 4/1/2025 that USDF RAWG recommends to disapprove except for Tracking #061-24.**

GR840.a Tracking #060-24

GR843.1 Tracking #064-24

GR702.1 Tracking #066-24

GR801.1 Tracking #063-24

No discussion. 15 approved, 0 disapproved, and no abstentions. Motion carried.

Heather Petersen moved and Kevin Reinig seconded **to approve Extraordinary Proposed Change Proposals effective date 4/1/2025 GR801.6 Tracking #061-24.**

Discussion: Recommended approval with reason that our concerns are covered by the DR rule and we would like to see it allowed in general by the organization.

15 approved, 0 disapproved, and no abstentions. Motion carried.

Kevin Reinig moved and Anne Sushko seconded **to approve Extraordinary Proposed Change Proposals effective date 4/1/2025 that USDF RAWG recommends to approve except for GR840.1 Tracking #65-24.**

GR839.1 Tracking #62-24

GR414 Tracking #090-24

No Discussion. 15 approved, 0 disapproved, and no abstentions. Motion carried.

Heather Petersen moved and Regina Antonioli seconded **to disapprove Extraordinary Proposed Change Proposals effective date 4/1/2025 GR840.1 Tracking #65-24.**

Discussion: Recommendation is based on concerns about competition already having accepted entries, etc.

15 approved, 0 disapproved, and no abstentions. Motion carried.

Kevin Reinig moved and Lorraine Musselman seconded **to approve Extraordinary Proposed Rule Change effective 12/1/2025 that USDF RAWG recommends to disapprove.**

GR1037.1 Tracking #067-24

No Discussion. 15 approved, 0 disapproved, and no abstentions. Motion carried.

Anne Sushko moved and Charlotte Trentelman seconded **to approve Clarification Proposed Rule Changes effective 12/1/2025 that USDF RAWG recommends to approve.**

DR 135.5 Tracking #077-24

DR 129.c Tracking #079-24

DR120.1 Tracking #087-24

DR121 Tracking #074-24

DR121.2 Tracking #070-24
DR121.5 Tracking #071-24
DR121.15 Tracking #072-24
DR121.21 Tracking #073-24
DR122.17 Tracking #075-24

No Discussion.15 approved, 0 disapproved, and no abstentions. Motion carried.

Anne Sushko moved and Charlotte Trentelman seconded **to approve Clarification Proposed Rule Changes effective 12/1/2025 that USDF RAWG recommends to disapprove.**

DR120.7 Tracking #078-24

Discussion: This is already covered in DR120.6 and other places in the rules.

15 approved, 0 disapproved, and no abstentions. Motion carried.

- Licensed Officials Working Group – Kathie Robertson, Liaison
No changes to the report. Up until 2025, we've had the opportunity to update LO P&Ps on an annual basis, which will be changing to every other year beginning with 2026 and 2028. A number of officials are going for licenses and completed our training, with multiple candidates in process. Discussion: Regarding the nine 'r' judge applicants, they have not met the new criteria as when they apply they are bound by the P&Ps when they signed, and won't have to adhere to new requirements, even though they haven't had their program yet.

Approval of P&P proposed edits

Lorraine Musselman moved and Helen van der Voort seconded **to approve the Policies and Procedure edits as seen below.**

VI. COMPETITIONS

A. USEF-Licensing/USDF-Recognition, page 29, paragraph 7

Change to read:

7. All USDF recognized competitions are required to carry at least \$1 million insurance liability coverage which cites USDF as an "additional insured", and submit a copy of the insurance certificate to USDF at least **15 days** ~~two weeks~~ prior to the competition. Failure to comply will result in a fine. (See Ch. VI, Section H).

Submitted by: Krystina Wright

Reason for proposal: For the USDF deadline to be consistent with the USEF deadline.

Effective: Upon USDF Executive Board approval.

VIII. COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES

B. General Council/Committee Policies, page 45, paragraph 2

Change to read:

2. Three councils are established by the USDF Bylaws and are each composed of those committee chairs **as** described under Section VIII D. below. If a committee consists of co-

chairs, ~~only one should~~ **both are members** ~~or~~ of their respective council, **but only one pre-declared chair sits on the council as a voting member.**

Submitted by: Sarah Garn

Reason for proposal: Housekeeping for accuracy. To be consistent with language in D. USDF Council and Committee Structure and C. Meetings under Section VIII. The Executive Board approved proposed edits to the Policies and Procedures in the fall of 2021 to include co-chairs as members of the councils, and for only one of the chairs to have voting rights on the council.

Effective: Upon Executive Board approval.

IX. PROGRAMS

A. Participation, page 52, paragraph 4

Change to read and re-letter:

4. Participating membership (in good standing) with USDF is required for participation in several USDF programs, including:
 - a. Candidates and participants in certification testings and ~~pre-certifications~~ **professional development assessments**
 - b. Certification examiners
 - c. Certified instructors and associate instructors (non-renewal of membership will result in removal of instructor's name from all USDF lists for any period of lapsed membership.)
 - ~~d. USDF Judge's Forum participants (excluding those forums specifically required to maintain USEF judges license)~~
 - ~~e.~~ **d.** L Education Program – Part 2
 - ~~f.~~ **e.** Faculty for L Education Program
 - ~~g.~~ **f.** Dressage participants representing the US in the NAYC.
 - ~~h.~~ **g.** USDF/USEF Young Rider Graduate Program
 - ~~i.~~ **h.** Trainers Conference
 - ~~j.~~ **i.** ~~JR/YR~~ **FEI Youth** Clinic participants (Riders)
 - ~~k.~~ **j.** USDF Honorary Instructors
 - ~~l.~~ **k.** Dressage Seat Medal Semi-Finals
 - l. Dressage Judge, Dressage Sport Horse Breeding Judge, and Dressage Technical Delegate Training Programs**
 - m. USEF/USDF Licensed Officials Clinics, required to maintain license or receive designation**

Submitted By: Kathie Robertson

Reason for Proposal: Housekeeping updates based on name changes to activities within some programs.

Effective: Upon Executive Board approval.

IX. PROGRAMS

C. List of Programs, page 54, paragraph 2

Change to read:

2. List of USDF programs as of ~~April 7, 2023~~ **September 1, 2024:**

- 1) Competition Awards (Rider, Horse Performance, Year-End, All Breeds)
- 2) Recognition Awards (HOF, MOD, Volunteer, GMO)
- 3) Annual Convention
- 4) Regional Adult Amateur Equitation/Regional Final
- 5) ~~Junior/Young Rider~~ **FEI Youth** Clinic Series
- 6) Qualifying and Selection Criteria for NAYC
- 7) USDF nomination to the USEF Youth Sportsman's Award
- 8) Shining Star
- 9) Ravel Education Grant
- 10) Youth Dressage Recognition Pin
- 11) Youth Convention Scholarship
- 12) Youth Outreach Clinics
- 13) Young Rider Graduate
- 14) Youth/Young Adult Dressage Sport Horse Breeder Seminar
- 15) Youth/Young Adult Dressage Sport Horse Handler Seminar
- 16) Arts Contest
- 17) University Accredited Events*
- 18) GMO Education Initiative*
- 19) ~~Certified-Instructor~~ **Certification** Testings
- 20) ~~Instructor/Trainer Workshops*~~ **Dressage Development Seminars**
- 21) ~~Instructor/Trainer Pre-Certification Clinics*~~ **Professional Development Assessments**
- 22) FEI Level Trainers Conference/s
- 23) Sport Horse Seminars
- 24) Sport Horse Prospect Development Forum
- 25) Sport Horse Handlers Clinic
- 26) Continuing Education in Dressage Judging*
- 27) L Education*
- 28) Licensed Officials (LO) Training
- 29) LO Clinics (that meet USEF maintenance requirements)
- 30) Dressage Technical Delegate Apprentice
- 31) Dressage Seat Medal Semi-Finals
- 32) Regional Dressage Championships
- 33) US Dressage Finals
- 34) Breeders Championship Series
- 35) Adult/Youth Camps**
- 36) Adult and Youth Regional Team Competitions**
- 37) Dressage Spirit Award

Submitted By: Kathie Robertson

Reason for Proposal: Housekeeping updates based on name changes to activities within some programs.

Effective: Upon Executive Board approval.

No Discussion. 15 approved, 0 disapproved, and no abstentions. Motion carried.

Peter Rothschild submitted the following Policies and Procedures proposal on November 11, 2024, missing the submission deadline of 30 days prior to the first day of the annual convention per our current Policies and Procedures. The proposal is being provided to the Executive Board for preliminary discussion.

VIII. COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES

C. Meetings, page 50

Add new:

16. Any USDF Member who submits an issue to any USDF entity, including, but not limited to, the Executive Board, any Committee, any Task Force, any Working Group or any other similar USDF entity, shall be offered the opportunity to present to such entity whenever the Member's issue is brought before such entity. This opportunity to present shall include the opportunity to respond to any question or comment from the entity's members.

Reason for proposal:

Over the past few years, I've had different proposals reviewed by various USDF entities and have specifically asked two of them to allow me to present my thoughts on those proposals. Of the two, one did not respond to my request and one did and allowed me to present. The other times I wasn't even notified the entities were reviewing the proposals so I didn't even have the opportunity to request the chance to present.

I think it is wrong that a USDF entity would review a proposal by a member and not provide the member with an opportunity to present as it shows a significant indifference to the member, at least that's my belief.

Towards the end of reversing that attitude, I'm hoping this proposed P & P will be adopted so that the Membership will see that "we care" when it comes to ideas put forth.

Please note, this proposal would not give a Member the "right to speak" on one's issue but only require the entity to provide an "opportunity" to present. If the opportunity provided is not one the Member could use, at least the opportunity would have been provided.

Discussion: The word 'issue' is too generic. If more explicit major issue, i.e.. bylaw, would help. There is also a procedure in place with steering committee to handle 'concerns'. Since these need to be submitted in writing, they should be afforded the opportunity to ask to present, but not locking USDF entities into having to schedule a meeting or prevent them from conducting e-mail discussion or votes. The Bylaws Committee's task force that has been established will work to develop a protocol for bringing proposals forward. This proposal, in its current wording, is impractical for the organization to utilize.

Management Committee report (closed session)

USDF/TDF Memorandums of Understanding

Memorializes the history and current relationship between USDF and TDF. There are three areas. First is the agreement for the Mary Anne and Walter McPhail Judge Education Fund. Second is the agreement for funding the 2024-25 USDF Youth Programs. Finally, is the agreement for a potential USDF Education Programs Support Fund, which is newly developed to establish a grant fund with the specific purpose of supporting USDF's educational programs. The fund will be administered by TDF.

Discussion: The creation of the USDF Education Programs Support Fund is because TDF has no general fund. Their funds are designated toward something specific. Timeline is when the TDF requirement of \$50,000 of seed money to establish the fund is met. Donations to TDF would need to be earmarked for the USDF fund. Once established, the Grant Fund Selection Committee will have a USDF EB appointed representative, but that does not necessarily need to be a board member.

Noah Rattner moved and Anne Snipes Moss seconded **to approve the four documents with TDF as presented**. No discussion. 15 approved, 0 disapproved, and no abstentions. Motion carried.

NAYC selections on Chef d' équipe

Hallye Griffin and Laura Roberts want to bring all NAYC chefs under the USEF umbrella. This would change how it is done presently by USDF.

A letter to potential chefs would describe what it takes to put your name in for consideration and what the selection process is and the requirements are. There are no exceptions to these requirements:

USEF Letter of Agreement:

2025 FEI North American Youth Dressage Championship Chef équipe Selection Process

This document is to outline the duties and responsibilities of each entity in the selection process of chefs d' équipe for the Children, Junior, and Young Rider regional or combined teams at the FEI North American Youth Dressage Championship (NAYC). This document has been created by the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) in collaboration with the United States Dressage Federation (USDF). If changes are to be made to this document, they will be amended prior to January 1, 2025.

Selection Process

Individuals will have the opportunity to express their interest in being chef d' équipe no later than April 1, 2025, at 5:00pm ET. These expressions of interest can come from the individual directly or through a USDF Regional Coordinator.

After April 1, 2025, the USDF FEI Youth Committee will provide a recommendation of one chef d' équipe per team (based on anticipated entries per region).

Their recommendation will then be reviewed by the USDF Executive Board, and a final recommendation will be made to the USEF no later than April 30, 2025, at 5:00pm ET.

A provisional chef d' équipe selection will be approved by the USEF no later than May 5, 2025, at 5:00pm ET.

After the FEI definite entry, the USDF FEI Youth Committee will provide a final recommendation of any combined teams and assigned chef d' équipe per team. In cases of combined teams, only one chef may be assigned per team.

Their recommendation will then be reviewed by the USDF Executive Board, and a final recommendation will be made to the USEF.

The USEF will make the final approval of the combined teams and chef d' équipe assignments.

In the event of further need to combine teams after the final approval from USEF due to unforeseen circumstances the chef de mission and the USEF Managing Director of Dressage will approve any further chef d' équipe changes.

Discussion and questions: Who will pay for the chefs? And if teams are combined, who goes as chef and which region pays their way? April time frame regions do not know if we have teams as riders have not declared or even started to show.

Charlotte Trentelman moved and Sue McKeown seconded **to adjourn meeting until Saturday**. No discussion. 15 approved, 0 disapproved, and no abstentions. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 2:25 pm CST until December 7, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Reinhardt
USDF Secretary

USDF FALL EXECUTIVE BOARD (EB) MEETING

Houston, TX – December 7, 2024

This document is edited for posting on the USDF website and is not the official or complete version of the minutes of this meeting.

Members Present:

George Williams, President	Kevin Reinig, Vice President
Lorraine Musselman, Treasurer	Debra Reinhardt, Secretary
Bettina Longaker, Region 1 Director	Debby Savage, Region 2 Director
Charlotte Trentelman, Region 3 Director	Anne Sushko, Region 4 Director
Heather Petersen, Region 5 Director	Noah Rattner, Region 6 Director
Regina Antonioli, Region 7 Director	Helen van der Voort, Region 8 Director
Bess Bruton, Region 9 Director	Susan Mandas, Activities Council Director
Sue McKeown, Technical Council Director	Anne Snipes Moss, Administrative Council Director

Members Absent: None

Staff Attending: Stephan Hienzsch, Melissa Schoedlbauer, Krystina Wright, Kathie Robertson, Ross Creech

Guest in attendance: None

The meeting commenced at 9:24 a.m. CST, USDF President George Williams presiding.

Determination of quorum, roll call and conflicts of interest

Call to order and agenda review (additions/corrections)

Heather Petersen moved and Noah Rattner seconded **to approve the agenda with the addition of members of the USDF Connection Advisory Committee under new business.** No discussion. 15 approved, 0 disapproved, and no abstentions. Motion carried.

2025 incoming Executive Board member welcome

Welcome to Regina Antonioli as official Region 7 Director, and Kevin Reinig as the new president. Heather Petersen moved and Bess Bruton seconded **to approve Lisa Gorretta as the interim vice president to complete the term.** No discussion. 15 approved, 0 disapproved, and no abstentions. Motion carried.

Approval of OC Executive Committee Recommendation for 2025 US Dressage Finals Manager and Secretary

Heather Petersen moved and Regina Antonioli seconded **to extend the contract for Debra Reinhardt as show manager and for Bettina Longaker as show secretary for the 2025 US Dressage Finals.** No discussion. 13 approved, 0 disapproved, and Debra Reinhardt and Bettina Longaker abstained. Motion carried.

Heather Petersen moved and Regina Antonioli seconded **to start the bid process as soon as possible for the 2026/2027 US Dressage Finals show manager and show secretary with the appointment by June 15, 2025.**

Discussion: The bid process should start this early so if the current show manager and/or show secretary are leaving, it would allow shadowing with Debra and/or Bettina and be on OC calls to learn and transition into their position. 13 approved, 0 disapproved, and Debra Reinhardt and Bettina Longaker abstained. Motion carried.

Additional Comments from Rules Advisory Working Group (RAWG)

Not all RAWG members were able to be communicated the changes, but they will try to meet as soon as possible and will come back in the next few weeks with comments.

New Member of the Sport Horse Prospect Development Forum Faculty

Kevin Reinig moved and Sue Mandas seconded to **approve Lehua Custer to be appointed as a member of faculty for the Sport Horse Prospect Development Forums.**

Discussion: Lehua apprenticed last year and the Sport Horse Committee would like to move forward with adding her to the faculty. 15 approved, 0 disapproved, and no abstentions. Motion carried.

Update on the Professional Development Program

The new dressage seminars were rolled out and a new Zoom educational series implemented for those involved in the program. They are recorded and then posted to the website to be viewed by all certified instructors. This will expand in 2025, starting in February, with new topics added (first year was mostly training with our faculty) and new experts being brought in to teach. Looking to host dressage seminars in OH, FL, CA, and one or two others (Region 6 and in Maine) for 2025. The one thing learned from last year is that while the program focus was grassroots/amateur friendly/education and anyone is welcome, it is still viewed as under the certification “umbrella”, so we are looking at ways to promote slightly differently to expand the market to those we really want to reach.

We look to host two assessments in the next year, to be followed by exams (one in Nebraska, and working to schedule on in Florida). Lake Erie will be hosting a standalone exam this summer, as there are still a few instructors who are still “floating” under the old system who want to move forward and this should allow them to do so.

There will be one FEI workshop/exam over the next year or so is planned.

Discussion: The last session they had Zoom call with Bill McMullin and Kate Fleming-Kuhn Was phenomenal. This should be repeated as they had wonderful attendance.

It is time to promote the professional development program as a whole, since we were tentative to push too hard because we wanted to get everything in place. Attendance options will be opening up going forward (for example, certified instructors).

Judging Education Initiative

We are moving into year three of the initial implementation plan. We’ve had two successful sessions this week, especially the membership session. The last couple of times the logging in process was painful, but things went much better this time. The introduction to the membership was also successful and everyone seems excited about it.

A pilot group used it for apprenticing (at one of Noah’s shows). They didn’t use the after part for evaluation, but used the system for entering scores and that may be something we look at using going forward.

The next exam ('S') will be in FL in January. Small 'r' exam will be at Kevin Bradbury's show at Waterloo, MI in July.

For 2025, Kathie is working with BlackHorseOne to roll out a new membership component. There will be access through the USDF website, and we are looking at putting up two to three tests per quarter, followed up by a webinar. It will be a member benefit, no additional expense.

Cost of this program is covered by McPhail's grant through TDF.

Appointments for the Regional Championships Site Selection Working Group *(three board appointments, three appointments from the Regional Championships Committee)*

Last year the working group included Natalie Lamping, Bill McMullin, Sarah Geikie, Gwen Ka'awaloa, Jean Kraus, Lisa Gorretta.

The Regional Championships Committee has selected Jean Kraus, Teresa Stewart, and Michelle King.

Lorraine Musselman moved and Regina Antonioli seconded **to approve the appointment of Lisa Gorretta, Lisa Schmidt, and Sarah Geikie to the Regional Championships Site Selection Working Group.** No discussion. 15 approved, 0 disapproved, and no abstentions. Motion carried.

Creation of a Dressage Seat Equitation (DSE) Working Group – Sue McKeown

The Judges, Technical Delegates, and Competition Management Committees put out their own plan for DSE, but there was no overarching plan. They felt a working group needed to be established to bring everything together and to evaluate more aspects.

People from competition management, judges, TDs, regional championships, and people who can look at youth and adult amateurs should make up the working group.

Bess Bruton moved and Kevin Reinig seconded **to approve the appointment of Jean Kraus, Lisa Schmidt, Joan Darnell, Sue Mandas, Kevin Hadfield, Marsha Lewis, Debra Reinhardt, Kathy Grisolia, Noah Rattner, Anneliese Vogt-Harber, Regina Antonioli and Heather Petersen with staff being Kathie Robertson and Krystina Wright from USDF and Kristen Brett from USEF, and George Williams as chair to the DSE Working Group.** No discussion. 10 approved, 0 disapproved, and Sue Mandas, Debra Reinhardt, Noah Rattner, Regina Antonioli and Heather Petersen abstained. Motion carried.

Horse Welfare Statement – George Williams

The USEF Dressage Sport Committee created a horse welfare statement which was provided to everyone for reference.

These welfare statements would be posted around show grounds (similar to MAAP).

The idea also is that USDF would adopt something along the same lines. It was felt if the USDF EB would support this, they would like to have that in place for the January convention. If supported by this EB it would most likely also filter down to the GMOs.

The USDF statement (as shared at the spring 2024 meeting) needs updating, etc. Stephan feels it is important that USDF stay in sync with USEF and their position.

Presently, we are looking for USDF EB "approval" to support the USEF implementing this statement.

Anne Sushko moved and Helen van der Voort seconded the motion **to support the USEF's horse welfare statement and provide suggested edits** (in the second paragraph recommend changing "best" to utmost" and in the fourth paragraph "we are also committed to"). 15 approved, 0 disapproved, and no abstentions. Motion carried.

The plan is to have an updated USDF statement by the 2025 spring EB meeting.

2025 Spring Meeting dates reminder

- Arrive in Lexington Monday, April 21
- Meet Tuesday, April 22 (full day) and Wednesday, April 23 (half day)
- Depart Lexington after meeting on Wednesday, April 23

Future Spring Meeting Dates

This idea is to implement set dates so that the EB members can plan around the meeting rather than trying to set dates every year. No conclusion in the discussion but will take it up for a full discussion at the spring meeting.

New business/miscellaneous

The **USDF Connection** magazine has two openings coming available on the Editorial Advisory Working Group. Charlotte Trentelman moved and Debby Savage seconded **to appoint Jean Kraus to the Editorial Advisory Working Group**. No discussion. 15 approved, 0 disapproved, and no abstentions. Motion carried.

Other names may come forward once we find out who else is presently on the working group.

The **strategic plan** is old and it is time to do one in the very near future. It is very expensive to do a full strategic plan, but as we have the dues increase we can allocate the funds to this.

First, the EB should review of the current version, which should be sent out to the EB prior to the Christmas holiday for review. Then, whether it can be tweaked/updated or if we need to develop a fully new one will be established. Without that evaluation, it is difficult to determine how we need to go. Stephan will provide costs to develop a whole new one.

The **Member Guide** should have a review group for the cover since it is so controversial on social media and particularly without coming to the Executive Director or President with the concerns.

It was pointed out that the current policy is that the Arts Contest winner is afforded the front cover as the winner. So, changes to that process/program would have to take place for this suggestion to be implemented and will require additional discussion. The contest allows for membership involvement into the publication, which is a good thing.

It is determined that staff will put together the options and circle back with the EB for review and feedback.

The meeting adjourned at 11:50 am CST.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Reinhardt
USDF Secretary