



Unique USEF Dressage Pathway Programs Supported by the USET Foundation

PREPARE FUTURE TEAM TALENT

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For American athletes with aspirations to compete at the elite level, there is a long journey from competing at the national level to representing the U.S. at international championships. The US Equestrian (USEF) development pathways for each Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI) discipline, supported by the United States Equestrian Team (USET) Foundation, help bring promising athletes along each step of the way, ensuring the best opportunities for success. What's more, these pathway programs are key to building a robust pipeline of talent and therefore our country's competitive equestrian excellence on the greatest international stages now and in the future.

In dressage, programs like the Robert Dover USEF Horsemastership Clinic Week (RDHCW), the North American Youth Championships (NAYC), the Under 25 (U25) division, prepare junior and up-and-coming riders for the higher levels, many of whom will compete at the Adequan® Global Dressage Festival. International team outings, such as developing European tours with Nations Cup events, also help dressage athletes gain the experience needed to excel on senior Nations Cup Teams in the future.

NAYC provides juniors and young riders with a unique team experience and atmosphere while the annual RDHCW hosts 20 skilled riders, via invite only, to participate in lectures and lessons from renowned clinicians designed to assist in the development the next generation of U.S. dressage team talent. The U25 division has also become an increasingly important way for athletes between the ages of 16 and 25 (FEI age) to bridge the gap between the Young Rider and Grand Prix levels and provides access to USEF Dressage staff and coaches.

Several of the athletes that participated in the RDHCW in January 2022 went on to have great achievements in team and individual classes at NAYC held in August 2022 in Traverse City, Michigan. The consistency of young dressage athletes across competitions and from year to year currently speaks to the success of the pathway programs and the caliber of talent in the high performance pipeline.

For example, in an impressive feat, Lexie Kment and Montagny von der Heide and Kylee Kment with Honor — both of whom participated in RDHCW in January 2022 — earned the distinction of being two-time NAYC team gold medalists after winning the Junior Team Final in 2021 and

2022. Their Region 4 teammate Ella Fruchterman aboard Holts Le'mans was also on the gold-medal winning NAYC team with the Kments in 2021 and 2022.

In March 2022, a team of three horse-and-rider combinations made their U.S. team debut in the FEI Intermediate II Test during the FEI Dressage

Nations Cup Wellington CDI/OU25 competition presented by Diamante Farms in Wellington, Florida. Quinn Iverson aboard Beckham 19, Nicole Scarpino and Lambada 224, and Kaylee Christensen and Chateau 28 were led by Chef d'Equipe Charlotte Bredahl. The team finished second with a final team score of 129.50 behind the team from Canada which claimed the top spot with a score of 133.323.

Bredahl explained the importance of providing team opportunities for riders progressing up the high performance pathway. "The team did really well, given that we faced some adversity with the heat and first-time team jitters, which is why these experiences are so important for our up-and-coming athletes," she detailed. "These combinations have such potential and always want to improve, which is exactly what we're looking for from them."

While North American team experience is critical, competing abroad is equally if not more important as athletes progress along the high performance pathway. Three U.S. Young Riders concluded their month-long European tour with an eighth-place finish at Hagen CDI/OY held at Future Champions in Hagen, Germany, from June 14-19, 2022. The CDI/OY division included 26 talented horse-and-rider combinations from 10 different countries. The team was led by Chef d'Equipe George Williams. Over



the course of the competition, Williams was pleased to see improved rides from Erin Nichols, Mackenzie Peer, and Christian Simonson.

"After a bit of a rocky start in the Team Test, I was proud and happy with how our riders came back with strong performances for the Individual Test," explained

Williams. "It was exciting to see Christian prove how competitive we can be by improving on last year's performance, earning the highest scores ever for a U.S. rider in this show, and placing fifth in the Individual and fourth in the Freestyle."

Williams continued on to describe the event's significance along the pathway. "Future Champions has become an important part of our program," he explained. "It is such a great experience for our young athletes. Not only do they go head to head against the other top countries, but they also do it on the Europeans' home turf."

The first dressage pathway program in 2023 will be the Robert Dover USEF Horsemastership Clinic Week presented by Zen Elite Equestrian Center running January 3-8 at the Adequan® Global Dressage Festival in Wellington, Florida.

As philanthropic partner to USEF, the United States Equestrian Team (USET) Foundation helps provide the necessary development, training, and competition resources for our country's developing and elite athletes. Please visit USET.org to learn about the ways you can support riders progressing along the high performance pathway and to ensure our U.S. teams' prominence at the most impressive events in the world.



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