



**US Equestrian
Combined Driving Athlete Pathway Program**

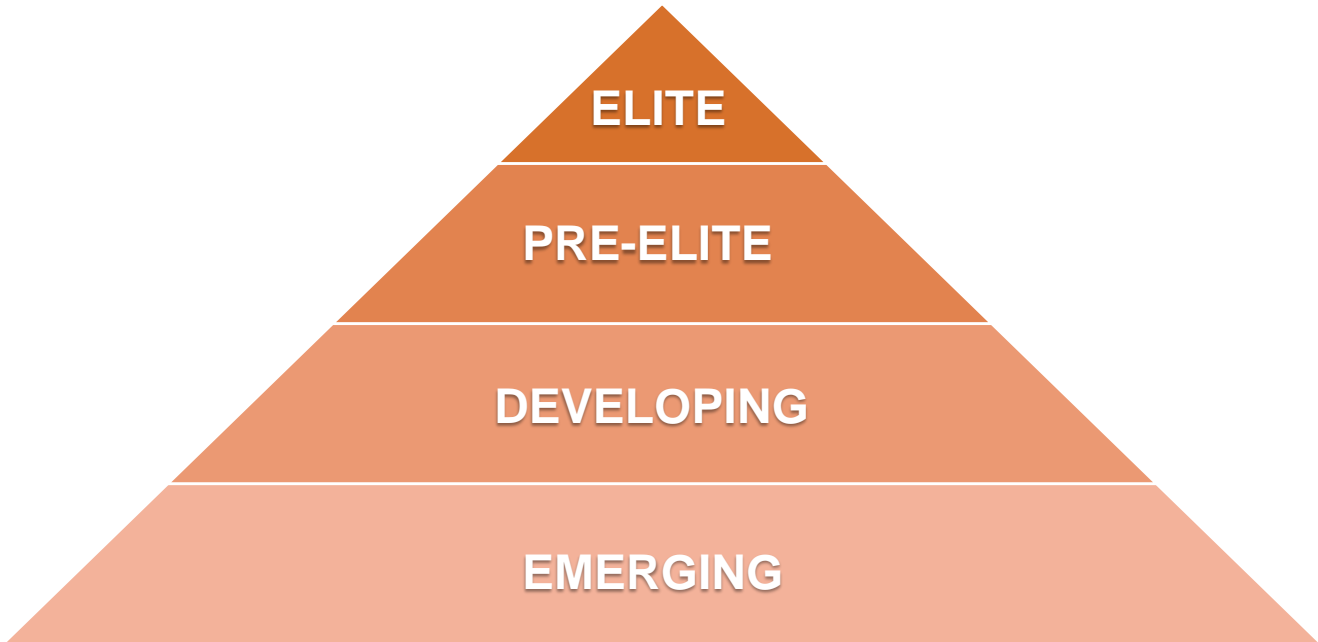


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Mission: Through a structured performance ladder, USEF will simultaneously increase the national standard of Combined Driving and achieve recognition on the world stage.

Vision: To grow and develop US Driving athletes and equines at all levels of their career.

Goal 1: Through grant support, USEF will support and maintain a growing number of Emerging Driver Clinics each year across the country.

Goal 2: Establish a formal tracking system to identify and support athletes through all levels of the Athlete Pathway Program.

Goal 3: By identifying and supporting talented drivers through the Athlete Pathway Program, US Equestrian will have an individual athlete finish in the top ten and the team, where applicable, in the top four at each FEI Championship by 2027.

USEF Driving Athlete Pathway Overview:

Designed as a route to prepare US Driving athletes for international success, the USEF Driving Athlete Pathway Program is designed to increase the quality of Driving talent in the United States as well as prepare those athletes to set their sights on Elite Driving and joining Team USA on the World Championship stage. Upon acceptance to the Pathway, Athletes agree to abide by the USEF Code of Conduct, USEF Safe Sport Policy, and all other USEF rules, Bylaws, policies, and procedures, while upholding the highest level of sportsmanship and horsemanship.

Pathway to Membership:

The Emerging Program level is open to all interested Athletes, while the higher tiers are limited to application or score-based admittance. For more information on each level's entrance requirements, please refer to that section of the Pathway Program.

Emerging Driver Program

The purpose of the USEF Emerging Driver program is to provide guidelines and support for introductory education in the sport. The program invites instructors to host introductory training sessions where approved curriculum is used to teach the basics of driving for singles up to multiples. Hosts and Clinicians may offer private lessons outside of Clinic hours. The Driving Sport Committee will approve both the Clinic and Grant amount at its discretion.

Guidelines for instruction at Emerging Driver Clinics will be created and shared with Hosts. Alternatively, hosts may also submit a clinician's own curriculum for consideration and approval.

Minimum Requirements to host a Clinic:

- Clinic hosts and Clinicians are required to be USEF Senior Active Competing members in good standing through the conclusion of the Clinic, including successful completion of all USEF Safe Sport Policy requirements.
- Clinic hosts will be required to execute an Emerging Clinic agreement prior to the release of grant funding.
- In the event of an accident, injury, or fatality, Clinic hosts must complete a Report Form and return it to USEF in accordance with GR848 and GR849.
- Clinic participants (athlete/equine combinations) may not be members of another USEF Driving Pathway Program.
- After the Clinic, the Clinician must submit a written report of the Clinic to the Director of Driving.

Program Benefits:

- Promotional support for the event via the USEF Driving Newsletter, USEF Combined Driving Website, and USA Driving Facebook Page.
- Free USEF Fan Memberships for participants who are not yet USEF members.
- Up to \$500 per day, maximum \$1000 total Clinic Support Grant

Developing Athlete Program

The mission of the USEF Developing Athlete Program is to provide guidance and educational resources to cultivate selected athlete/equine combinations who display the potential to improve the national standard of the sport and eventually contribute to a U.S. Team score at Driving World Championships. Athlete/equine combinations are admitted to the Developing Athlete Program for a maximum of four years. Combinations that attend an FEI Driving World Championship during their tenure in the Developing Athlete Program are automatically Developing program graduates and are entered into the Pre-Elite Program for a year.

Minimum Requirements for Eligibility:

- Athletes must be a U.S. Citizen & maintain an Active Competing membership with USEF in good standing.
- All horses/ponies must be recorded in good standing with USEF.
- Athletes must have completed and signed the USEF Code of Conduct.
- Athletes must comply with all requirements of the USEF Safe Sport Policy.
- Athletes must comply with the Clean Sport and Equine Drugs & Medications policies.
- Within the last two years from the date of application, athlete/equine combinations must have completed at least three CDEs at the USEF Preliminary level or above. Athletes based more than 1,000 miles from the closest USEF licensed CDE may apply to the Developing Athlete Program via in-person assessment at a Developing Athlete Clinic. For more information or to apply for an assessment, please contact the Director of Driving.

How to apply to the Developing Athlete Program:

Eligible athletes may apply via their Athlete Dashboard in either November or May; applications must include a video of the athlete's current division level Dressage test and a video of either a Cones or Marathon course. Para-Drivers will be considered on a case-by-case basis in comparison to the applicable level.

The following factors are considered for admission to the Developing Athlete Program:

- Athlete/equine competition results and the trajectory of results over the last two years, including a complete class comparison.
- The athlete's previous commitment to the sport of driving, including advancement through competition schedule and various participation opportunities.
- Athlete/equine combinations committed to seeking out additional training opportunities.
- Athlete/equine combinations showing consistency in performance, reviewed via video submission.
- Behavior of the athlete and team associated with the athlete; including, but not limited to horse/pony owners, coaches, grooms, and partners that may have an impact on creating a positive group environment.

Minimum Requirements for Retention:

- Attend one clinic and two USEF or FEI competitions a year
- All members must renew their Developing Athlete Membership during the November application cycle each year of their 4-year term.

Program Benefits:

- Competition planning and goal setting with Clinicians for both short term and long-term goals for the athlete and horse/pony combination.
- Training with a variety of appointed clinicians. The athlete's personal trainers are encouraged to attend and audit Clinics as well.
- Access to virtual educational opportunities which will enhance the athlete's competition performance.
- Group support at identified USEF competitions.

Developing Equine Program

The purpose of the USEF Developing Driving Equine Program is to allow current or previous Elite Athletes as well as athletes who have ever been selected for FEI Driving World Championships to receive support in expanding new equine's talents. Upon admission to the program, Athletes may attend the Developing Athlete Clinics to seek more training for their horses or ponies. The USEF Developing Athlete Working Group oversees the Developing Equine Program as a satellite division of the Developing Athlete Program. The Developing Equine Program is part of the Driving Athlete Pathway which seeks to assist athletes wishing to advance their up-and-coming new Driving equines to the next level of competition and performance.

Minimum Requirements for Eligibility:

- Athletes must be a U.S. Citizen & maintain an Active Competing membership with the USEF in good standing.
- All horses or ponies must be recorded with USEF in good standing and a minimum of four (4) years of age as defined by USEF in GR 102.
- Athletes must have completed and signed the USEF Code of Conduct.
- Athletes must comply with all requirements of the USEF Safe Sport Policy.
- Athletes must comply with the Clean Sport and Equine Drugs & Medications policies.
- Athlete/equine combinations must have only competed for two years or less prior to application in November.
- Athletes must have, at one point in time, been named to or attended at least one of the following:
 - USEF Elite Athlete Program
 - FEI Driving World Championship for Single Horses
 - FEI Driving World Championship for Pair Horses
 - FEI Driving World Championship for Four-in-Hand Horses
 - FEI Driving World Championship for Combined Ponies
 - FEI Driving World Championship for Young Horses
 - FEI Para Driving World Championship for Singles

How to apply to the Developing Equine Program:

Applications are available once a year in November through the Athlete Dashboard in your MyUSEF account. The submission must include a video of the equine training or competing. The following factors will contribute to the evaluation of the athlete's horse/pony:

- Horse/pony's showing perceived potential for future competitive success internationally.
- Review of the submitted video, including quality of movement, perceived scope and suitability for the discipline.
- Positive recommendation from another professional or a USEF or FEI licensed official.
- Athlete/equine competition results and trajectory of results, if applicable.

- Behavior of the athlete and people associated with the athlete (including, but not limited to horse/pony owners, coaches, grooms, and partners) that may have an impact on creating a positive group environment.

Athlete/equine combination admittance to the Program is limited to one year, with the option to renew for one year. Equines are limited to two years in the program, while Athletes may reapply with a new equine. Upon approval, athletes will be notified of their admittance into the Program and will be included in all DAP member communications.

Program Benefits:

- When availability permits, athletes may attend DAP clinics or training sessions with their developing equine.
- Competition planning and goal setting with Clinicians for short term and long-term goals for the horse/pony.
- When available, optional access to educational opportunities offered in the DAP.

Pre-Elite Program

The Pre-Elite Program is designed to help athletes and their horses/ponies begin to establish themselves on the international competition stage. Admission to the Pre-Elite Program is a score-based system determined by the top 30% of each competition phase and overall result at the last 2 World Championships in either USEF Novice/Open Advanced or CAI 2* or 3*. Para-Driving Athlete admittance is based on USEF Intermediate, or CPEAI 2* or above competitions. Athletes will need two qualifying scores in two phases, two overall qualifying scores, or one result from two phases and an overall score to be named to the Pre-Elite Athlete Program.

Minimum Requirements for Eligibility:

- Athlete must be a U.S. Citizen and must be an active competing member of the USEF in good standing.
- Athletes must maintain an active registration with the FEI in good standing.
- All horse(s)/ponies must be FEI registered and/or recorded with USEF in good standing.
- Athletes must have completed and signed the USEF Code of Conduct.
- Athletes must comply with all requirements of the USEF Safe Sport Policy.
- Athletes must comply with the FEI Clean Sport Policy (WADA).

Minimum Requirements for Qualification:

The qualifying period for the Pre-Elite program runs from December 1 to November 30 of the following year. Able-bodied Athlete and horse/pony combinations must obtain the following results at the USEF Novice/Open Advanced or FEI CAI 2*, 3*, or above competitions within the qualification period to be named to the Pre-Elite Athlete program list. Para-Driving Athletes and horse/pony combinations must obtain the following results at the USEF Intermediate, or CPEAI 2* or above competitions within the qualification period to be named to the Pre-Elite Athlete program list:

- Two competition phase results; or
- Two overall results; or
- One two phase result and one overall result.

Athlete/equine combinations are defined as two of the same horses/ponies in the turnout for pairs or three of the same horses/ponies in the turnout for Four-in-Hands. Qualifying results for competition phases will only be considered successful when obtained together at the same event. Marathon results for all divisions are determined by seven obstacles, and where applicable, athlete results are calculated to an average of seven obstacles.

Phase	Horse Four-in-Hand	Phase	Horse Pair
Dressage	47 or better	Dressage	58 or better
Marathon	106 or better	Marathon	100 or better
Cones	7 or better	Cones	12 or better
Overall	163 or better	Overall	174 or better
Phase	Horse Single	Phase	Pony Four-in-Hand
Dressage	58 or better	Dressage	54 or better
Marathon	88 or better	Marathon	96 or better
Cones	2 or better	Cones	13 or better
Overall	151 or better	Overall	173 or better
Phase	Pony Pair	Phase	Pony Single
Dressage	52 or better	Dressage	56 or better
Marathon	84 or better	Marathon	84 or better
Cones	4 or better	Cones	6 or better
Overall	149 or better	Overall	150 or better
Phase	Para-Driving Grade I	Phase	Para-Driving Grade II
Dressage	53 or better	Dressage	55 or better
Marathon	102 or better	Marathon	103 or better
Cones	3 or better	Cones	2 or better
Overall	166 or better	Overall	165 or better

Program Benefits: Upon acceptance, Pre-Elite Athletes gain access to their choice of benefits. Athletes can either:

- opt in to attend Developing Athlete Clinics; or
- receive up to a \$1,500 grant to be used toward training.

Pre-Elite Athletes that choose the grant option are still able to audit the DAP Clinic lessons. After gaining their second qualifying score, Pre-Elite Athletes can begin qualifying for the program again within the same calendar year; however, grant benefits are only disbursed once a year. Pre-Elite Athletes with grant benefits that qualify for the Elite Athlete Program in the same year will only receive the difference between the two grant amounts; those with Clinic benefits will receive the full Elite Athlete grant.

Elite Athlete Program

The Elite Athlete Program is primarily a score-based system with admission also based on podium finishes at World Championships. Score-based entry is determined by the top 15% of each competition phase and overall result at the last two World Championships in either USEF Open Advanced or CAI 3*. Para-Driving Athletes admittance is based on USEF Intermediate, where the CPEAI Dressage Test is being used, or CPEAI 2* or above competitions. Athletes will need two qualifying scores in two phases, two overall qualifying scores, or one result from two phases and an overall score to be named to the Elite Athlete Program. By making the Elite list, Athletes gain grant support to remain continuously competitive at the top level.

Minimum Requirements for Eligibility:

- Athlete must be a U.S. Citizen and must be an active competing member of the USEF in good standing.
- Athletes must maintain an active registration with the FEI in good standing.
- All horse(s)/ponies must be FEI registered and/or recorded with the USEF in good standing.
- Athletes must have completed and signed the USEF Code of Conduct.
- Athletes must comply with all requirements of the USEF Safe Sport Policy.
- Athletes must comply with the FEI Clean Sport Policy (WADA).

Minimum Requirements for Qualification: The qualifying period for the Elite program runs from December 1 to November 30 of the following year.

Podium finish qualifications: Athlete/equine combinations that earn an overall team or individual medal at the following events within the qualifying period will earn a qualification to the Elite Athlete list for two years following the championship:

- FEI Driving World Championship for Single Horses
- FEI Driving World Championship for Pair Horses
- FEI Driving World Championship for Four-in-Hand Horses
- FEI Driving World Championship for Combined Ponies
- FEI Para-Driving World Championship for Singles

Score-based qualifications: Athlete/equine combinations must obtain the following results at the USEF Open Advanced or FEI CAI 3*, or above competitions within the qualification period to be named to the Elite Athlete program list. Para-Driving Athlete/equine combinations must obtain the following results at the USEF Intermediate or equivalent Foreign National Competition, where the CPEAI Dressage Test is being used, or CPEAI 2* or above competitions:

- Two competition phase results or
- Two overall results or
- One two phase result and one overall result

Athlete/equine combinations are defined as two of the same horses/ponies in the turnout for pairs or three of the same horses/ponies in the turnout for Four-in-Hands.

Qualifying results for competition phases will only be considered successful when obtained together at the same event. Marathon results for all divisions are determined by seven obstacles, and where applicable, athlete results are calculated to an average of seven obstacles.

Phase	Horse Four-in-Hand	Phase	Horse Pair
Dressage	44 or better	Dressage	54 or better
Marathon	103 or better	Marathon	98 or better
Cones	5 or better	Cones	7 or better
Overall	158 or better	Overall	163 or better
Phase	Horse Single	Phase	Pony Four-in-Hand
Dressage	56 or better	Dressage	48 or better
Marathon	86 or better	Marathon	93 or better
Cones	0 or better	Cones	8 or better
Overall	143 or better	Overall	157 or better
Phase	Pony Pair	Phase	Pony Single
Dressage	49 or better	Dressage	55 or better
Marathon	89 or better	Marathon	83 or better
Cones	4 or better	Cones	4 or better
Overall	149 or better	Overall	145 or better
Phase	Para-Driving Grade I	Phase	Para-Driving Grade II
Dressage	50 or better	Dressage	49 or better
Marathon	97 or better	Marathon	96 or better
Cones	0 or better	Cones	0 or better
Overall	155 or better	Overall	149 or better

Program Benefits: Upon acceptance, Elite Athletes gain access to a one-time up to \$5,000 grant per qualification period to support the Athlete/Equine combinations training and growth in the sport.