



Chef d'Equipe Guide for the Dressage North American Youth Championships

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Overview: Scope and Purpose

This guide is intended to provide general information and guidance for Chef d'Equipes (Chef) for the North American Youth Championships (NAYC).

As a volunteer position, the role of Chef is a significant commitment that provides critical support to the athletes and their families and can have a direct impact on the success of the team.

This guide is intended to provide helpful information, tools, and support for the planning and execution of the Chef's role. **While intended to be comprehensive, there will always be additional information provided by FEI, USEF, and USDF that may not be included in this document.**

Rider Applications will be available on January 1. Final Selections of athletes are named AFTER USEF submits the definite entry to the FEI, and receipt is confirmed. ANY ATHLETES WHO ARE LISTED ON MULTIPLE NOMINATED ENTRIES (CHILDREN, JUNIOR, YOUNG RIDER, U25) OF A REGION MUST DECLARE IN WHICH EVENT THEY WILL PARTICIPATE BY THE DEFINITE ENTRY DEADLINE.

What to expect as a Chef

The Chef serves as the team manager, coordinating athletes, supporting staff, and logistics while ensuring the athletes follow championship rules and procedures. They act as the primary liaison with event officials and help support strategic decisions to keep the team running smoothly. Some key items to expect as Chef include:

Preparation:	Onsite at Show:
Prospective Chefs will submit a chef application, background check, and other forms. USDF/USEF memberships must be current, and SafeSport must be completed prior to submission of the application.	Expect 12+ hour days onsite at the horse park for the duration of the event to support athletes and families.
Support the Regional Youth Coordinator in communicating key information to declared athletes.	Manage daily communications and schedules to ensure all athletes are informed and prepared.
May be involved in assisting teams with fundraising, sponsorships, team kits, transportation, etc.	Coordinate schooling, lunging, veterinary service, and medical support in accordance with rules.
Make their own travel arrangements (using personal credit card) that stay within the defined budget. Chefs will be reimbursed by their region (receipts must be received within 30 days of the closing of NAYC)	Clearly communicate rules and expectations to all athletes and families.

Planning Checklist

The following checklist is intended to provide general guidance. Depending on your region and the role of your Regional Youth Coordinator, the Chef may or may not be involved in every activity below.

Month(s)	Task
Jan – March	Submit Chef application: Chef Application
Jan – May	Support the Regional Youth Coordinator and declared athletes (rules, fundraising, sponsorship, budget, etc.)
Jan – Jun	Make travel arrangements to Traverse City as soon as possible.
Jan – Jul	Review NAYC rules with emphasis on SafeSport, medication, attire, show map, etc.
Jun – Jul	Support coordination of team items: parade, sponsor banner, jog outfits, team kits, etc.
July	Submit Nominated and Definite Show Entry paperwork
July	Coordinate travel schedules, stabling, feed & bedding orders, etc.
July	Onsite: Support early and normal arrival, vet checks, and stable setup
July	Carry out onsite responsibilities for the duration of the show.
August	Summarize lessons learned to improve for next year.

Chef Application

Typically, the application process will begin in the first quarter (January – March). Chef Applications are submitted to USEF. USDF will review applications and send recommendations to USEF, who makes the final decision. To be considered, Chef applicants must have a USEF membership, USDF membership, and Safe Sport training at the time the application is submitted. If selected, other paperwork will be required, including USEF Code of Conduct, USEF Conflict of Interest Form, and USEF Letter of Agreement (upon selection).

- USDF Participating Membership
- USEF Competing Membership
- Background Check
- Safe Sport
- Code of Conduct
- Conflict of Interest Form
- Letter of Agreement Upon Selection

Planning: Support Regional Youth Coordinator

The Chef may be involved in supporting the Regional Youth Coordinator to communicate and support the declared athletes. Each region handles the preliminary planning differently, but some considerations include:

- **Budgeting:** Be sure to have a clear budget in place to assist with travel and other expenses.
- **Communication:** Clear communication right from the start will help the entire process go more smoothly. The Chef may support the Region Youth Coordinator to introduce athletes to each other, encourage fundraising, communicate budget goals, provide information about the qualifying process, rules, medical or veterinary requirements, FEI Passports, Safe Sport, and foster the region's cohesion.
- **Fundraising:** Throughout the qualifying process, the declared athletes will typically begin their fundraising efforts. They may need information, support, ideas, or encouragement from the Regional Youth Coordinator and/or Chef. For more information, see Fundraising.
- **Preliminary Travel Arrangements:** As soon as possible, travel arrangements should be made due to the high (and escalating) costs of the Traverse City area. As a popular summer travel destination, the costs of lodging, flights, and rental cars dramatically increase as the year progresses. For more details, see Travel Arrangements.

Travel Arrangements

Travel costs to the Traverse City area are high since it is a popular summer vacation destination. Booking your travel as early as possible will save money. Some considerations include:

- Coordinate closely with the Regional Youth Coordinator.
- Often, the Chefs will share lodging (hotel room, Airbnb/VRBO) due to the high costs in Traverse City.
- Chefs can coordinate with the Regional Youth Coordinator to submit expenses in two-three batches. The first expense report can be submitted after the preliminary travel is booked (flight, lodging, car rental, golf cart rental). Then, the final expenses can be submitted after the show has concluded. This will reduce the need to personally cover the high credit card bill for multiple months. The Regional Youth

Sample Typical Out of Pocket Chef Expenses	
Air Travel	\$800
Hotel/AirBNB/VRBO (split)	\$1,500
Car Rental	\$800
Meals	\$500
TOTAL TEAM ESTIMATED COSTS	\$3,600

3. **Individual Show Entry:** After the Definite Entry has been accepted, USDF will distribute specific instructions for each rider to sign up for the show. This process is evolving, and it is the Regional Coordinator's role to communicate the instructions to the athletes and their families clearly. USEF recommends that the athlete submit their own entries after discussion with the Regional Youth Coordinator.

Pre-Travel Communications

As NAYC approaches, there will be a steady stream of information and instructions. It can be overwhelming, especially for new athletes and their families. Compiling the information into a single communication and/or sending timely reminders can help make the process go smoothly. Some key reminders as you approach the show include:

- Show Entry:** The Regional Youth Coordinator confirms, and the Chef will double-check that all athletes have completed their individual show entries and submitted their payments.
- Stabling Requests:** The Regional Youth Coordinator confirms, and the Chef will double-check that stabling requests have been submitted and accepted.
- Feed & Bedding:** Regions differ in their approach to coordinating feed & bedding but communicate CLEARLY about feed orders. The individual athletes will establish their own accounts. It is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED for each rider to bring at least a bale of hay and two bags of shavings. Athletes should be prepared to arrive without having their hay/bedding at their stall. Especially if you are part of the early arrivals or if you are arriving late at night, you may not be able to reach anyone in the feed/bedding office. **Be prepared! Each competitor will create their own account and handle individual expenses.**
- Coordinate Arrivals:** As the Chef, you should know when your athletes are arriving. Have contact information for each rider.
- FEI Human and Horse Health Info:** Provide reminders of where to check for banned substances.
- Temperature Checks:** Remind your athletes to have temperature checks three days before arrival and to enter them into the FEI Horse App.

Combined Teams

If regions do not have enough athletes for a regional team, USDF will work with USEF to formulate combined teams and, when possible, to provide a team experience for all athletes. They will combine athletes from different regions to formulate a Combined Team. In this case, typically one Chef will be assigned to support the team onsite. Some considerations for combined teams are outlined below:

- Short Notice:** Combined Teams are assigned by USEF and are intended to be as evenly competitive as possible. The short notice is a challenge, but teams cannot be combined until after the definite entry, which is posted in the FEI Schedule for the event.

- ❑ **Stabling:** Combined Teams may be stabled together, or the athletes may be stabled with their home Region. Stabling by team or region will be determined by USEF. Athletes should be prepared for both scenarios. We encourage flexibility and understanding.
- ❑ **Chef's Role:** The Chef onsite will serve ALL athletes on the combined team. Group communications, team meetings, and scheduling will need to include all athletes and the Regional Youth Coordinator (if on-site). The Chef for the athlete's region should also still be available to communicate, offer support, and answer questions for the athletes.

Onsite at NAYC: Chef Responsibilities

Early Arrivals
 FEI Barn Move In & Vet Checks
 Welcome Meeting and Daily Communications
 Chef's Meetings
 Scheduling Schooling, Vet Services, Lunging
 Jogs & Competition Days
 Passport Return & Departure

Early Arrivals

Early arrivals at NAYC can be challenging. Since there are ongoing hunter/jumper shows, it can be confusing for athletes who arrive before the FEI stabling is open. Some considerations for proactive Chef communications include:

- ❑ **Stall Assignments:** Although the horse will be provided with a stall assignment, it may not be available when you arrive. Communicate with the Feed Office if your stall is not available. If you arrive in the middle of the night, the Feed Office will not be open. Confirm the official Traverse City after-hours contact.
- ❑ **Bring Feed and Shavings:** Instruct early arrivals to bring feed and at least two bags of shavings to use upon their arrival. Even if the food has been ordered ahead of time, there is a possibility that it will NOT be waiting for you.
- ❑ **Bleach Bottle:** The barns are NOT FEI compliant for early arrivals. So, it is advised that athletes be prepared to clean and sanitize the stalls on their own. Inspect for needles or any other substances left behind by the previous show.
- ❑ **Confirm with Sarah Hollander, USEF, who the stable manager is.**

FEI Barn Move In & Vet Checks

In preparation for FEI Barn Move-in and Vet Checks, here are some considerations:

- ❑ **Verify Stalls:** Before the athletes begin moving in their horses, the Chef should verify that all stalls are assigned, including horse stalls, tack room(s), and feed room(s). Typically, the team or regional horses are grouped together (divided by Children/Juniors/Young Riders).
- ❑ **Coordinate Vet Check In:** Obtain information from the dressage show office about the timing and scheduling of the vet checks. Communicate with the athletes in preparation for

the vet check and escort the athletes to present each one. The athlete must bring the passport and their thermometer. The vet will retain the passport, which will be returned at the end of the show.

- Equipment:** Coordinate approval of therapeutic equipment with the Vet.

Welcome Meeting and Daily Communications

Communication is the key to being successful in the role of Chef. It is important to plan out what will work best for you and your team. It is important to plan out your strategy. There is so much information coming from multiple sources, and it is the Chef's job to relay credible, clear messages to their athletes and families. Some considerations include:

- Schedule Calendar:** One option is to distribute the overall competition schedule before travel begins – just to get everyone on the same page. Please note that the schedule is subject to change, and changes should be communicated to the team as soon as possible.
- Welcome Meeting:** Hold a welcome meeting on Sunday or Monday, depending on your team's athlete arrivals. It can be at the barn or a welcome party at a restaurant. Use this meeting to convey all initial information and clearly explain how the daily updates will be communicated. This will allow you to set the expectations and tone for the week. With prior notice, Sarah Hollander, USEF, can arrange a meeting space at Traverse City.
- Daily Communication:** Daily communication and updates are critical. It is recommended to do a daily schedule update each evening for the following day. Include all known information, including times, locations, participants, etc. For example, see SAMPLE Daily Communications.
- WhatsApp:** This will be the primary communication tool for the teams and will be limited to chef, athlete, parent, trainer, and Regional Youth Coordinator only. You can set this up before travel begins. Each person will need to download the free WhatsApp app. The Organizer Committee will have its own WhatsApp communication for Chefs ONLY.
- White Board:** A good ol' white board is also helpful. Each evening, write out the next day's schedule. You can also snap a picture and add it to your WhatsApp group.

Chef Meetings

Typically, each day there is an official Chef meeting for the Children, Juniors, or Young Riders. They are mandatory to attend. Chef meetings are for Chefs only (no coaches, parents, or athletes are allowed to attend). Some key points include:

- Add The Meetings to Your Calendar:** Make sure you know when and where they will be taking place.
- Source of Key Information:** There may be updates or highlighted topics that you will be responsible for sharing with your athletes and families. Take notes and include a summary in your daily communications.
- Draw:** The draw for the rider order of go for the team competition will be conducted at the Chef meetings. Bring your luck.
- Rider Order:** Chefs will be expected to turn in their rider order forms at the Chef meeting for the team competition by the official deadline determined by the Organizing Committee.

- ❑ **Questions:** The Chef meetings are the appropriate place for Chef inquiries that affect the competition as a whole. If you have an individual question, typically you can ask either before or after the meeting. The Chef meetings are also an opportunity to speak with other Chefs.

Scheduling Schooling, Vet Services, and Lunging

One of the important aspects of the on-site role of Chef is assisting the athletes to schedule schooling, vet services, and lunging. The show organizing committee will provide the specific times and locations for each of the items, but it is up to the Chef to clearly communicate and coordinate. All athletes should clearly communicate their needs to the Chef since there will be specific rules and requirements that must be met. Without the following rules, athletes may be disqualified:

- ❑ **Vet Services:** The onsite FEI vets will be required to provide ANY type of vet service. Chefs will work with the athletes to schedule these services, and whenever possible, Chefs will escort their athletes to the vet.
- ❑ **Schooling & Lunging:** There will be specific times and arenas that athletes will be allowed to go to school and lunge in. The Chef's responsibility is to clearly communicate and work with the athletes to schedule both schooling rides and lunging. In some cases, the lunging arena will require signing up. Whenever possible, the Chef should escort the athletes to their activities. It is the chef's responsibility to ensure a steward is present for schooling and lunging.
- ❑ **Approval of Therapeutic Equipment:** Chefs will need to schedule time with the vet to review therapeutic equipment.

Jogs & Competition Days

Some considerations for the role of the Chef at Horse Inspections/Jogs and Competition Days include:

- ❑ **Jogs:** Clearly communicate the time and location to all athletes for their jogs. If needed, scout out the location to make sure you know where to direct the athletes. The Chef will escort the team to the jog and be present in case there are any issues or concerns. Confirm with athletes that they understand the jog protocol. Regional Youth Coordinators should ask all athletes if they have done a FEI jog beforehand, but as Chef please confirm.
- ❑ **Competition Days:** Post all ride times on the whiteboard and the daily communication in WhatsApp. Escort the athletes, when possible, to the arena or line up a trainer or an appropriate individual to escort the athletes. Understand that the competition days can be stressful and emotional for the athlete. For the Chef, keeping a positive attitude is key.
- ❑ **Award Ceremonies:** The award ceremonies immediately follow the last rider. If your team/athlete is in contention for a podium spot going into the last rider, clearly communicate expectations and timing. Ensure that someone for the last rider brings polo wraps to the arena. The Chef participates in the team ceremony and should be wearing a team shirt.

- ❑ **Interviews for Podium Finishers:** Ensure that a groom, or appropriate individual, will be present for horses participating in award ceremonies and for horse care after the award ceremony when the athlete is needed for the Press Conference. The groom, or appropriate individual, will need to lead the horse back to the barn and care for the horse until the athlete is finished with the interviews.

Passport Return & Departure

It is critical for the Chefs to coordinate their travel to ensure that at least one regional Chef remains on-site until the end of the competition. If your region has two or more chefs, travel can be staggered – with one Chef arriving a day early and the other one staying until the end of the awards on Sunday. With flight schedules, this can be challenging. Some of the considerations include:

- ❑ **Passport Return:** At the end of the competition, the Passports are typically returned to the Chef. Then, the Chef distributes them to the athletes.
- ❑ **Packing Up:** The Chef can work with the athletes to coordinate who will be transporting the team banners or other regional materials back. Communicate clearly with the team to ensure the regional materials that are reused end up with the Region Youth Coordinator or the Regional Director.
- ❑ **Show Accounting:** The Chef must confirm with athletes that their accounts are settled at the end of the competition. If not, passports may be withheld. On Friday or Saturday, athletes can ask for a printout of expenses, confirm expenditures, and pay.

SAMPLE Daily Communications

Daily Schedule Communications are a critical part of the Chef’s role and are effective in keeping everyone on the same page. Daily communication can be written on a whiteboard or sent electronically via WhatsApp to your athletes and their families.

Each day will be different and should include competition ride times for your athletes.

Tuesday (DATE)

00:00-05:00 Low-light Barn Hours (sign-in/sign-out req’d)

06:00-07:00 Hand-walking opportunity in WARM-UP Arena (not the Competition Arena)

10:00 Chef d’ Equipe On-Site (or earlier)

10:00-14:00 Team Poster Making in Cabana Coast Tent

10:40-11:00 Familiarization (YR Div.) in Warm-Up

11:00-11:20 Familiarization (YR Div.) in Main Ring
15:20-15:40 Familiarization (Children Div.) in Warm-Up
15:40-16:00 Familiarization (Children Div.) in Main Ring
16:45-17:00 Horse Inspection for Children Div. (BRAID HORSES)
17:30-17:45 Horse Inspection for YR Div. (BRAID HORSES)
17:30-18:30 Parade of Nations (Team Uniforms)
18:30-19:00 Welcome Party Hosted by Chick-fil-A (Dinner)

18:30-19:00 Chef d'Equipe Meeting and Draw for Comp. CH Prelim B

Additional Resources

USDF and USEF will send updated information throughout the qualifying period, preparation, and competition.

The links in this section are only intended as a guide. Continually be aware that links may change, and new information sources may be added.

Most information can be found on the main USEF North American Youth Championships page, which includes selection procedures, Horse and Human drug rules, attire and equipment rules, and much more.

[FEI North American Youth Championships](#)

Rules and information for Safe Sport can also be found on the USEF website:

[Safe Sport](#)

Standings, Declared Athletes, and Previous Results can be found on the USDF website:

[USDF NAYC](#)

The show venue website has travel and site information:

[Traverse City Horse Shows](#)

Addendum – Code of Ethics

It is the responsibility of the Chef to represent the rights of the rider and the team. The Chef needs to be present if a steward speaks to their athlete and to enforce instructions. Chef should also notify Chef d' Mission (USEF Dressage Youth Coach, or assigned individual, to represent Chef d' Equipes onsite with FEI) of all discussions.

