



## Athlete Selection Policy for the FEI World Championships (Dressage) Aachen (GER) 2026

### Introduction

This Policy sets out the process for selecting athletes and horses for the FEI World Championships (Dressage) in Aachen (GER) 10<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> August 2026.

### Section 1 – Key Timelines

<b>22<sup>nd</sup> June 2026</b>	The Dressage HPM announces the long list of combinations under consideration for selection for the FEI World Championships (Dressage)Aachen (GER) 2026
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> July 2026</b>	Horse Sport Ireland publishes the list of nominated entries.  Horse Sport Ireland reserves the right to amend or supplement the list of nominated entries up to the FEI deadline, where additional Athlete/Horse combinations achieve the Minimum Eligibility Requirement within the FEI qualification period.
<b>6<sup>th</sup> July 2026</b>	Horse Sport Ireland formally submits the nominated entries to the FEI, to include a certificate of capability for the FEI World Championships (Dressage) Aachen (GER) pursuant to FEI General Regulations. Inclusion on the nomination entry list does not confer selection to the team.
<b>8<sup>th</sup> July 2026</b>	The Dressage High Performance Manager will determine the selected athlete combinations who will represent Ireland at the FEI World Championships (Dressage) Aachen (GER).
<b>27<sup>th</sup> July 2026</b>	Horse Sport Ireland will submit the Definite Entries to the FEI for the FEI World Championships (Dressage) in Aachen (GER).

### Section 2 - Eligibility for Nomination

- 2.1 All athletes and horses wishing to compete at the FEI World Championships (Dressage) must in the first instance achieve a Minimum Eligibility Requirement (MER) in accordance with the FEI Qualification Procedures. Please note that the achievement of the MER is a basic requirement and in no way confers an obligation upon the High-Performance Manager to select an Athlete/Horse combination.
- 2.2 It is the sole responsibility of each Athlete to ensure that they have the required MER for the level of Championship.

#### **FEI qualification criteria for the 2026 FEI World Championships – Dressage :**

In order to qualify for participation at the 2026 FEI Dressage World Championship, Athlete/Horse combination must have achieved a percentage score of at least 66% attributed by the Ground Jury and by any two (2) different FEI Level 4 Dressage Judges, of a nationality other than that of the rider, in a Grand Prix, at two (2) different CDI3\*/CDI4\*/CDI5\*/CDI-W or CDIO3\*/CDIO4\*/CDIO5\* events, from 1st January 2025 until the date of the nominated entries.

### **Section 3 - Responsibilities**

- 3.1 It is each athlete's responsibility to be fully cognisant of the current FEI Rules for Dressage and the FEI Clean Sport policy.
- 3.2 Athletes must strictly abide by the following:
  - a) FEI General Regulations and FEI Discipline Sport Rules
  - b) FEI Code of Conduct for the Welfare of the horse.
  - c) FEI Equine Anti-Doping Rules and Equine Controlled Medication Rules and the Human Anti-Doping Rules as set out by the FEI and Sport Ireland.
  - d) Horse Sport Ireland General Rules.
  - e) The Horse Sport Ireland Athlete Code of Conduct.
  - f) Prompt communications with the Dressage High Performance Manager, Team Veterinarian, and Horse Sport Ireland in relation to the Horse Sport Ireland High Performance Programme requirements/requests.
  - g) Athletes must show a commitment to personal fitness and professional behaviour.
  - h) All Athletes selected will be required to wear the official NF kit were provided while participating at the FEI World Championships (Dressage).

### **Section 4 - Veterinary**

- 4.1 Horse Sport Ireland can request that a horse be made available for inspection by the Team Veterinarian(s) or an appointed Veterinarian at any time. Athletes must comply with this request.
- 4.2 Athletes must notify Horse Sport Ireland of any change in their horse's health status or of any veterinary issues when they first become apparent.
- 4.3 The Horse Sport Ireland can send the Team Veterinarian or an appointed Veterinarian to take a blood and/or urine sample from a horse at any time, for the purposes of testing for prohibited substances, and/or FEI Pre-Arrival Testing and/or as part of an assessment of the horse's well-being.

- 4.4 Athletes (at their own expense) shall make available, upon the request of the Team Veterinarian or an appointed Veterinarian, the veterinary records of horse(s) being considered for selection. In addition, athletes, (at their own expense), shall be responsible for supplying any follow-up diagnostic information requested by the Team Veterinarian for horses being considered for selection. Failure to comply with any request of the Team Veterinarian or an appointed Veterinarian may adversely affect a combination in respect of selection.
- 4.5 Each athlete will be required to keep a medication logbook for their horses in which they shall record all products, treatments, foodstuffs and all supplements used on or given to their horse commencing **42 days** before the event until the conclusion of the FEI World Championships (Dressage).
- 4.6 The Team Veterinarian will be entitled to view this logbook at any time. Athletes are required to submit this logbook together with the Medication and Anti-Doping Control Declaration (Appendix 3) to the Team Veterinarian for assessment on or before the FEI Final Definite Entries in line with Rule 8.12 of the Horse Sport Ireland General Rules.
- 4.7 In the event that treatments and medications are necessary subsequent to the submission of the logbook, express approval is required from Team Veterinarian and Horse Sport Ireland. This is a mandatory requirement to ensure that squad horses are managed appropriately within the pre-competition window and before departure.
- 4.8 For the purposes of section IV, Horse Sport Ireland reserves the right to remove an athlete combination from selection, where the athlete does not comply with any of the above veterinary requests, or the horse is deemed unsound and/or unfit by the Team Veterinarian to travel and compete at the FEI World Championships (Dressage). The decision of Horse Sport Ireland on advice from Team Veterinarian is final.

## **Section 5 - Specific Nomination Criteria**

### **Core Objective:**

This nomination policy combines both competition and general criteria in order for the Dressage High Performance Manager to select Irish Athlete/Horse combinations to compete at the FEI World Championships (Dressage).

The Dressage High Performance Manager's primary objective is to nominate the appropriate mix of combinations and/or individual athlete/horse combinations, as applicable, to give Ireland the best possible chance of achieving its strategic objectives at the FEI World Championships (Dressage), including qualification opportunities for the Olympic Games, Los Angeles 2028, where such qualification is available.

- 5.1 In assessing the performances of Combinations, the High-Performance Manager **will consider** the following competition & general measures:

#### **(A) Competition Measures**

- i. The results by the athlete and horse combination at CDI3\*, CDI4\* and CDI5\*, CDIO\* - NC, CDI-W level in 2025 and 2026 with emphasis firstly on Grand Prix, then the Grand Prix Special, followed by some consideration of those in the Freestyle.

- ii. Consistency of scores over 68%, the High-Performance Director reserves the right to consider scores below 68% if there are compelling reasons to do so.
- iii. The star level of the shows and the calibre of the judges with relevance to the ground jury of the World Championships.
- iv. The performance trajectory in 2025 and 2026, the trend in scores.
- iv. Scores in 2026 will be given greater weight than scores obtained in 2025.
- v. In accordance with FEI Rules applicable in 2026, Minimum Eligibility Requirements may be achieved while competing in a snaffle bridle. However, as a double bridle remains mandatory at 4\*, 5\* and Championship level, for the purposes of selection, greater weighting will be afforded to scores and performances achieved in a double bridle. The High Performance Manager reserves the right to consider performances achieved in a snaffle bridle where satisfied that such performances are relevant to current form and Championship readiness.
- vii. The overall quality of the start list as determined by FEI rankings of the other athletes and horses, and their current form.
- viii. The experience of the athlete and horse as a combination and their ability to cope with the pressures and challenges of the FEI World Championships (Dressage).
- viii. Any mandatory selection event(s) will, where practicable, be communicated in writing to eligible athletes in advance of the selection period.
- viii. Degree of commitment to the Horse Sport Ireland Dressage High Performance Programme.

**(B) General Considerations**

- i. The soundness of the horse to meet the challenges of competing and travelling to the FEI World Championships (Dressage) will be a significant factor in any selection decision. Athletes must keep the Team Veterinarian fully briefed on any health or soundness issues the horse may have both historically and throughout the season.
- ii. Athletes are required to disclose any illness or injury (however minor) to the High-Performance Manager and Team Veterinarian. Where it becomes apparent that a selected horse is unsound or unfit to travel or that there was a non-disclosure relating to soundness, the High-Performance Manager reserves the right to remove that combination from nomination and selection with immediate effect.
- iii. Athletes are required to disclose any illness or injury (however minor) to the High-Performance Manager and HSI Medical Officer, Dr Lindsay Mason which may affect their ability to perform. The health and fitness of the athlete to meet the challenges of competing at and travelling to the FEI World Championships (Dressage) will be a factor in any selection decision.
- iv. Further consideration will be given to the following general measures:
  - a. Past performances and current form of the athlete and horse as a combination will be the primary consideration, together with the

- historic performance record of the athlete and/or horse, where the High Performance Manager considers such history to be relevant.
- b. Consideration of the circumstances surrounding any non-completion of events, including elimination, retirement or withdrawal, whether recent or historic. The High-Performance Manager will assess such circumstances having regard to all relevant mitigating factors and submissions from athletes and may determine the weight, if any, to be attributed to such circumstances.
  - c. The suitability of the Combination with regard to the likely characteristics of the arenas in Aachen, GER and for the expected conditions of the FEI World Championships (Dressage) (taking into account the objective of the team competition);
  - d. the ability of the Athlete and his/her support personnel to operate and perform in a Championships environment which is highly regulated and pressurised.
  - e. the ability of the Athlete and/or support team to contribute towards an effective team and winning orientated environment.
  - f. the overall composition of the team.
  - g. the ability and experience of the Combination to compete successfully at the highest level of international competition.
  - h. demonstrated experience and/ or success at Championship level.
  - i. the ability, or potential ability, of a horse and/or Athlete to perform under the stress and pressure of the Championships.
  - j. the ability of the Athlete to prepare their horse to peak condition for a major campaign, such as the FEI World Championships (Dressage);
  - k. consistency of performance and the likelihood of a suitable performance to contribute towards the primary outcome/a podium outcome.
  - l. exceptional ability of a Combination (and the potential to achieve a podium finish) may be a consideration and may, in the sole discretion of the HPM, place a Combination with less experience or consistency ahead of another Combination.
  - m. degree of commitment to the Horse Sport Ireland Dressage High Performance Programme.

## **Section 6 – Force Majeure**

- 6.1 In considering the performances of athletes at events or other attendances in line with this policy, the High-Performance Manager may, at her discretion, give weight to extenuating circumstances.
- 6.2 For the purposes of section 6.1 above, extenuating circumstances means an inability to compete, or perform or contribute at an optimum level arising from:
  - i. Injury or illness.
  - ii. Bereavement or personal misfortune, and/or;
  - iii. Any other factors reasonably considered by the High-performance Manager to constitute extenuating circumstances;
- 6.3 Athletes unable to compete at events or other attendances must advise the High-Performance Manager by email of this fact and the reasons thereof as soon as practicable after the extenuating circumstances arise.

## **Section 7 - Removal of Athletes and/or horses**

- 7.1 An athlete and horse as a combination, or separately, may be removed from nomination to FEI and FEI Definite Entries by the High-Performance Manager for any reason, including in particular the following:
- a) Violation or alleged violation of the Sport Ireland and FEI (Human) Anti-Doping protocol, policies and procedure.
  - b) Violation or alleged violation of FEI Equine Anti-Doping Rules.
  - c) An adverse analytical finding following on from testing pursuant to Sport Ireland, FEI Clean Sport protocol, (Human & Equine), Horse Sport Ireland National Equine Anti-Doping Programme policies and procedures.
  - d) Violation or alleged violation of the FEI Sport Rules and Regulations and Horse Sport Ireland General Rules.
  - e) Violation or alleged of the Horse Sport Ireland Code of Conduct.
  - f) Any action which could damage the reputation of the sport or the country.
  - g) Selected horse produces an adverse analytical finding following on from an assessment and/or Pre- Arrival Testing.
  - h) The Team Veterinarian determines the nominated horse unsound to travel and compete at the FEI World Championships (Dressage).
  - i) The Team Veterinarian determines the selected horse incapable of travelling to the FEI World Championships (Dressage) for any stated reason.
  - j) Where an athlete falls ill or sustains an injury subsequent to nomination by the Dressage High Performance Manager and is certified by the Horse Sport Ireland Medical Officer or his/her designate as unfit to travel and compete.

## **Section 8 - Disclaimers**

- 8.1 These procedures are based on FEI General Regulations, applicable FEI Sport Rules as presently known and understood. The selection criteria are based on the latest information available to Horse Sport Ireland. However, the selections are always subject to unforeseen, intervening circumstances, and may not have accounted for every possible contingency.
- 8.2 As such, this selection policy can be amended at any time by Horse Sport Ireland. Horse Sport Ireland reserves the right to amend or change the Policy where necessary at any time in order to fulfil any objective within the Policy. In the event that Horse Sport Ireland is of the opinion that such an amendment is necessary as a result of any change in any of the above stated rules, regulations and agreements, to give effect to the policy following discovery of a drafting error or oversight or for any other reason determined to be in the best interests of Horse Sport Ireland, Horse Sport Ireland shall not be responsible or liable in any way to anyone as a result of any such amendment.

## **Section 9 - Appeals**

- 9.1 An eligible athlete who fails to be selected for (1) the nominated entry list or the team selection, and/or reserve athlete in the team of 5, pursuant to the criteria set out in this policy, may appeal against said omission as arising as set out in this section.
- 9.2 Limitation of Appeal - The sole grounds of any appeal are that:
- Any appeal is limited to grounds of:
- (a) bias, and/or
  - (b) failure to adhere to the relevant Athlete Selection Policy

9.3 Any appeal under section 9 will be dealt with by Sport Dispute Solutions Ireland (Just Sport Ireland Limited) <http://sportdisputesolutions.ie/about/> SDSI is an independent dispute resolution service for Irish Sport.

9.4 Appeals will be heard by Sport Dispute Solutions Ireland and otherwise proceed in accordance with the time limits set out below and in accordance SDSI Arbitration Rules for final and binding arbitration. Sport Dispute Solutions Ireland Rules.

9.5 Notice of Appeal:

Any eligible athlete wishing to appeal against their omission from the selection must lodge a Notice of Appeal Form (Appendix A, SDSI Rules), and comply with the requirements as set out in Rule 14 and Rule 57 of SDSI Arbitration Rules.

Athletes must submit the completed form within 36 hours of published nominated entries on the Horse Sport Ireland website and in respect of the team selection and reserve team athlete, the clock starts from the publication of the team selection on the HSI website.

Athletes should note that the time limit as set out in SDSI Rules 14.2 (b) does not apply in this instance.

9.6 Statement of Appeal:

Within 48 hours after lodging the SDSI Rules, for nominated entry list or team selection the appellant (the athlete making the appeal) must file a Statement of Appeal as set out in Rule 14.2 (f) & (g) of SDSI Arbitration Rules, Appendix B. Athletes should note that the time limit of (7) days as set out in SDSI Rules 14.2 (f) does not apply in this instance.

9.7 Reply

Within 48 hours from receipt of the Statement of Appeal, the Respondent (High Performance Manager) shall file a "Reply Form" in accordance with the provisions of Rule 14.3 (a) & (b) and Rule 57 of the SDSI Arbitration Rules. Athletes should note that the time limit of (14) days as set out in SDSI Rule 14.2 (a) does not apply in this instance.

Ends/

Approved by the HPM, Anne-Marie Dunphy

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