



Athlete Selection Policy
FEI Pony European Dressage Championships
CH-EU-P-D (Pony Dressage) Le Mans, (France)
28th July – 2nd August 2026

Section 1 Timelines

The selection timelines for the **CH-EU-P-D (Pony Dressage) Le Mans (FRA)** are as follows:

15th June 2026	The Youth Dressage High Performance Manager publishes the long list of athlete/pony combinations under consideration for Nominated Entries for the FEI Pony European Dressage Championships 2026.
29th June 2026 (TBC)	Horse Sport Ireland formally submits the nominated entries (5 combinations) to the FEI, to include certificate of capability for the CH-EU-P-D Le Mans (FRA) pursuant to FEI General Regulations Art.116.2.2
On or before 2nd July 2026	<p>The Youth Dressage High Performance Manager announces the final selected Athlete/Pony combinations, in alphabetical order. The YDHPM may select a squad of (4) four athletes OR a maximum of two (2) individual athletes arising out of their performances throughout the season 2025 & 2026. In addition to the four (4) squad athletes as detailed above, 2 combinations may be named as non-travelling reserves.</p> <p>Note: All Athletes should note that the number of athletes selected for CH-EU-P-D Le Mans (FRA) is discretionary on the part of the Youth Dressage High Performance Team Manager regardless of FEI requirements taking into account all factors for the Youth Dressage High Performance Programme for 2026.</p>
13th July 2026 (TBC)	Horse Sport Ireland will submit the Definite Entries to the FEI.

NB: Timelines are subject to change when official FEI schedule is published.

Section 2 Eligibility for Selection

- 2.1 All athletes and pony combinations wishing to be considered for selection for the CH-EU-P-D Le Mans (FRA) must in the first instance have attained (as a combination) one final percentage score of minimum 64% in a Pony Team or Individual Competition Test at a CDIP, including the 2025 EC, from 1st January 2025 until the date of nominated entries (FEI MER).
- 2.2 It is the sole responsibility of each Pony Dressage Athlete, their Person Responsible and/or their personal management team to ensure that the athlete/Pony combination meets the required level for selection.
- 2.3 Thereafter, Pony Dressage Athletes, their Person Responsible and/or their personal management team should be mindful that the criteria as stated above, is only a **MINIMUM** requirement. Please refer to Section V below.
- 2.4 An Athlete may compete as a Pony Rider from the beginning of the calendar year in which he reaches the age of 12 until the end of the year in which he reaches the age of 16.
- 2.5 All Pony athletes must be registered as IRL athletes for 2026, notwithstanding Art. 119.3.1 of the FEI General Regulations, 2026 which states that a 'A minor athlete who is a citizen of more than one country can choose each calendar year which he wishes to represent'.
- 2.6 Pony Owners must ensure that their Pony holds a FEI Lifetime Certificate of Measurement. To check status, please confer with the FEI Database.

Section 3 Responsibilities

- 3.1 It is the sole responsibility of all Pony Dressage Athletes, their Parent/ Guardian and/or their personal management team to be fully cognisant of the current [FEI Rules for Dressage](#) and the [FEI Clean Sport policy](#).
- 3.2 It is the responsibility of each Pony Athlete, their Person Responsible and/or their personal management team to be fully cognisant of the FEI Veterinary Regulations, including but not limited to Chapter IX, Pony Measuring.
- 3.3 Athletes must strictly abide by the principles of the following:
 - i. FEI General Regulations;
 - ii. FEI Code of Conduct for the Welfare of the Horse;
 - iii. [HSI & 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;
 - iv. Horse Sport Ireland General Rules and Policies;
 - v. The Horse Sport Ireland 'Athlete Code of Conduct' and act in a manner that does not bring Team Ireland Equestrian into disrepute, please see **Appendix 1** attached;
 - vi. The Horse Sport Ireland 'Social Media Policy', please see **Appendix 2** attached;
- 3.4 Prompt communications with the Youth Dressage High Performance Team Manager, Team Veterinarian and Horse Sport Ireland in relation to the High-Performance Youth Dressage Programme are required throughout the season;
- 3.5 Athletes must show a commitment to personal fitness and professional behaviour.
- 3.6 All Athletes selected will be required to wear the official HSI Team Ireland Equestrian kit while participating at the CH-EU-P-D Le Mans (FRA)
- 3.7 One of the goals of the Horse Sport Ireland High Performance Youth Dressage Programme is to build a good team spirit within the squad.

SECTION IV VETERINARY

- 4.1 The Youth Dressage High Performance Team Manager and/or Horse Sport Ireland can request that a Pony be made available for inspection by the Team Veterinarian or an appointed Veterinarian at any time. Athletes must comply with this request.
- 4.2 Athletes must notify the Youth Dressage High Performance Team Manager of any change in their horse's health status or of any veterinary issues when they first become apparent.

- 4.3 The Youth Dressage High Performance Team Manager and/or Horse Sport Ireland can send the Team Veterinarian or an appointed Veterinarian to take a blood and/or urine sample from a pony at any time, for the purposes of testing for prohibited substances, and/or as part of an assessment of the pony'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 Ponies 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 Ponies being considered for selection. Athletes, (at their own expense), are to consider any treatment prescribed by the Team Veterinarian, in consultation with the Ponies regular Private Treating Veterinarian. Failure to comply with any request of the Team Veterinarian or an appointed Veterinarian may result in the removal of the athlete/Pony combination from selection by the Pony Dressage High Performance Team Manager.
- 4.5 Each athlete will be required to keep a logbook for their Ponies in which they must record all products, treatments, supplements used on or given to their horse from selection date **2nd July 2026** until the first vet inspection on **28th July 2026**. 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 on or before **13 July 2026** in line with Rule 8.12 of the Horse Sport Ireland General Rules.
- 4.6 In the event that treatments and medications are necessary subsequent to the submission of the logbook, express approval is required from Team Veterinarian and the Youth Dressage High Performance Team Manager. This is a mandatory requirement to ensure that squad Ponies are managed appropriately within the pre-competition window and before departure.
- 4.7 For the purposes of section IV, the Youth Dressage High Performance Team Manager reserves her right to remove an athlete combination from selection, where the athlete does not comply with any of the above veterinary requests or the pony is deemed unsound by the Team Veterinarian to travel and compete at the CH-EU-P-D Le Mans (FRA). The decision of the Youth Dressage High Performance Team Manager on advice from the Team Veterinarian is final.

SECTION V SPECIFIC SELECTION CRITERIA

- 5.1 Pursuant to the 2023 FEI Dressage Rules, a team of four (4) athlete/pony combinations OR maximum two (2) individual athlete/pony combinations are authorised to take part in the **CH-EU-P-D Le Mans (FRA)**.
- 5.2 All four squad places or individual places will be selected by the Youth Dressage High Performance Team Manager, at her sole and absolute discretion, with the objective of achieving the best possible team and/or individual result at the CH-EU-P-D Le Mans (FRA).

The Youth Dressage High Performance Team Manager retains the right to determine the number of combinations selected for nomination and entry, regardless of how many athletes have achieved the FEI Minimum Eligibility Requirement (MER).

In order to be eligible for final squad selection, athlete/pony combinations must:

- Have competed at a minimum of **two (2) CDIP** events between 23 June 2025 and 29 June 2026, and
- Have achieved a final score of at least **66%** in either the Team or Individual Test at a CDIP.

Meeting these criteria does not guarantee selection. Selection remains at the discretion of the Youth Dressage High Performance Team Manager based on the broader performance and suitability criteria outlined in this policy.

General Measures

- 5.3 Without in anyway limiting the discretion of the Youth Dressage High Performance Manager, the following measures will be considered in the context of the selection of all four squad places OR individual places, this follows the minimum stated criteria noted at Section II above.
- 5.4 Further, the below measures will also be considered when selecting the 2 athlete/Pony combinations that may be named as non-travelling reserves in order. All reserves selected should be available (if necessary) to step into the squad up until the departure date for the Championships.
- 5.5 In assessing the performances of combinations, the Youth Dressage High Performance Team Manager will consider the following competition measures:
- i. All competitions national and international in 2025 and 2026 and the scores achieved in each class.
 - ii. In addition, Horse Sport Ireland may identify a mandatory selection event prior to selection date of 2nd July 2026 to performance test the athletes. This event will determine current form and fitness of the combinations.
 - iii. Team and individual tests to be ridden from memory, without a whip.
 - iv. The final placing of the Combinations (note that the score and the placing of each Combination will be considered but do not automatically position one Combination above another for selection purposes).
 - v. Pony Athletes based outside of Ireland will compete at designated key events as identified by the Youth Dressage High Performance Team Manager.
- 5.6 In assessing the performance of combinations, the Youth Dressage High Performance Team Manager will give consideration to competition measures as noted above combined with the following general measures. These general measures include, but are not limited to:
1. the suitability of the Combination with regard to the likely characteristics of the arenas at CH-EU-P-D and for the unexpected conditions of the CH-EU-P-D (taking into account the objective of the team and individual competition);
 2. the ability of the Athlete and his/her support team to operate and perform in a FEI championship environment which is highly regulated & pressurised;
 3. the ability of the Athlete and/or support team to contribute towards an effective team and winning orientated environment;
 4. the overall balance of the Combinations selected;
 5. the ability and experience of the Combination to compete successfully at the highest level of international competition;
 6. demonstrated experience and/ or success at Championship level; the ability, or potential ability, of a Pony and/or Athlete to perform under the stress and pressure of a FEI Championships;
 7. the ability of the Athlete, their person responsible and/or their personal management team to prepare their Pony to peak condition for a major campaign, such as the FEI Championship;
 8. consistency of performance and the likelihood of a suitable performance to contribute towards a team medal outcome may be a consideration;

9. exceptional ability of a Combination (and the potential to achieve an individual medal) may be a consideration and may, in the Youth Dressage High Performance Manager's sole discretion, place a Combination with less experience or consistency ahead of another Combination;
 10. Strong commitment to the Horse Sport Ireland Youth Dressage High Performance Programme.
 11. Where Pony athletes, their Persons Responsible and/or their personal management teams decide to pursue European Championship selection, they must give due consideration to pony welfare in all aspects of training and competition. At no point should a pony's welfare be compromised in the pursuit of selection. Any indication to the contrary may, at the sole discretion of the Youth Dressage High Performance Manager, be deemed inconsistent with the principles of the Horse Sport Ireland High Performance Programme and FEI rules.
 12. Pony athletes are encouraged to discuss their Individual Athlete Performance Plan (IAPP) with the Youth Dressage High Performance Manager at the beginning of the season and throughout its duration. For clarity, it is not the responsibility of the Youth Dressage High Performance Manager to create individual plans for athletes, but to provide technical support where appropriate. The responsibility for designing and implementing an IAPP lies solely with the athlete, their Persons Responsible, and/or their personal management team, based on the combination's skills and readiness at the time.
 13. Consideration will be given to 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.
- 5.7 Athletes should note that where a squad place is secured, this place is wholly dependent on the athlete/pony combination **maintaining fitness, form and soundness**.
 - 5.8 The soundness of the Pony to meet the challenges of competing and travelling to the **CH-EU-P-D Le Mans (FRA)** will be a significant factor in any selection decision. Athletes must keep the Youth Dressage High Performance Team Manager fully briefed on any health or soundness issues the pony may have both historically and throughout the selection period. From **the selection date** all selected squad members must immediately inform the Pony Dressage High Performance Team Manager and Team Veterinarian of any illness or injury (however minor). Where it becomes apparent that a squad Pony is unsound, and/or that there was a non-disclosure relating to soundness, the Youth Dressage High Performance Team Manager reserves the right to remove that combination from the squad with immediate effect. The decision of the Youth Dressage High Performance Team Manager on advice from the Team Veterinarian is final.
 - 5.9 Prior and subsequent to selection, the Youth Dressage High Performance Manager may undertake regular evaluations as to the combination's standard of fitness, their progress in training, their preparedness for the competition and their form (as a combination and on other ponies). Any advices provided by the Team Veterinarian, support personnel may be utilised by the Youth Dressage High Performance Team Manager, where required. However, such evaluations shall be discretionary on the part of the Youth Dressage High Performance Team Manager.
 - 5.10 Furthermore, the Youth Dressage High Performance Manager shall have the authority to remove a selected pony/athlete combination from the squad or as a reserve, where the selected pony and/or athlete has not maintained their fitness, standard of performance, form or any other performance related matter in which the HPM considers important, which is not

a standard comparable to that exhibited so as to gain selection to represent Ireland at the **CH-EU-P-D Le Mans (FRA)**.

- 5.11 High Performance Squad training will be held at various times and dates throughout the season. Once the squad has been selected after 3 July 2026 training will commence for selected squad athletes and reserves, which is mandatory unless expressly excused by the Youth Dressage High Performance Team Manager.

SECTION VI FORCE MAJEURE

- 6.1 In considering the performances of athletes at events or other attendances in line with this policy, the Youth Dressage High Performance Team Manager may, in 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 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 Youth Dressage High Team Performance Manager to constitute extenuating circumstances.
- 6.3 Athletes unable to compete at events, trials or other attendances required under this policy must advise the Youth Dressage High Performance Team Manager by email of this fact and the reasons thereof as soon as practicable after the extenuating circumstances arise.
- 6.4 In the case of injury or illness, athletes may be required to undergo a medical examination by a doctor or doctor (s) nominated by Horse Sport Ireland. The Youth Dressage High Performance Team Manager reserves her right to remove an athlete where the designated medical officer deems the athlete unfit to compete at the level which resulted in their selection for the CH-EU-P-D.
- 6.5 A decision in each case of extenuating circumstances will be made by the Youth Dressage High Performance Team Manager on a case-by-case basis.

SECTION VII REMOVAL OF ATHLETES

- 7.1 An athlete shall be removed from squad selection (individual or team), non-travelling reserve selection, FEI Nominated Entries and/or FEI Final Entries by the Pony Dressage High Performance Manager pursuant clause 4.7, 5.8, 5.20, 6.4 above;
- 7.2 An athlete may be removed from squad selection (individual or team), non-travelling reserve selection, FEI Nominated Entries and/or FEI Final Entries for any of the following reasons:
- i. Notification of an adverse analytical finding following on from testing pursuant to the FEI & HSI Equine Anti-Doping Rules and Equine Controlled Medication Rules & FEI & Sport Ireland Human Anti-Doping Protocols.
 - ii. Violation of the FEI & HSI Equine Anti-Doping Rules and Equine Controlled Medication Rules & FEI & Sport Ireland Human Anti-Doping Protocols;
 - iii. Violation of the FEI Hypersensitivity Protocol;
 - iv. Violation or alleged violation of the FEI Sport Rules and Regulations, HSI General Rules and/or Policies;
 - v. Violation or alleged violation of the HSI Code of Conduct;
 - vi. Any action which could damage the reputation of the Sport or the Country;
 - vii. Where the Team Veterinarian designates the Pony unsound, unfit, unwell to travel and compete at the EU-CH.
- 7.3 The decision of Youth Dressage High Performance Team Manager is final and binding.

SECTION VIII DISCLAIMERS

- 8.1 These procedures are based on FEI General Regulations, applicable FEI Sport Rules, Dressage Ireland Rules as presently known and understood. However, Horse Sport Ireland enjoys exclusive jurisdiction over this Selection Policy. This Selection Policy is based on the latest information available to HSI. However, the selections are always subject to unforeseen, intervening circumstances, and realistically may not have accounted for every possible contingency.
- 8.2 As such, this policy can be amended at any time by Horse Sport Ireland. Horse Sport Ireland reserves the right to amend or change the Selection Policy where necessary at any time in order to fulfil the objective of the Selection 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 governmental advice related to Coronavirus and 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.

Any queries with regard to the above athlete selection policy can be directed to the Youth Dressage High Performance Team Manager, Anne Marie Dunphy info@equiproconsulting.ie or Susann Tschoerner, High Performance Executive stschoerner@horsesportireland.ie

ENDS

Appendices Schedule

Appendix 1	Athlete Code of Conduct
Appendix 2	HSI Social Media Policy
Appendix 3	HSI Medication & Anti-Doping Declaration & Logbook

<https://www.horsesportireland.ie/governance/hsi-codes/>

Close of nominations for EU Championships date TBC (normally 4 weeks before EC), timelines will be updated on publication of Official FEI Schedule

Athlete Selection Policy updated 10th February 2026