

The Complete Entry Form

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It has been a LONG time since I have been the Entry Secretary for New England Dressage Association's Fall Dressage Festival but I hear there are still the same problems with entry forms as I encountered during the 1990s. I thought it was time for an update on how to fill out the Omnibus Prize List (OPL) entry form. The advice I gave back then is still true, PLAN AHEAD, START EARLY, and CALL THE SHOW SECRETARY IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS. If you need an OPL and entry form, please see side bar.

Once you've decided which shows to enter, look at the show date and work back from there. There are a couple important "days" that you should be aware of. The opening date (OD) is the first day that competitors may mail their entries to the show secretary. It is generally 4 to 8 weeks before the actual show date. The closing date (CD) is the last day that an entry may be mailed without incurring penalties. The CD is generally 2 to 4 weeks before the show. What this means is that YOU NEED TO BE PREPARED WAY BEFORE THE SHOW DATE. The opening and closing dates can be found on the title page of a show's prize list. Entries mailed before the OD *may* be returned to sender. Mailing by the CD does NOT guarantee entry into the show. Most shows must limit entries and many fill up before the CD. This is why you should mail your entry close to the OD. Okay, so now you know, you need to start early.

In the OPL or on the web, locate the dressage shows that interest you, Some OPL prize lists are abbreviated version of the master prize list posted on a website. If necessary, refer to the website prize list for more details. Then, READ THE PRIZE LIST CAREFULLY. If it helps, highlight the information that relates to you, such as are you a JrYR, an AA or an Open rider.

- A Junior is a rider under the age of 18, as of December 31 of the current competition year.
- A Young Rider is under the age of 22, as of December 31 of the current competition year.
- An Adult Amateur rider must have an AA designation which is granted by the US Equestrian Federation (USEF). You must be a USEF member who has signed the affidavit on the USEF form to certify that you are an AA.
- An Open rider is one who is a professional or who is not a member of USEF with an AA designation

This leads me to a discussion regarding USEF, US Dressage Federation (USDF) and your local Group Member Organization (GMO). USEF is the National Governing body for equestrian sports in America. USDF is our National Dressage Organization. NEDA is a GMO of USDF. As a member of NEDA, you will receive a USDF GM card with your USDF member number. Your USDF GM number is all that you need from USDF to compete in USEF recognized dressage competitions UNLESS you are working towards certain USDF Year End Awards programs and/or towards the USDF Regional Championships. In that case you will need a USDF Participating Membership (PM). But, if you are new to the sport of dressage, chances are that your USDF Group Member card is all that you need to get your competitive dressage career started.

If you are not a member of any of the above mentioned organizations you may compete but you will have to pay non-member fees and you WILL NOT be eligible for any year end award opportunities. If you are not a member of USEF, the non-member fee is \$30. If you are not a USDF GM or PM, the non-member fee is \$20. At the NEDA Spring and Fall Shows, there is a \$25 NEDA non member fee, except when both Rider and Owner are current NEDA members. **If you plan to compete in two or more USEF recognized competitions, do the math, it may be cost effective for you to join USEF and a local USDF GMO.**

Before putting pen to paper, you need to get your “other” paper work together. Here’s what you’ll need:

- Your horse’s coggins (taken within the 6 months prior to the show date). If you arrive on the show grounds with an outdated Coggins, you will be asked to leave.
- Your US Equestrian (USEF) and US Dressage Federation (USDF) member cards, if you are a member. (See above.)
- Your horse’s USEF Horse Registration or USDF Horse Identification Number (HID). (See more below.)
- Your NEDA member card, for NEDA Spring and Fall competitions.
- Copies of the USEF & USDF cards for the Owner and Trainer, if different from the rider/handler.
- You can get your USEF and USDF Horse, Rider, and Owner cards all on one page by going to www.eqverification.org

Regarding Horse Registration and the HID, there are a couple options. For USEF, you can get a Lifetime Horse Registration or an Annual Horse Registration. The form can be found at www.usef.org. Lifetime registration is \$200, if the horse is over 3 years old. The Annual Registration Fee is \$75, and needs to be renewed each year. One or the other of these is needed if you want to qualify for the Regional Championships. For USDF, you can get a Horse Identification number (HID) or a Lifetime registration. The forms can be found at www.usdf.org. You must have a USDF HID as a minimum to compete. The HID is \$20 and the Lifetime is \$85. **Do the math and decide which choice makes sense for you.**

Considering the time frame for getting your entries in within the two to three week window between the OD and CD, be sure to give yourself enough time to round up your member cards along with the cards of your trainer and the horse owner, and/or to join the various organizations, if that is what you decide you should do. If you have questions, don’t be afraid to ask your instructor, the show secretary or the various equestrian organizations. We all want to educate our members so that you can get it right. It makes everything more fun for everyone.

Okay, so now it is time to fill out the OPL Entry form. Here are a few suggestions to consider as you fill out your entry form:

- Write legibly! VERY IMPORTANT! For computer savvy entrants, the front page of the OPL entry form is posted on the NEDA website (www.neda.org) in Word .doc format. You can download that form and fill it out the Rider / Owner / Horse information on your computer, to use all season. Don’t forget the back page of the entry form, which contains the signatures, show history, and credit card information. Entries will not be accepted unless both front and back are received.
- Answer ALL the questions.
- Three signatures are required for each entry. Signatures go on the back. An adult must sign for a minor. Trainers and Owners, if different from Rider/Handler must each sign the entry.
- Copies of signatures are NOT VALID. Each entry form must be signed appropriately.
- Contact info is critical. Fill in your correct mailing address plus the zip code. Include email address for the Rider, as show secretaries are increasingly relying on the internet for contact with competitors. Many do not use snail mail any more. Include a phone contact as well, for special issues.
- Tell us all the details about your horse. Include a copy of your horse’s breed registration. Increasingly there are special breed specific awards.
- Return the secretary’s phone calls as soon as possible. If the secretary is trying to reach you, there is an important reason.
- If you are sending in several copies of member cards for several people, you should copy them all onto one sheet of paper. Then make spare copies of those cards for your next show. You can get your USEF and USDF Horse, Rider, and Owner cards all on one page by going to www.eqverification.org

- If you are sending in more than one entry in an envelope, paper clip the Coggins and member cards to the relevant entry form.
- If a USDF member cannot find their card, you should be able to download it from the USDF web site. Otherwise you'll have to pay a \$5 affidavit fee.
- For each Rider/Handler, Owner and Trainer that is not a USEF or USDF member, you must include the appropriate non-member fees. (See above.)

In addition, talk to your instructor/trainer and your friends, who will be going to the show(s) with you, about your stabling arrangements. Will you be trucking in for the day, staying overnight, or staying for the duration of the show? You will want to be on the same page (as in, "in the same barn") as your traveling companions. Be sure to list the names of everyone who wants to be stabled together on your entry form so that the show secretary can pass that information along to the stabling manager.

Finally, if you want to enjoy your time at the show, a correctly completed entry form is the best way to start the day. If the show secretary let's you know that more information is needed, be sure to get that information to the secretary, prior to the show, if possible. There is nothing worse than spending weeks and months preparing for a competition only to have the occasion spoiled because the paper work was not done correctly. Show management wants to host a fun and fair competition. Please do you part of help make it so.

Sidebar: If you need a copy of the OPL, after Jan 1, you must pay \$20 for each copy when you send in your NEDA membership. For the coming year, if you renew your NEDA membership between September 1 and December 31, the OPL is sent free of charge with your NEDA membership. The OPL Entry form can be downloaded from the NEDA web site, www.neda.org. It is found under Other Competitions.