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SOME ENTRY FORM NOTES

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.**

Pick Your Show

Most New England USEF/USDF recognized shows are listed in the **NEDA Omnibus**, sent free of charge to NEDA members who renew before January 1. Most of them also have their own websites. The NEDA website also has a list of Schooling Shows. Once you've decided which shows to enter, look at the show date and work back from there.

If you need a copy of the OPL, after January 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 Compete / Fall Festival / Entries.

Important Dates

Opening Date. There are a couple important "days" that you should be aware of. The Opening Date is the first day that competitors may present their entries to the Show Secretary. Some shows use the Postmark Date / Fax Date / email date to sequence entries. Other shows, such as NEDA Fall Festival, use the Date Received to sequence entries and determine if an entry is considered late, not the snail mail Postmark Date. Check the show prize list! Opening Date is generally 4 to 8 weeks before the actual show date.

Closing Date. The Closing Date is the last day that an entry may be presented without incurring penalties. The Closing Date 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 presented before the Opening Date *may* be returned to sender. Presenting your entry by the Closing Date does NOT guarantee entry into the show. Most shows must limit entries and many fill up before the Closing Date.

Wait List. Most shows accept entries until available ring time is used up and schedule those classes as entered. Subsequent entries are placed, in their entirety, on a Wait List. However, NEDA Fall Festival accepts entries, filling each Open Class only until its preset limit is reached. This is because Fall Festival must reserve time to accept all Regional Championships entries received on or before Closing Date. Further entries to filled classes are placed on a Wait List for that class. Therefore, popular classes (such as First Level 3) fill early, usually within 10 days of

Opening Date. It is common at Fall Festival that, even though an entry is accepted, a competitor at NEDA Fall Festival may find one or more desired classes on the class Wait List.

This is why you should mail your entry close to the Opening Date. Okay, so now you know, you need to start early.

Read the Prize List

In the OPL or on the web, locate the dressage shows that interest you, Most 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**. For Fall Festival, read the section you are entering plus the General Specifications section.

Junior / Young Rider / Adult Amateur Designation

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) and is so indicated on the USEF membership card. 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.

USEF / USDF / GMO

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, a federation of local Group Member Organizations (GMO's). 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 without paying the non member fee. **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 you must pay a \$30 non member fee for each Rider / Owner / Trainer who does not have a current USEF membership. If you are not a member of USDF you must pay a \$25 non member fee for each Rider / Owner who does not have a current USDF membership. . **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.**

Required Forms

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

- **Coggins.** A copy of your horse’s Coggins. NEDA Fall requires the Coggins within 12 months. Other shows might be different. Check the prize list. If you arrive on the show grounds with an outdated Coggins, you will be asked to leave.
- **Membership Cards.** You can get your USEF and USDF Horse, Rider, Trainer and Owner cards all on one page by going to --- www.eqverification.org --- You need:
 - USEF and USDF member cards for each person on the entry who is a member, if you are a member. For USEF Rider / Owner / Trainer. For USDF Rider / Owner.
 - Your horse’s USEF Horse Registration or USDF Horse Identification Number (HID). You must have a USDF HID, which can also be used as the USEF HID. (A USEF HID cannot be used as a USDF HID). (See more below.)

Check the show Prize List for any additional forms. For example, NEDA Fall Festival 2013 is requiring a Health Form and Vaccination to be presented at the Show Office before a number will be issued.

Some Details About Horse Memberships

Regarding Horse Memberships 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 USEF 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. It will also be accepted for a USEF HID. The USDF HID is \$25 and the Lifetime is \$95. The Lifetime is required to participate in the USDF Regional Championships. A USEF horse annual (\$75) or lifetime (\$200) membership is required to participate in the USDF Regional Championships. **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 Opening Date and Closing Date, 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.

Filling Out the Entry Form

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! The OPL Entry Form is posted on the NEDA website (www.neda.org) in fillable format. Since browsers work differently it is best to download the empty fillable form onto your computer. Then, using Adobe Reader, fill it out and save it.

This same OPL Entry Form is posted on the website in non-fillable .pdf format which can be downloaded, printed and filled out with pen or pencil then sent to the Show Secretary.

Some pointers:

- 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 valid, but it must be a written (not typed or printed) signature. 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. NEDA Fall Festival does all communication with competitors via email. 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.