

The United States Equestrian Team (USET) can boast an impressive list of medals and championships in international competition since its founding in 1950. A diverse group of sportsmen joined together to select, train, equip, and finance teams of the highest caliber to represent the United States in international competitions. Based in Gladstone, New Jersey, the Hamilton Farm stable is a fitting home for an organization that deals regularly with superlative horses and equestrians. When it was built in 1916, the stable was described as the largest and most lavish in the United States. It boasts an ornate interior with 54 large box stalls and 40 rooms.

Horse enthusiasts from all over the world have thrilled to competitions held in this opulent setting and have joined in support of the organization that operates it. The USET is run entirely on a nonprofit voluntary basis financed wholly through contributions made by members, corporations, and other organizations. Their generous support is crucial to the continued advancement of the equestrian teams that represent the United States. Unlike many other national equestrian teams in Europe, Australia, and New Zealand whose governments and Olympic committees supply funding, the USET receives no direct or indirect subsidy from the government. The United States Olympic Committee supplies less than 10 percent of the USET's annual operating budget of over \$4 million.


The appeal of supporting outstanding horses and their riders is one that has garnered a large following both in and out of the horse world. Individual contributions make up 60 percent of the annual operating budget. The USET reports that three out of every four contributors either own or have previously owned horses, and currently ride competitively or recreationally. These individuals come from a wide range of equestrian interests, and they give generously for the privilege of being a part of the support team.

Their support and that of the corporate sponsors all goes toward identifying world-class riders and their horses and providing them with the training, equipment, and money to participate in international competitions. To receive this support, a rider or driver must be at least 16 years of age and a U.S. citizen. Both men and women are eligible and

compete on an equal level. Riders are selected for their ability rather than their experience; however, ability is often honed by experience, so the two generally go together and riders are encouraged to gain competitive experience whenever possible. The USET has instituted a number of plans like the Show Jumping Developing Rider program to assist riders who have not had extensive experience in international competition. Professionals are eligible for inclusion as USET riders.

In 2000 USET riders excelled in many different venues. The Sydney Summer Olympics saw U.S. riders bringing home an individual gold medal and team bronze medals in the three-day event competition and team bronze medals in the dressage competition. Olympic veteran David O'Connor claimed the individual gold medal and set two Olympic records, one for the best eventing dressage score and another for the best total score. In dressage, the U.S. hopes for a medal came to rest on first-time Olympian Christine Traurig of California and her mount Etienne. As the final rider in the team dressage competition, Ms. Traurig was well aware that her country's chance rested upon her ability to turn in a brilliant performance. She did just that by riding Etienne to

the best score they had ever achieved. The USET driving squad finished sixth in the World Four-In-Hand Championship held in Wolfsburg, Germany. Floridian Molly Ashe and her mount Kroon Gavin won the Eternit Grand Prix of Germany. Ms. Ashe was a standout member of the USET's 2000 Show Jumping Developing Rider tour. In the most recently USET recognized discipline, reining, Todd Crawford of California riding Hickorys Holly Cee won the Festival of Champions individual reining title. The U.S. reining team won the first Nations Cup International Reining Competition.

While the accolades from international competitions continue to pour in for USET riders, an added boon for the continuation of USET's programs came just last year when the USET and the Nature Conservancy announced that 120 acres of Hamilton Farm will receive easements protecting the farm from development. This move assures the USET's headquarters a home from which they can continue to support the best equestrians in the United States. 

The United States Equestrian Team Holds a History of Supporting Champion Horses and Riders

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