

The 2007 East Coast USEF Junior Hunter National Championship Begins Today

Young Hunters compete for top prizes, including \$50,000.

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The HITS-on-the-Hudson 2007 East Coast USEF Junior Hunter National Championship begins today and runs through Wednesday in Saugerties, N.Y.

The annual competition is designed to encourage and promote the basic training and development of junior hunters. Divided into four sections, the finals feature competition for small juniors 15 and under; large juniors 15 and under; small juniors 16-17; and large juniors 16-17.

All competition will be held in either the Grand Prix Stadium or the Main Hunter Stadium at the Saugerties equestrian facility. In addition to 23 various awards and countless ribbons, \$50,000 in prize money is waiting to be awarded.

"The footing is in excellent condition and everyone is looking forward to a great event," says trainer Don Stewart, who has 11 horses competing in the finals.

It's a long road to the finals. Junior hunters from all over the East Coast qualify by winning a championship or reserve championship in an A-rated junior hunter section between July 2, 2006 and July 1, 2007. In addition, any horse that is in the top 10 in its zone in any of the four junior hunter sections as of July 1, 2007, using points accumulated during the qualification period, is qualified for the finals.

"The junior hunter finals are different, so they are fun," says trainer Susie Schoellkopf. "It takes a lot for a rider to get to the finals. With more than \$50,000 in prize money at stake, its great incentive for the kids to work hard and do well."