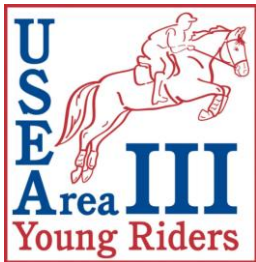


# Area III Young Riders

Lee Ann Gilson, YR Coordinator 678-873-8785 – [area3youngriders@gmail.com](mailto:area3youngriders@gmail.com) – [www.usea3.org/young-rider-program](http://www.usea3.org/young-rider-program)



## From the YR Coordinator

What is the Young Rider program and what are the benefits of signing up seem to be common questions. The Area III Young Rider program is offered through USEA for riders 25 years of age or younger. It encompasses all levels of eventing from Amoeba up to Intermediate. The program not only focuses on the riding aspect but also the horse management side of horses. Horse management is vital to a well-rounded rider because it gives the rider necessary knowledge so they may take care of their mount and further strengthens the bond between horse and rider. The program teaches sportsmanship and instills moral values, such as responsibility and work ethic, in riders while giving them a chance to make lasting friendships with other young riders.

As you read this newsletter you can see the Area III Young Rider program encompasses many different things and a wide range of opportunities for all our members. I encourage you to explore all options by starting with the clinics and camp so you can meet others in your area that share your love of the horse and eventing.

## USEF Young Rider Eventing Championships

One of the common known things about the Area III Young Rider program is the Championships. The Championships are held once a year and each of the 10 areas are allowed to send one team of four riders and two individuals for 1\*, 2\*, and 3\* levels of competition. This provides an avenue for upper level [modified (1\*) to intermediate (3\*)] riders to learn about a team atmosphere and how to handle the stresses of competing on a team. The program helps give these riders a jump start to their riding career and opens up doors for them by introducing them to some of the top level riders in our sport. There are specific organized activities for these riders so they may form a bond and friendship with their potential teammates. Many riders may declare their intent to try out for the team at the beginning of the year but 6 riders at each of the three levels is all we are allowed to send to Championships.

Area declarations will open April 3<sup>rd</sup> and close May 31<sup>st</sup>. The venue and date of 2023 Championships will be announced at the end of March.

This is a very small percentage of our member base. So what about the other riders you ask?

## Clinics and Camps

There are many aspects to the Area III Young Rider program. One of the strongest is the clinics we have throughout the year and our yearly camp that are offered to all the members of the YR program. These clinics give all members a chance to meet other riders in their area while brushing up on their riding skills with top level clinicians. One common mistake is these clinics are for the upper level riders only to prepare them for Champs. While they can use these clinics to hone their skills and better prepare them for Champs the clinics are designed for the “grass root” riders (if you will). The younger and lower level riders make up the core of the program’s numbers and these clinics and camp can groom them during their progression up the levels by increasing their education and skills. No matter what the rider’s goals are the Area III Young Rider program can provide guidance in reaching their goals

## EA21 Program and Mentorship Program

Another avenue of the YR's is the EA21 (U21) program. The purpose of the program "is to identify and provide consistent quality instruction to the next generation of elite event riders. The aim is to create a pipeline for potential team riders by identifying and developing young talent, improving horsemanship and riding skills, and training and improving skills and consistency." This program was born in 2022 and five regional clinics were held with one national winter clinic for riders picked from the regional clinics. To be eligible for this program you must be 21 years or younger, established at Training Level or higher, and a member of the Young Rider program.

Yet another avenue is the YR Mentorship program. This program gives YR's a chance to see what goes on behind the scenes when running and officiating an international event. This takes place during the YR Championships and gives the YR a chance to job shadow the eventing officials at the competition. They get an up close and personal look at what the President of the Ground jury or members of the Ground jury, Steward, Technical Delegate, Chief Vet, organizer, and cross country designer and builders are responsible for while an international level event is running.

### Interscholastic Eventing League (IEL)

While the Interscholastic Eventing League (IEL) is not directly linked to the Young Rider program there is the opportunity for Area III YR's to form teams at competitions and compete in the EIL. "The mission of the IEL is to bring together junior riders with a common interest and provide a supportive community through which students can continue to pursue their riding interests. The program will encourage team camaraderie and will give junior members a chance to compete in a team atmosphere." This program is open to individuals currently in the 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grades and competing at USEA events. Riders can only affiliate themselves with one interscholastic team and often it is their barn or pony club that will put together a team and submit the roster to USEA. For those riders who find themselves without a team you may join the [Area III Young Rider Affiliate](#) roster so you will be eligible to compete in the IEL competitions.

### Upcoming Events

March 31<sup>st</sup> – April 2<sup>nd</sup> - YR Team Challenge at Chatt Hills

April 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> – clinic with Allison Springer and Sarah Dunkerton Sizemore at Sandy Hills Farm in Aiken, SC

May 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> – YR Team Challenge at Stable View

June 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> – YR Team Challenge at Poplar Place

June 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> – YR Camp at Majestic Oaks with Ashley Johnson & Lauren Eckardt  
Jonathan Holling – 3<sup>rd</sup> instructor if #'s warrant

October 3<sup>rd</sup> – YR Team Challenge at Ocala Fall HT

November 25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> – YR Team Challenge at Pine Top

## Coaches Corner - recap of February 20<sup>th</sup> clinic with Ashley Johnson & Hilda Donahue

On Monday, February 20th, Hilda Donahue and I kicked off the Area III Young Rider activities for 2023 with a fun clinic at Sweet Dixie South in Reddick, FL. Hilda and I have a great time teaching together, and we worked out a format that we felt would benefit everyone. Hilda started in the morning with flat work over cavaletti exercises. Each group was challenged to maintain balance and rhythm while negotiating cavaletti on turns and straight lines. The riders improved their ability to feel connection, to ride each horse's topline more correctly, and to maintain rider balance. After Hilda's group, riders took a break and then met me on cross country a few hours later. In my section, with the use of simple standards and skinny rails, I taught cross country gymnastics. We primarily used the water jump, as it had both water and uphill and downhill terrain, but at the end of the sessions we did the ditches and other cross country portables. At the water, one of the hardest exercises was the one where riders were challenged to maintain a solid cross country position while jumping a vertical at the edge of the water, and then quickly shift their eye to the next skinny jump on the exit. This exercise and others improved balance and agility for both the horses and the rider. The day was topped off by a lunchtime sport psychology lecture that I gave about the role of emotion in three-day event riding.

Many Area III young riders participated in the clinic, as well as some Area III adult riders. The weather was beautiful, and Hilda and I both agreed that everyone did a great job with the exercises. The two highlights of the day for me were answering questions after the lunchtime lecture and the moment in the afternoon where I felt one of my riders would do well to bridge his reins. As I stepped in to demonstrate this skill, I asked if he had ever bridged his reins before. He answered that he had just learned the skill a few hours before with Hilda! I loved that we were able to give such consistent advice throughout the clinic!