

AHA National Homebrew Competition

Steward Instructions and Responsibilities

Thanks for your help! Your presence guarantees the success of this judging!

Setting Up Tables

After check-in, see one of the competition staff members who can help you locate the supplies for your table. Your job is to provide judges with everything they require while judging, from setting up the table to getting whatever they need during the session and clearing the table at the end of the session. Make sure the judges at each table have the following supplies:

- Category placard (a.k.a. Table sign with category number and category name)
- Water pitcher
- Bread/Crackers
- Bottle openers (1 per flight), cork screw (if necessary), tasting stoppers
- Swill bucket
- Pencils
- Plastic judging cups
- Plastic water cups
- Category/Flight Sheet
- Score sheets (one sheet per judge per entry, get these to the judges as quickly as possible so they can begin filling them out)
- Cover Sheets (one per entry)
- Category descriptions and style guidelines
- Cellar sheet (a.k.a. Pull sheets)

Getting Beer

Once your table is set up and judging is about to begin, you can collect the beers for your panel from the steward staging area. Some panels may have more than one box. Please double-check the cellar sheet to make sure you have the correct set of entries and that no entries are missing. The judges may start with a calibration beer.

Handling Beers

PLEASE BE CAREFUL handling the bottled entries. Through shipping mishaps, or for other reasons, entrants may have only one bottle entered; if the bottles are mishandled or broken, everyone involved will be greatly disappointed. Be careful not to disturb sediment when handling the entries, protect them from light and keep bottles cool by placing them back in case boxes. For lager categories, stewards may need to return bottles to the cooler or set them in ice. Please consult with the judge coordinator and with the judges to see if your beers are too cold or are warming up too quickly. If practical for categories with a large number of entries, use an empty case box to hold the bottles that have been judged. This way, all of the beers are sure to be judged.

Ready, Set, Wait...

The first session takes a while to get going, and your patience is appreciated. Do not pour any competition beer until every panel has all their judges. The site organizer or the judge coordinator may have to make last-minute changes if judges do not show. Instruct the judges NOT to open any beers until the competition director makes an opening announcement and gives the signal for judging to commence. At that time ask the judges if they need anything else before they start evaluating the calibration beer (optional).

Judging Procedures

Judges choose entries that will advance to the Final Round in the following manner. Each flight has a two-to-four judge panel. Large categories are split into two tiers. In the two-tier system, two-to-three entries from each flight advance from the first to the second tier. For very large categories with 50 to 70 entries, a total of 10-to-21 entries in the second tier will require two second tier panels moving the best entries to a third tier. Only entries that score 30 or higher should be sent on to the second tier. During the judging, use the tasting stoppers or caps to seal the bottles of entries scoring 30 or more points. Some of these bottles will be pushed to the second tier judging.

For the first tier, the cover sheet for each entry should have the entry number, the category number and subcategory letter of the entry, the ordinal number for the panel in which it was judged (1 of 10, for example), the consensus score, and check the box if the entry progressed to the mini-BOS. Do NOT write anything in the box reserved for Place in the first-tier judging.

For the second tier (a.k.a. mini-BOS), the two or three highest-ranking panel judges choose, by consensus (no score sheets are needed), the top three entries (first, second, and third) that will advance to the Final Round (assuming there are three entries with scores of 30 or higher). **The cover sheets of the winning entries for the category should be marked “1”, “2”, or “3” to indicate first, second, and third place.** No other cover sheets in the category should have any marks in the box for Place. The entry numbers of the winning beers must be entered in the proper spaces on the flight sheet, which should then be delivered along with all of the score sheets to the site director or competition registrar.

Steward Responsibilities

Make sure the judges have everything they need to judge. Confirm that the judges at your table are judging beers recorded on the cellar sheet. Keep track of the beers as closely as you can. Verify that the judges have accurately completed all score sheets and cover sheets. Believe it or not, judging can be exhausting and even the most experienced judge will sometimes neglect to write their name, entry number, or may incorrectly add scores as the judging progresses. It is your job to double-check the score sheets. Place the first, second, and third place winning score sheets on top, then sort the remaining score sheets according to entry number and return the score sheets and flight sheets to the appropriate organizer.

Killing Time

Once the judging is under way, you will have little to do until the judging is over unless some problem comes up or if the judges need something else. During the session you may sample beers only if the judges can pour an extra taste for you without using more than half of the bottle. Only when judges indicate they have finished with an entry and will neither return to it nor advance it to the secondary judging, should you sample beer. Do not pour beer for yourself from any bottle until the session is finished and the results have been collected.

Learning About Judging

During the session you are welcome to sit down with the judges and listen to their comments. Please do not attempt to influence the judges in any way.

Keep an Eye on the Judges

Remind the judges to **POUR ONLY HALF OF THE BOTTLE** for the initial evaluation.

Cleanup

Please clean up after the first-tier judging for second-tier judging, lunch, etc. **DO NOT** discard or dump any bottles until the second-tier judges indicate that everything is in order and they have all the necessary entries. When all judging has concluded, you may sample the remaining entries and set a few aside to sample later.

Just Ask

Ask if you have questions about a procedure or your duties. We will be happy to answer them. Have fun.