



18th Annual APWA BBQ Challenge and Membership Drive June 9th, 2023

Judging Information and Rules

General Judging Information

Being invited to judge the APWA BBQ Challenge is truly an honor, and the APWA BBQ Committee trusts that each judge will treat it as such. For this reason, the opportunity to be a judge for this contest is first offered to Past Presidents of the Kansas City metropolitan chapter of APWA. In the event that the required number of judge positions cannot be satisfied by the available number of Past Presidents, invitations to judge the contest will subsequently be issued to current members of the chapter's Executive Board and other long-standing members of the Kansas City chapter. These invitations to judge will be extended by the Kansas City metropolitan APWA chapter's immediate Past President, at his/her personal discretion.

Although the APWA BBQ Challenge does not explicitly follow the judging procedures of the Kansas City Barbeque Society (KCBS), the APWA BBQ Committee does subscribe to most of the KCBS principles of BBQ contest judging. The APWA BBQ Challenge utilizes a blind judging system. Participating teams are randomly assigned an entry number that is known only to the APWA BBQ Committee's Chief Judge and/or other authorized personnel. When participating teams submit their meat entries for judging, these random numbers are assigned to the teams' sample containers before the samples are presented to the contest judges.

For the APWA BBQ Challenge to remain fair and equal to all cooks, the integrity of the interactions between contestants, judges, and organizers is essential. For this reason, the APWA BBQ Committee asks that judges do not fraternize with the BBQ teams on the day of the event until the conclusion of the judging process. Only the contest judges, APWA BBQ Committee members, and other necessary support staff are allowed within the judging area during the judging process. No other activities will be allowed in the judging area or surrounding vicinity between 4:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. on the day of the contest. No smoking or consumption of alcoholic beverages will be allowed by judges either before or during the judging process. Cleansing of judges' palettes between samples will be achieved with water and/or saltine crackers provided for the judging process.

Judging will be performed by tables of six (6) judges, with up to three (3) separate tables required for the contest. There will be a Table Captain assigned to each set of judges. Please follow the Table Captain's instructions at all times. The meat judging will be performed only on the basis of taste and tenderness / texture. No considerations for the appearance of meat samples will be made by judges. When samples are provided to the judges, each judge will place a sample from each container in the appropriate space on the judging plate. The judge will then score each entry for taste and tenderness / texture on the judging scorecard, before moving on to the next entry. Please take small portions of each sample so that you will be able to complete the judging process. Also, judges should remain silent and maintain a neutral body language while judging, so that any reactions (positive or negative) do not unduly affect the other judges at the table.

The scoring system for the APWA BBQ Challenge is from 9 to 1, with all whole numbers within this range being used to score the entries. For reference purposes, the following descriptors may be utilized by judges in order to ensure that they are assigning scores consistently: 9 = Excellent; 8 = Very Good; 7 = Above Average; 6 = Average; 5 = Below Average; 4 = Poor; 3 = Bad; and 2 = Inedible. A score of "1" shall be reserved for entry disqualifications, such as samples that include foreign objects, prohibited garnishing, sauce pooling, markings of any kind, or an insufficient number of samples. All disqualifications will require the approval of the APWA BBQ Committee's Chief Judge. It is important that judges score based upon their first impression of each sample – no erasing of scores will be allowed.

Ultimately, the systematic scoring of samples is at the discretion of each individual judge, as long as the scores are assigned in a consistent manner. Also, please note that each meat sample should be judged on its own merits. Judge each sample as it is submitted, because that is the way that the competitor wants it. Comparison of samples from various teams within a given meat category by the judges is strongly discouraged by the APWA BBQ Committee and will be strictly enforced by the Chief Judge. Also, pay no attention to how other judges at your table score – it is your opinion that is important!

Judging Guidelines

To assist with the contest judging duties, the APWA BBQ Committee has prepared the following general guidelines to describe the characteristics and/or conditions that should be considered by judges for each particular category of meat that is included in the APWA BBQ Challenge. Please note that these descriptions are intended to be informational in nature, since most judges for the APWA BBQ Challenge have not participated in the more formalized KCBS certified judging program. Again, the preferences and discretion of each individual judge will ultimately govern their scoring of the meat samples.

- **Sausage:** For the APWA BBQ Challenge, the competing teams are responsible for providing their own sausage product. Sausage consists of any number of ground ingredients, too numerous to list. In general, the competitors will select either a prepared variety of sausage, or they may choose to mix their own meat and spice ingredients. Sausage entries may be presented either with or without casings. Casing materials may be either natural or synthetic in nature. It is quite common for sausage contest entries to be provided in link, roll, or loaf forms. Typically, sausages are either served whole or in slices. Sausage may also be served with a coating of sauce, at the cook's discretion. It is important that you consider the texture of the meat, rather than the tenderness, for this category. Sausage samples are inherently tender, due to the ground nature of the meat and ingredients.
- **Chicken:** Chicken may be presented either with or without the skin for a contest. It may also be presented with a combination of white and dark meat, or all of one or the other type. The type presented should not in any way affect the way it that is scored. Properly smoked chicken will be moist, have a nice texture, and any juices present should be clear (i.e., without a bloody appearance). Smoked chicken has a tendency to produce a red coloring around the bone areas, especially in the thigh and leg meats. To some judges, this coloring gives the impression that the sample is under-cooked. Always check the juices to be sure they are clear and that the chicken is properly cooked. You may also find that the breast meat appears pinkish in color, but again this is a characteristic of properly smoked chicken.
- **Pork Ribs:** There are many opinions about what a good rib should be. However, when judging pork ribs for a contest, there are several specific factors to consider. First, determine how well the rib was cooked. When eating a properly cooked rib, the meat should come off the bone with very little effort, and meat should only be removed from the area where the bite is taken. If the meat pulls off the entire bone, it is a good indication to the judge that the rib is over-cooked. Also, when a rib is over-cooked, the meat tends to be mushy, with little or no texture. When a bite is taken from a properly smoked rib, the exposed bone will tend to appear dry soon after being exposed to the air. Ribs should also be moist and have a good smoked flavor. Ribs can be either spare ribs or loin (baby back) ribs and presented with or without sauce (e.g. Memphis-style "dry" ribs).
- **Pork:** A pork sample may come from the Full Shoulder, the Arm Picnic, or the Boston Butt. Properly smoked pork meat should be very tender, but with a definite texture to the meat. Pork is very easily over-cooked to achieve tenderness. As a judge, determine whether or not the meat is mushy in your mouth. Mushy meat dissolves with very little effort when chewing. A sliced piece of this meat should pull apart with little effort, be moist when eaten, and have good texture. This category can also be turned in as pulled or shredded forms. With these types of entries, it is very important to check that the entry has been properly cooked, not over-cooked. It is quite easy for competitors to disguise an over-cooked entry when it is presented as a pulled or shredded form.

For additional reference information, the judging, scoring, and awards procedures for the APWA BBQ Challenge, as distributed to the participating teams, is attached on the following page.

Judging Procedures & Awards

1. Contest judging procedures will NOT strictly adhere to standard KCBS (Kansas City Barbeque Society) rules and scoring.
2. Judging will be completed by a total of up to eighteen (18) judges, with most holding the position of Past President of the APWA – KC Metro Chapter. Judges will be seated at tables of six (6).
3. Contest teams will be provided Styrofoam boxes by the APWA BBQ Committee for use in submitting meat samples for judging.
4. Entries for the contest meat categories will be required to be turned in on the following schedule:
 - 4:30 – Sausage
 - 4:50 – Chicken
 - 5:10 – Ribs
 - 5:30 – Pork
5. Teams will have from five (5) minutes before until five (5) minutes after the turn-in times listed above to submit entries for judging, with no exceptions.
6. Every effort will be made to keep judges from seeing which team is submitting each sample box. Random numbers will be assigned by the APWA BBQ Committee to each team, and affixed to corresponding sample boxes, prior to presentation for judging.
7. Sample boxes must contain at least six (6) separate and distinct samples for judging. Failure to provide a sample for each of the six (6) judges will result in a disqualifying score of “1” from all judges who are left without a meat sample.
8. The judges, with the approval of the APWA BBQ Committee, have the right to reject any meat entry that they feel is not completely cooked, or has not been handled properly.
9. Judging will be based only on taste and tenderness. No considerations for the appearance of meat samples will be made. Therefore, teams shall not submit entry boxes containing any form of garnish or stuffing, or any foreign objects, such as aluminum foil, toothpicks, skewers, etc.
10. Marking of any kind on the meat or container will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to, painting, sculpting, or decorating. Disqualifications for marking will be at the discretion of the APWA BBQ Committee’s Chief Judge.
11. To simplify the judging process, no side sauce containers will be permitted in the meat judging containers. Meats may be presented with or without sauce on them, as the contestant wishes. Sauce shall not be pooled or puddled within the sample container.
12. Judging for each meat sample will be on a “1 to 9” scale, with a score of “1” being reserved only for disqualifications. Any disqualifications will require the approval of the APWA BBQ Committee’s Chief Judge.
13. Each meat sample will be judged on its own merits. Comparison of samples from various teams within a given meat category by the judges will be strongly discouraged by the APWA BBQ Committee and enforced by the Chief Judge.
14. Only six (6) judges will evaluate a team’s samples presented for each meat category. Team samples will be randomly assigned to only one (1) of the three (3) tables seated with judges. Judging of meat samples will always be completed by equal teams of judges.
15. For every meat category, the low score received in each of the taste and tenderness criteria will be discarded. Results for the remaining five (5) scores will be tallied, with winners determined by the highest combined taste and tenderness score. In the event of a tie, the highest overall score received in the taste category will determine the winner. If still tied, the discarded lowest score for the taste category will be compared, and the higher of the two scores will determine the winner. Any remaining ties will be determined by a coin toss.
16. Product for the Sausage contest category will need to be provided by the teams, and approved by the APWA BBQ Committee at the time of event check-in.
17. Sausage category entries must also be smoked on-site the day of the contest.
18. The winner in each meat category will be awarded a first-place trophy. In addition, ribbons will be awarded in each category for first, second, and third places.
19. The contest Grand Champion awards will be based on the combined scores for the chicken, ribs, pork, and sausage categories.
20. The contest Grand Champion and Reserve Grand Champion teams will receive trophies. In addition, a traveling trophy, engraved with the names of all Grand Champion teams, will be awarded. Teams will take possession of this traveling trophy (following engraving) until the date of the subsequent APWA BBQ Challenge and Membership Drive event.