

**NATIONAL**

# **HOMEBREW COMPETITION**

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**VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**

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## 2018 Judging and Steward Updates

The American Homebrewers Association Competition Subcommittee discusses rule and process changes after the conclusion of each competition year. For 2018, the AHA Competition Subcommittee has decided to implement the following changes for judging and stewarding:

### Judging

#### New Scoresheet

New this year, all First Round and Final Round judging will use a revised Beer Checklist Scoresheet. The purpose of the new scoresheet is to provide more meaningful feedback to entrants and improve the overall efficiency of judging in the First and Final Rounds of the competition.

#### Entry Information Labels on Scoresheet

All judges in the First and Final Rounds will be given labels to place on scoresheets in the entry information box rather than writing out the entry information. **This is very important and absolutely required!** These labels will allow all scoresheets to be digitally scanned and delivered through email to entrants rather than by traditional mail.

### Stewarding

#### Entry Information Labels on Scoresheet

Each NHC Style in the competition will have a set of entry information labels for judges to place on scoresheets. There is a set of labels for every entry in a particular NHC Style. **These are very important and absolutely required for scoresheets.** These labels will allow scoresheets to be digitally scanned and delivered through email to entrants rather than by traditional mail. Please ensure every scoresheet has a label on it and it is the proper label when distributing to judges.

#### Mini Best-of-Show Scoresheet (optional)

As a highly encouraged but not required, the mini Best-of-Show (mini BOS) scoresheet is a brief summary of what transpires during the mini BOS round. The head steward at each table will record a few words for each entry to give some additional feedback to those entrants who advance to their respected NHC Style Mini-BOS.



## Competition Integrity

The National Homebrew Competition (NHC) is organized and run with great passion and integrity. The organizers, core crew, judges, stewards, and volunteers are dedicated to providing entrants with a high quality competition that runs smoothly, and gives meaningful feedback and honest results in a timely manner. This dedication to the production of a high-quality competition has resulted in increased excitement and participation from the homebrewing community worldwide.

Becoming involved with this event as a volunteer requires the same dedication to high standards. Being **exact** and doing things **correctly** have to be the main goals.

**Confidentiality is an absolute expectation.** To maintain the integrity of the competition, all volunteers need to remember that whatever they see, hear, or taste regarding beers during the competition does not get repeated beyond those walls. Conversations about the beers and winners with judges, entrants, or friends should **never** take place. The use of cell phones, pagers, Blackberries, tablets, or any text compatible device is highly discouraged once judging begins for any session, though some judges may use them to look up the BJCP Style Guidelines. Please try to refrain from excessive use of cell phones during the judging sessions unless absolutely necessary.

Other points that promote a high quality competition include:

**Punctuality:** The competition only works well when everything and everyone is in place and functioning when needed.

**Appearance:** The competition looks good when staff looks good. Maintaining a neat appearance is important.

**Hygiene:** Please avoid perfumes, aftershaves, and scented lotions on competition day as they can interfere with the judging process.

**Courtesy:** Demonstrating respect and consideration for judges and fellow staff members reinforces everyone's motivation to be part of this great event. In the event of delays or other unexpected occurrences, relax, smile, and provide appropriate information and work to resolve the problem. Judges are given the same expectations, and have generally treated competition staff in a positive and respectful manner. If there is an issue, please find the competition director.

**Accuracy:** **Double-check everything you do to ensure accuracy.** It's important to run a quality competition that the community trusts. Do not hesitate to ask questions if you are not sure of something or something is unclear.

**Moderation:** Beer is available to sample throughout most of the competition. Please sample responsibly. Remember what you are at the competition to do and perform those tasks first!



## Judge Information & Responsibilities

### Why You Are Here

Your obligations are to 1) provide quality feedback to entrants and 2) select entries to advance to the Final Round of the National Homebrew Competition. When filling out scoresheets, you should include the reasons why you find the entry to be exemplary of the style or lacking in style characteristics. Be as specific as possible. It is unfair to simply say “does not exemplify style” without stating why.

It is highly encouraged to give suggestions for improving the entry so the brewer can improve. **Fill out the scales and write brief comments when only necessary.** As a brewer, you know how disappointing it can be to receive a scoresheet with little to no feedback. About 80 percent of the entries do not advance beyond the First Round, and offering informative feedback to those brewers is critical.

### Checking In

Check in with the organizer. They will give you instructions, a name badge, and category assignments. If you have been assigned to a category that you have an entry in, please see the Competition Staff as soon as possible. Please sign the roster for the sessions you have judged. Attendance determines BJCP experience points. Be sure you sign-in or you will not receive your points.

### Finding Your Place

Each table has a sign to indicate the style category. Find the table with your category. **Once seated, relax, read the judges' instructions and REVISED scoresheet instructions. Entry info labels will be provide to judges to place on the scoresheet. This is absolutely required.** Judge info labels will also be provided.

### Category Assignments

We made every effort to place you in styles you prefer. If you wish to exchange assignments with another judge of similar experience who is willing to trade, please ask the Competition Staff for permission.

### Stewards

Stewards are here to take care of the details to make your job easier. Do not hesitate to ask them to help you with whatever you need. They are also here to learn more about judging. Many of them aspire to be in your seat, but lack the knowledge and experience required for this level of competition. Please encourage those interested stewards and make them feel welcome.

### Calibration Beer (Optional)

A calibration beer may be used to start judging, but is not required. This beer is intended to get judges acquainted with each other and the judging process. The score will be discarded. The calibration beer hopefully will help to prevent erratic scoring and enable the judges to score the first entry more accurately. These beers are not entries from the competition.

### Judging Procedures

A competition of this size for large categories uses the two-tier (Mini-Best-Of-Show) judging system to advance entries. Multiple judge pairs concurrently judge all entries of each style. Each judge pair will



select two to three of the best entries in their flight to advance to a mini-best of show (mini-BOS) round for the category. For very large categories, a total of 10-21 entries in the second tier will require two second tier panels moving the best entries to a third tier.

Only entries with a score of 30 or higher are eligible to advance to the Mini-BOS and the Final Round. Since there may be only one bottle per entry, pour only half of the bottle or less for the preliminary evaluation.

**Remember to record a consensus score and write on the scoresheet in the box at the top of the page. The difference between an entry's scores must be less than seven points.**

### Mini-Best-of-Show

A panel of the most experienced judges from the initial judging choose by consensus the top three places in that NHC Style (assuming there are at least three entries with scores of 30 or higher).

- **A mini-BOS scoresheet is filled out by the head steward to briefly record what transpires. This is shared with the entrants in the mini-BOS.**
- **Please note first, second, and third on the mini-BOS scoresheet and the flight summary sheet.**
- **Put the top three scoresheets on the top of the pile and arrange the rest in order by entry number.**

### Killing Time

**Do not pour any entries until you get the go-ahead from the Competition Staff.** Last minute changes may have to be made if judges are absent. DO NOT open any entries until you are told to do so.

### Just Ask

If you have questions about something, ask. If you are missing information regarding special ingredients/base style for an entry – or you believe an entry may have been placed in the wrong category, please bring it to the Competition Staff's attention. Have fun!

## Competition Volunteer Overview

A number of teams work together for a competition of this magnitude to run smoothly and efficiently. Each group performs important tasks without which the other groups could not function. Besides the judges, who are a completely separate entity, these groups or teams include Competition Staff, Stewards, Scoresheet/Results Staff, and Back Room Crew. Below is a summary of the tasks that these groups perform if interested in helping. Keep in mind each location may have slight variations on the below tasks and responsibilities.

**Competition Staff:** These are the overall organizers of the competition. They usually include a site organizer, a judge coordinator, and a cellar master, though some competitions may have additional staff members to help delegate tasks. This group does all the preparatory work to organize the competition and are the first people to ask when there are issues.



**Stewards:** There are usually two or more stewards per judging table, with the potential for more if the category being judged is large. Stewards prepare the judging tables, pull necessary entries based on documentation, present the beers to the judges, help complete paper work as requested by judges, keep the judging area orderly, turn in all necessary paperwork to the competition staff, and provide additional support and assistance to the judges and competition staff as needed.

**Scoresheet/Results Staff:** Some competitions may designate scoresheet/results staff to help process completed scoresheets for data entry. This group proofs and verifies scoresheets, flight sheets, coversheets, and any additional paper work before it is entered into the database.

**Cellar Master/Back Room Crew:** The cellar master manages the organization, sorting, and delivery of the entries. The back room crew assists the cellar master. Their responsibility is to assist with beer delivery for each session. They manage moving appropriate case boxes to the judging area, as well as other tasks that are pertinent to the moving of entries from cold storage to the judging area.

## Competition Run of Show & Steward Information

Competition volunteers are absolutely vital to the success of the competition. Many volunteers may have a limited understanding of what running a major competition entails and how their specific responsibilities fit into the competition as a whole. It is difficult to present tasks of various individuals in an entirely sequential manner as job responsibilities may be shared and are often completed simultaneously.

In the following pages, effort was made to detail the natural progression of events from the time of entries are received through the time paperwork is returned to homebrewers after the competition. Although there is little down time, each category of volunteers has a rush of activities at specific times throughout the competition.

### Prior to the Competition

In the weeks and months leading up the competition, the Competition Staff are hard at work. Entries must be received, unpacked, labeled, boxed, checked-in, palletized, stored, and sometimes shipped to the competition site.

All entries are sorted by NHC Styles with each NHC Style containing BJCP subcategories. Boxes are created for the entries, and each entry receives a “judging number” label, which is different than the “entry number”. These new numbers are to prevent someone from being able to judge an entry whose number they recognize. Sometimes it is necessary to have more than one box in a category. For example, if category 17 has three boxes, they might be numbered 17A, 17B, and 17C to denote the first, second, and third boxes of category 17 respectively.

Some competitions may also separate entry bottles. There are two bottles per entry in the First Round – one used for comment scoring and the other used for a Mini-Best-Of-Show judging if it qualifies. The first bottle is used for comment scoring, while the other bottle will be kept cold in storage. This is to



ensure entries are being treated with the upmost care and integrity. Each site is different and Competition Staff will explain their method once you are on site.

### Competition Day

Upon arrival to the competition, check-in with the competition staff who can help you locate supplies and designate your role at the competition.

Stewards 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 (Table sign that indicates the category number and category name)
- Water pitcher(s)
- Bread/crackers
- Bottle openers (1 per judge pair), cork screw (if necessary), tasting stoppers
- Swill bucket
- Pencils
- Plastic judging cups
- Plastic water cups
- Flight sheets
- Score sheets (Consensus Box, mini-BOS, and Place indication are on scoresheets and stewards are responsible for making sure each box is filled out fully and accurately)
- Pull Sheets

Once your table is set up and judging is about to begin, collect the beers for your panel from the staging area where the Back Room Crew has put out the case boxes for judging. Some categories may have more than one box. Please cross-reference the pull sheet to make sure you have the correct set of entries and that no entries are missing.

If an entry is not found in the expected box, all the boxes for that category should be checked before determining that the entry is missing. If the beer cannot be located in any of the boxes for that category, find the Competition Staff. Also, should a beer be found in a box that is not on any pick sheet for that category, find the Competition Staff.

### Handling Entries:

**Please be careful** handling the bottle entries. Due to shipping mishaps, or 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 bottles from light and keep them 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 Competition Staff and the judges to see if your beers are too cold or are warming too quickly. If practical for categories with large number of entries, use an empty case box to hold the bottles that have been judged. This way all the beers are sure to be judged.



In certain categories, it may be desirable to establish a serving order. For example, in the Specialty Beer category, the judges may prefer that the beer be served from lightest to darkest. Beers containing peppers or other strong spices are best served later in the flight. Judges will help stewards determine a serving order.

### Core Responsibilities:

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, cover sheets, and flight 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 category number, and incorrectly adding scores isn't uncommon.

Individually, judges fill out scoresheets for each beer they judge during their flight. Once the beer has been judged, it is discussed among the pair of judges. The scores must be within 7 points of each other, and the judges will let you know which entries they will consider moving on to Mini-Best-Of-Show.

Once all the beers are judged in a flight, judge pairs will move on a maximum of three entries to the Mini-Best-Of-Show. These entries should be marked on the Flight Sheets and Cover Sheets of the entry, and these are the bottles you will need to pull from all judge pairs in a particular category. This portion of the competition is where first, second, and third place are determined for each category. Set the table with all the second-tier entries for the judges to sample. Deliver the sheet of the winning entry numbers (provided by a judge) to the Competition Staff.

**It is your job to double-check the paper work. Place the first, second, and third place winning score sheets on top, then sort the remaining scoresheets according to "entry number" and return the score sheets and flight sheets to the Competition Staff/Score Sheet Staff.**

### Killing Time:

The first session takes a little while to get going, and your patience is greatly appreciated. Do not pour the beer until the Competition Staff gives you the go ahead. Instruct the judges NOT to open any beers until the Competition Staff 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 begin.

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. Do not pour beer for yourself from any bottle until the session is finished and the results have been collected.

### 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.

### Ask Questions:

Ask if you have questions about a procedure or your duties. We're happy to answer questions. And make sure to have fun!



## Important Dates

Date	Subject	Description
Through January 29	Join/Update AHA Account (Highly Encouraged)	It is highly encouraged to be an AHA member to volunteer for this event. Members who volunteer are given priority in the following year's competition for entry placement.
February 8	NHC Volunteer Sign-up	Sign up to volunteer as a judge or steward in any of the First Round competitions.
April 6 – April 22	First Round Judging	First round judging for all 12 competitions sites. Make sure you mark your calendar and contact the Competition Staff prior to volunteering
February 8	Final Round Volunteer Sign-up	Volunteers begin signing up for the Final Round judging and stewarding. If you volunteered in the First Round, you <b>still need to sign up for Final Round volunteering.</b>
June 28	Final Round Judging	Final Round judging for the competition. Make sure to monitor your emails and contact the judge coordinator and steward coordinator beforehand.



## Final Note

It takes lots of volunteers completing multiple tasks to make a competition like the National Homebrew Competition run smoothly. No team of volunteers is more important than any other. If any one of the teams were missing or underperforming, all other teams would be affected and the competition itself would grind to a halt.

Therefore, all of YOU are extremely valued and integral to the competition. Being a part of any team, then, is something to take pride in. Acceptance of the responsibilities to that team and the competition as a whole should not be taken lightly. We trust that your willingness to commit to work at this competition means that you are also willing to put forth your best efforts to preserve its integrity. We also hope that you will find pleasure and fulfillment along the way.

WELCOME ABOARD!

John Moorhead



NHC Director

