

# Competition Education

The background is a solid teal color. It features several decorative elements: a large, semi-transparent pie chart in the upper right quadrant; several smaller, semi-transparent pie charts scattered around it; and a bar chart in the bottom right corner with four vertical bars of increasing height from left to right.

What is a Homebrew Competition like, and how do I participate?

# What makes a Competition?

## Structure, Execution, and Volunteers

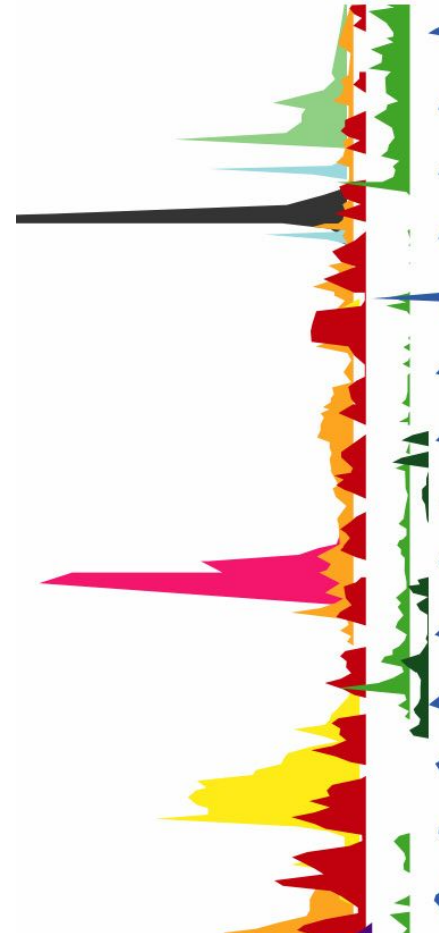
- Beer Judge Certification Program (BJCP)
  - Started in 1985
  - Certifies and ranks beer judges
    - Over 7000 Judges
  - Provides a framework for Competition
    - Style Guidelines
    - Sanctioning
    - Document Templates
    - Handbooks
  - Provides educational resources
    - Guidelines
    - Sensory Kits
    - Training





# Timeline of a competition.

- **Planning Committee**
  - Dates
  - Location
  - Sponsorship
  - Promotion
- **Registration**
  - Sign up
- **Entry Window**
  - Enter your beer
- **Drop off Deadline**
  - Usually a Homebrew Store or Brewery
- **Entry Pickup & Bottle Sort**
  - Team Effort
- **Judging Session**
- **Results Packaging & Mailing**



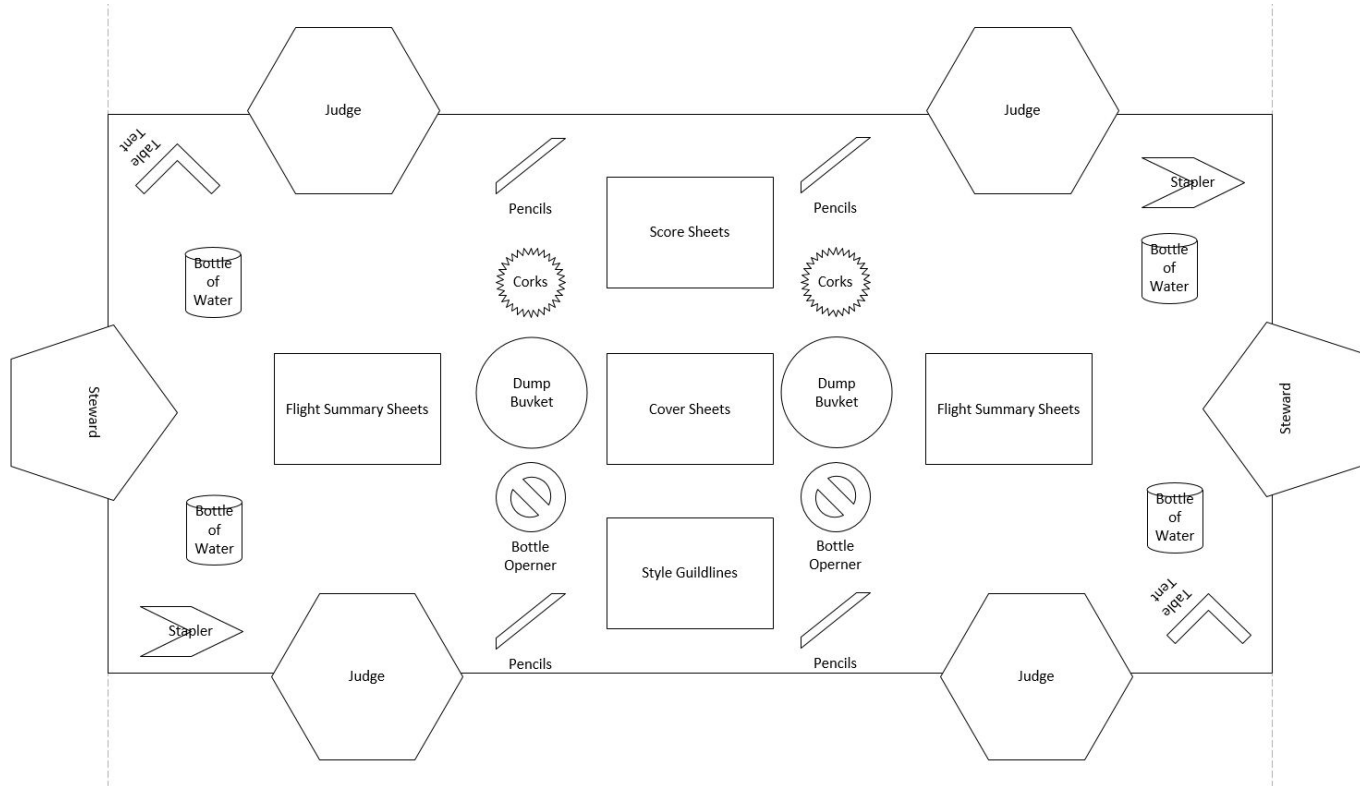


# Stewarding

- The job of a steward is to help the judges. By...
  - Ensuring the judges have all of the materials required.
    - Cup, Bottle Opener, Scoresheets, Pencils, Staplers, Water, Crackers, etc.
  - Bringing the competition entries to the judges in the order specified.
    - Ask the head judge what order they want
  - Maintain proper serving temperatures during judging.
  - Double-checking all of the competition forms, including the cover sheets, to be sure they have been properly completed and that the math has been done correctly.
  - Empty dump buckets as needed.
  - Do not empty opened bottles or discard bottle caps until instructed!
- Judging is an intensive process, and the stewards play a key role in making sure all goes smoothly.
- Serving as a steward is an excellent means of learning about beer evaluation and is usually the first step in becoming a beer judge.



# Table Layout





# Judging

- Signing up
- Preparation
- Judging
- Score Sheets



# Signing Up

- Everyone has something valuable to contribute!
  - ANYONE that has eyes, a nose, and a mouth can judge
  - Like learning a foreign language - match known feelings to vocabulary
- Number of flights to sign up for
  - 3 per day can be challenging
- Choosing styles you don't want to judge
  - If you've entered that category
  - Difficult/Obscure styles
    - Czech lagers
    - Specialty categories



# Preparation

- Don't wear strong smelling deodorant, cologne, no smoking etc.
- Download BJCP app onto your phone
- Look over categories beforehand







# Judging

- No talking about beer w/fellow judge until done scoring
  - Power of suggestion > senses
- Aroma
  - Cover cup w/hand or coaster
  - Sniff arm to reset nose
- Be specific
  - Citrus - What kind of citrus?
    - Orange - What kind of orange?
      - Blood Orange - What part of the orange?
        - Rind - What level?
          - Assertive blood orange rind ≠ citrus





# Score Sheets

- First impression score, then fill out categories
- Don't need to go in order
- Write a lot
  - But don't just try to fill space if it doesn't add value
- Write quickly
- Give tips, but don't diagnose
- Value the entrant's effort and money
  - Be honest, but be positive
  - No mean/negative comments



# BEER SCORESHEET



<http://www.bjcp.org>

AHA/BJCP Sanctioned Competition Program

<http://www.homebrewersassociation.org>

Judge Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Judge BJCP ID \_\_\_\_\_

Judge Email \_\_\_\_\_

*Use Avo's Label # 5100*

### BJCP Rank or Status:

- Apprentice       Certified  
 National         Master             Grand Master  
 Honorary Master    Honorary GM    Mead Judge  
 Provisional Judge    Rank Pending    Cider Judge

### Non-BJCP Qualifications:

- Professional Brewer    Beer Sommelier    GABF/WBC  
 Certified Cicerone     Adv. Cicerone     Master Cicerone  
 Sensory Training       Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Descriptor Definitions (Mark all that apply):

- Acetaldehyde** – Green apple-like aroma and flavor.  
 **Akshohic** – The aroma, flavor, and warming effect of ethanol and higher alcohols. Sometimes described as *hot*.  
 **Astringent** – Puckering, lingering harshness and/or dryness in the finish/harshness; harsh graininess; huskiness.  
 **Diacetyl** – Artificial butter, butterscotch, or toffee aroma and flavor. Sometimes perceived as a slickness on the tongue.  
 **DMS (dimethyl sulfide)** – At low levels a sweet, cooked or canned corn-like aroma and flavor.  
 **Estery** – Aroma and/or flavor of any ester (fruits, fruit flavorings, or roses).  
 **Grassy** – Aroma/flavor of fresh-cut grass or green leaves.  
 **Light-Struck** – Similar to the aroma of a skunk.  
 **Metallic** – Tinnny, coinny, copper, iron, or blood-like flavor.  
 **Musty** – Stale, musty, or moldy aromas/flavors.  
 **Oxidized** – Any one or combination of stale, winy/vinous, cardboard, papery, or sherry-like aromas and flavors.  
 **Phenolic** – Spicy (clove, pepper), smoky, plastic, plastic adhesive strip, and/or medicinal (chlorophenolic).  
 **Solvent** – Aromas and flavors of higher alcohols (fusel alcohols). Similar to acetone or lacquer thinner aromas.  
 **Sour/Acidic** – Tartness in aroma and flavor. Can be sharp and clean (lactic acid) or vine-gar-like (acetic acid).  
 **Sulfur** – The aromas of rotten eggs or burning matches.  
 **Vegetal** – Cooked, canned, or rotten vegetable aroma and flavor (cabbage, onion, celery, asparagus, etc.)  
 **Yeasty** – A bready, sulfury or yeast-like aroma or flavor.

Category # \_\_\_\_\_ Subcategory (a-f) \_\_\_\_\_ Entry # \_\_\_\_\_

Subcategory (spell out) \_\_\_\_\_

Special Ingredients: \_\_\_\_\_

Bottle Inspection:  Appropriate size, cap, fill level, label removal, etc.

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

**Aroma** (as appropriate for style) \_\_\_\_\_/12

Comment on malt, hops, esters, and other aromatics

**Appearance** (as appropriate for style) \_\_\_\_\_/3

Comment on color, clarity, and head (retention, color, and texture)

**Flavor** (as appropriate for style) \_\_\_\_\_/20

Comment on malt, hops, fermentation characteristics, balance, finish/aftertaste, and other flavor characteristics

**Mouthfeel** (as appropriate for style) \_\_\_\_\_/5

Comment on body, carbonation, mouth, creaminess, astringency, and other palate sensations

**Overall Impression** \_\_\_\_\_/10

Comment on overall drinking pleasure associated with entry; give suggestions for improvement

**Total** \_\_\_\_\_/50

SCORING GUIDE

- Outstanding** (45 - 50): World class sample of style.  
**Excellent** (38 - 44): Exemplifies style well, requires minor fine tuning.  
**Very Good** (30 - 37): Generally within style parameters, some minor flaws.  
**Good** (21 - 29): Meets the mark on style and/or minor flaws.  
**Fair** (14 - 20): Off flavors/aromas or major style deficiencies. Unpleasant.  
**Problematic** (00 - 13): Major off flavors and aromas dominate. Hard to drink.

Classic Example	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stylistic Accuracy				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not to Style
		Technical Merit									
Hawless	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Significant Flaws
Wonderful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lifless



# Entering Beer

- What to enter
- How to find a comp
- How to submit
- Interpreting results



# What to Enter

- **Overshooting > Being Subtle**
  - Sometimes it's better to be obvious
- **Less popular categories = better chance at winning**
  - IPA & Pale Ale → saturated
  - Think about what it will be paired with
- **Bolder styles typically do better in BOS**
  - Imperial stout > Oatmeal stout



# How to find a comp

- Keep a calendar/list
- Check the AHA Calendar
  - <https://www.homebrewersassociation.org/aha-events/calendar/>
- In MN, many seem to be in the Winter
  - Brew in the Fall
- Pay attention to number of entries
  - Less entries = more chance of winning
  - More entries = enter more obscure categories
- TONS of competitions nationally, if you're willing to ship



# Submitting your Entry

- Judge your own beer
  - Bottle it & wait a week or two
  - Cold & Warm
  - Read guidelines & match style
- Focus on the details
  - Carbonation is commonly low
  - Use a clean bottle & fill appropriately
- Enter early, drop off last minute





# Special Ingredients



- For some reason, people like to tell their whole life story in the comments section of specialty beers
- DON'T talk about technique
  - I don't really care that you did a quadruple decoction mash
- DON'T say the type of hops unless it's fundamental to its "specialness"
- DON'T mention any ingredients that aren't clearly there
  - if you added rose petals, but you can't taste them, don't say that they're in there
- DO mention strength & style if called for



# Interpreting Results

- Take feedback with a grain of salt
  - Judges are people too
- Take repeated comments seriously
- Don't get discouraged, much of this is up to luck
  - Which means, more beers = more chance of winning
- Refer back to judging tips





# Final Thoughts

- Don't be afraid
- Don't get discouraged
- Help where you can
- Try something new

