CONTEST RULES

Barbecue Competitors Alliance (BCA)

1. Definitions and Basics

Ancillary	Any food item prepared for a contest category that is NOT one of the main barbecue meats of half chicken, pork spareribs, pork (Boston butt or shoulder), or beef brisket. An ancillary category is also known as a jackpot category.
Barbecue	Barbecue is the preparation of meat that is usually done in an outdoor environment by smoking the meat over wood or charcoal. The word barbecue is derived from the old European word *barbacoa* that translates as "sacred fire pit". Barbacoa in this sense means a smoker or grill for cooking meat, consisting of a raised platform resting on sticks. The Barbecue Competitors Alliance (BCA) is dedicated to bringing traditional *barbacoa* to the modern public in the form of being the sanctioning body of choice for low-cost barbecue contests.
Contest Official(s)	The BCA contest official(s) (hereafter known as an official) is/are the person/persons who are assigned to manage the judging area during a sanctioned contest. These officials enforce BCA rules and follow BCA procedures. BCA will train its officials to fairly and consistently apply contest rules and procedures at its contests. BCA will assign a minimum of one contest official to a given contest for about every 30 registered teams.
Cooks Meeting	An organized session or meeting where the contest official(s) welcome participants to the event, review all important contest rules with an emphasis on unique site rules/limitations, and will officially announce the number of participants/teams and all turn-in times for the contested meats/ancillaries. BCA recommends the meeting be scheduled sometime during the evening on the day before the first meat is turned in. All participants are required to attend this meeting.
Non-Traditional Contest	A contest where any legal fuel or energy source including wood, wood/charcoal products, gas, or electric, can be used as a heat source for this type of contest. There are no limitations as to the required number of contested meat categories. All other BCA rules will be followed.

Participant/Contestant A participant/contestant is any group or individual (hereafter known as a team) cooking in a BCA sanctioned contest with the intent of preparing and cooking barbecue and other items for judging in said contest. Each team will be comprised of a head cook and as many assistants as required. Promoters may restrict the number of assistants for logistical reasons. No team shall enter more than one turn-in box per meat category in a contest; BCA recognizes one head cook from each team. Except for children's or junior cook-offs, all participants and judges must be 18 years of age if cash prizes are awarded. A child participant is a person that is younger than high school age that participates in an appropriate event. Likewise, a junior participant is a person that is of high school age but not an adult that participates in an appropriate event.

People's Choice A contest consisting of meat or ancillary products that is judged by the general public using a set of specific rules and procedures developed by the promoter. A People's Choice category or event is not part of the usual BCA contest and is administered by the promoter.

Promoter/Organizer A promoter/organizer is any group or individual (hereafter known as a promoter) who is putting together a BCA sanctioned barbecue contest. The promoters/organizers have the responsibility to select judges for their contest. The promoter/organizer may not cook in his or her contest.

Sanctioning Sanctioning implies a promoter agrees to follow all BCA rules during their contest. As part of a sanctioning agreement, each promoter promises to pay a predetermined yearly sanctioning fee as defined by BCA. In addition, the promoter also agrees to pay a per team fee (also defined by BCA) for use of the rules, and the usual and customary BCA official expenses to manage the judging area during the contest. A minimum of ten (10) teams is required for a BCA sanctioned contest.

Traditional Contest A contest where only wood or wood/charcoal products can be used as a heat source for cooking the meats. All other BCA rules will be followed.

2. Cooking Meat All meat will be cooked on site with no pre-marinating, injecting or pre-seasoning allowed. Pre-trimming of the meat, however, is allowed. No meat may leave the contest site after the conclusion of the cooks meeting or when preparation for the contest has begun. In general, BCA discourages meat inspection at its contests since there is no way to

ensure the inspected products are what are turned in for each category. However, inspection is appropriate for participants who missed the cooks meeting (with an approved excuse) or are first time contest cooks. This inspection can help ensure that their purchased meat is appropriate and that cold storage temperatures have been maintained.

3. Equipment

Each team will supply all of the equipment necessary for the preparation and cooking of their entry including a cooker, wood, charcoal, or wood pellets. For a BCA sanctioned Traditional Contest, only wood and wood/charcoal products are allowed as heat sources to cook the meats; however, a barbecue pit may include gas or electricity for starting the combustion of wood or wood/charcoal products but NOT to complete cooking. Cookers that use electricity to run augers, rotisseries, or similar non-heating devices are allowed. No team may share a cooker or grill with any other team. Only winners of a BCA sanctioned Traditional Contest are eligible for the draw at the Jack Daniels World Championship in Lynchburg, Tennessee.

In the case of non-traditional ancillary categories like hamburger patties or beef steak, the promoter can allow the use of gas or electric as a heat source. In this case, the promoter will make this intention clear in the contest registration forms and other related literature. Likewise, the BCA contest official will also make this allowance clear in the cooks meeting.

At a BCA sanctioned Non-Traditional Contest, any legal fuel or energy source including wood, wood/charcoal products, gas, or electric, can be used as a heat source for cooking the meats. All other BCA rules will be followed. No team in a BCA sanctioned Non-Traditional Contest may share a cooker or grill with any other team. The use of specific heat sources is limited to what is allowed by all local, state, and national laws.

Winners of Non-Traditional BCA Contests are NOT eligible for the draw at the Jack Daniels World Championship in Lynchburg, Tennessee.

Under no circumstances shall a BCA Non-Traditional Contest be held at the same time and location as a BCA Traditional Contest.

4. Sanitation

Cooks are to prepare barbecue in as sanitary manner as possible. It is advised that promoters provide power and water connections at or near the individual cook sites to aid in the overall sanitary conditions present at the contest location. When applicable, local health department rules override these rules on sanitation and must be followed.

5. Categories

Cookoff promoters shall advise teams in advance of applicable barbecue meat or ancillary categories and other local rules or conditions. BCA recommends the following barbecue meat categories be part of every sanctioned contest:

- Chicken,
- Pork Spareribs, and
- Beef Brisket.

Pork (Boston butt or shoulder) can be included as a fourth barbecue meat category but is not required. Pork can be counted towards Grand Champion if desired. Participants will be notified at the Cook's meeting if Pork is counted towards Grand Champion.

BCA suggests that promoters/organizers are free to add the following ancillary categories to any contest:

- Dessert - This should be a separate category, and the promoter/organizer should specify if it should be cooked on site, on the pit, or if it can be cooked at home to be entered.
- Sauce - The promoter/organizer should specify if it can be brought from home or cooked on site.
- Chicken Wings - The promoter/organizer should specify if this product can be brought from home or cooked on site.
- Steak - The promoter/organizer should specify the quantity of meat used for this category.
- Open - Any meat/item other than those listed above.

6. Double Tickets

BCA contests use a double-blind ticket system. This system ensures fair and unbiased competition. The system requires that two tickets bearing the same number be utilized, one firmly attached to the top of the judging container or side of a cup in a manner that hides the number, and the other ticket easily removed by the head cook for retention after signing the head cook's name in front of an BCA contest official or their representative. Winning numbers will not be revealed until time to announce each place in each meat category. At that time, the secret numbers attached to the container will be removed and announced.

7. Product Containers

Entries will be submitted in Styrofoam containers without internal compartment dividers with hinged lids and only a single piece of aluminum foil lining the bottom. No other garnish of any kind is permitted in the container. All judging containers shall be clean and free of any markings. The Styrofoam containers will have a minimum bottom size of about 9 x 9 inches. Larger Styrofoam containers will be used for Chicken entries when the contest has 50 or more teams.

8. Turn-In Quantities BCA requires that the promoter and/or the contest official advise all cooks of the exact quantities and cuts of meat that will be placed in the judging trays. This will normally be accomplished at the mandatory head cook's meeting. The BCA contest official or designated representative will inspect all trays at the time of turn-in in order to assure compliance with the turn-in criteria. Other than the single piece of aluminum foil, other garnishes and condiments are prohibited, as they do not reflect the true quality of the cooked meat. Meats may be cooked with sauces and/or other liquids, but once the cooking is complete, sauces and/or liquids may not be added once put into tray. While sauce can be used during cooking, there can be no puddling of sauce or any other liquid in the judging container.

For contests of less than 50 teams, BCA requires the following quantities be submitted at turn-in:

Chicken: One half (1/2) fully jointed chicken including the skin, breast, wing, thigh and drumstick. A wingtip does NOT have to be present for an acceptable entry. Each chicken entry must fit into the container and its lid must close. The backbone can be cut out if necessary. No Cornish game hens are allowed.

Pork Spareribs: Seven (7) ribs, bone in, meat side up, with all product stacked parallel to the container hinge, with three (3) ribs on top of four (4) ribs on the bottom, all in the same direction. St. Louis cut spareribs are an acceptable entry. However, baby back ribs, loin ribs, or country style ribs are not acceptable entries.

Beef Brisket: Seven (7) slices that fills the width of the container, approximately 3/8 inches thick. The fat cap of the brisket may be cut off after cooking. Likewise, the ends of the brisket can only cut off (blocked) before cooking. If the slices are too long, curl the meat ends around the sides of the box (in a "U" shape).

Pork: Containers should be filled with pieces of pork butt or shoulder that are approximately one-half inch in diameter and more than about one and one half inches long. Cooks should provide sufficient pork to fill the container.

Dessert: In general, cooks should prepare sufficient product for the number of judges present at the event.

Sauce: Fill a 12–16-ounce Styrofoam cup about three-quarters full with product. Each sauce entry can contain pieces of vegetables or other components smaller than the tip of your little finger.

Chicken Wings: Sauce can be applied/added to the product at any time during the cooking process. The promoter/organizer should specify the types and number of chicken pieces that are allowed in this category and how the product will be judged.

Steak: In general, all cooks should prepare one type/cut of steak during a contest. The promoter sets the size, weight, and thickness of the meat that are allowed to be used in the contest.

Other: Cooks should prepare sufficient product for the number of judges present at the event.

For contests with 50 or more teams, BCA requires participants turn-in two half chickens (in a larger Styrofoam container), nine pork spareribs, and nine slices of beef brisket. The quantity of pork can also be adjusted to guarantee sufficient product for judging.

9. Turn-In Times

Turn-in times for each category will be set by the contest official in consultation with the promoter. The selected turn-in times will be announced at the mandatory cooks meeting. The head cook or his/her representative must attend this cook's meeting. Once these turn-in times are set and announced, no changes will be made. The BCA contest official is authorized to make changes to these times in the event of an emergency and with full notification of all teams in the contest. A window of ten (10) minutes before and after the set turn-in times will be recognized, for a total of a 20 minutes. Product containers received at any time before or after each turn-in window will not be accepted for judging and are not considered to be a disqualification.

Turn-in times will be adjusted depending on the number of teams in the contest; this is to allow the judges to completely evaluate and score all samples. For contests with 25 teams or fewer teams, it is recommended that turn-in times be every hour (60 minutes); with more than 25 teams and less than 60 teams, an hour and a half (90 minutes) between categories is suggested. Contests with more than 60 teams should have two hours (120 minutes) between categories. The BCA contest official will make the ultimate determination for the turn-in times and judging schedule for all categories.

10. Late Arriving Cooks

Any participant who does not make the scheduled cooks meeting must contact the head official(s) before the scheduled start time of the meeting stating they are coming to the contest and will arrive late. Late arriving cooks/teams are subject to a mandatory meat/site inspection by the contest official(s) or their designate. The predetermined turn-in times and other announcements will be given to these late arriving participants the following morning when they pick up their turn-in

boxes. It is the sole responsibility of any late arriving head cook to obtain the turn-in boxes and all necessary information to compete in the contest.

11. Judging

BCA recommends that a computer application be used to score all its barbecue contests. At a minimum, contest official(s) will train prospective judges on BCA rules and procedures before the start of each turn-in window. For chicken, judges will be advised to taste either white or dark meat for all samples, depending on their individual preference. Judges should bring any potential raw chicken samples to the attention of the BCA contest official(s).

If 17 teams or less are entered in the contest, there will be one round of judging. If there are more than 17 teams but less than 60 teams, there will be a preliminary and a final round (two rounds) of judging. Three or more rounds of judging will be used for contests with more than 60 teams. The number of containers in each round will be set to reduce the number of samples to about half the previous round. The BCA contest official will predetermine the number of top results from each preliminary judging table that will be sent on to subsequent levels of judging. The contest official will make the final determination as to the number of judging rounds used in any BCA contest.

Judges should be drawn from the general public. Judges for the main meat categories MUST be at least 18 years of age. No team/family members will be allowed to judge on the final table. Head cooks are prohibited to participate as judges. The BCA official can disqualify any judge for just cause. Persons between the ages of 16 to 18 can judge in ancillary categories. Persons under 16 years of age can judge Kids Que events.

BCA recommends that a minimum of six (6) judges per table be utilized during all non-final rounds of judging. The final round of judging should utilize a minimum of seven (7) judges per table. For all rounds, BCA also allows promoters to use a maximum of nine (9) judges per table. BCA requires that no smoking take place in the judging area. Judges are only allowed to drink water while sitting at a table.

For products presented in all rounds except the finals, judges will score each entry on a scale of two to ten (2-10), in whole number increments (i.e. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10). A score of 10 is the highest score any product can achieve. Conversely, a score of 2 is the lowest score any judge can give a product. Any whole number score between 2 to 10 is allowed. A score of zero (0) is not allowed. Judges will score each entry immediately after it is tasted. Judges will not compare entries to assign scores. Judges will use an approved BCA score sheet to record their assigned scores for each entry. Word descriptions for each assigned number are printed on the bottom of the judge's score sheet.

For products making the final round, judges will score each entry on a scale of 6.0 to 10.0 in half-integer increments (half whole numbers). A score of 10.0 is the highest score any product can achieve. Conversely, a score of 6.0 is the lowest score any judge can give a product. Any half-integer score between 6.0 and 10.0 is allowed (i.e. 6.0, 6.5, 7.0, 7.5, 8.0, 8.5, 9.0, 9.5, and 10.0). A score of 10.5 is not allowed. Judges will use an approved BCA score sheet to record their assigned scores for each entry. Half-integers will only be used for scores in the final round. Word descriptions for each assigned number are printed on the bottom of the judge's score sheet.

BCA recommends that a maximum of twenty (20) containers be assigned to each judging table. It is recommended that a predetermined number of top scoring results from each preliminary table be sent to subsequent levels of judging. Comment cards can be used at the discretion of the BCA contest official. If used, judges are given the option of using official BCA comment cards to give cooks written feedback on their entries. Judges will be instructed to give cooks constructive comments during their training session. Judges will be required to provide comment cards for entries with scores of less than five (5) in all rounds except the finals. For the final round, judges will be required to give a comment for a score of six (6). Comment cards will be given back to the cooks at a place determined by the BCA contest official(s) after the awards ceremony. BCA contest official(s) reserve the right to throw out the entire score sheet for any judge at any table who refuses to write a comment.

12. Disqualifications

If a container is found to be in violation of these rules, then it will be disqualified at the sole discretion of the BCA contest official(s). Marked containers are not permitted and will be disqualified by the BCA contest official. Chicken entries that are deemed to be raw by the BCA contest official will be disqualified. Entries that are disqualified will be awarded a score of one (1) by the contest official for each participating judge. The decision of the BCA contest official concerning entry disqualification is final. Judges can only give a one (1) to an entry if directed to do so by the BCA contest official(s).

13. Winners and Prizes

BCA recommends that announcement of winners be based on the number of competitors in each category. At a minimum, a contest with ten (10) or more teams should announce places 10 to 1 in reverse order for each category. With approval of the promoter, more places can be announced, especially if prizes are awarded to those finishers. In the interest of recognizing winners, these places will be announced regardless of prizes or trophies being awarded.

The BCA official will announce any disqualifications that took place during the contest. Cooks can check with the BCA official after the

conclusion of the awards ceremony to verify ticket numbers that were disqualified. It is recommended that at least one unbiased person verify ticket numbers at the awards ceremony. It is also recommended that a BCA contest official do the announcing of the ticket numbers and head cook's name for each place at the awards ceremony. The ticket numbers of the entries that made it to the final table (finalists) will be read after the winners are announced.

At a minimum, the BCA Grand Champion and a Reserve Grand Champion will be named at every contest. In all cases, the overall results from only the contested barbecue meat categories are used to calculate BCA Grand Champion, Reserve Grand Champion, and all announced overall finishers. These winners as well as other overall finishers and ten or more finishers in each of the meat categories will be announced and posted on the BCA website. Other overall prizes can be awarded at the discretion of the promoter.

BCA uses a cumulative point system for each meat; For contests of less than 50 cooks, a total of 10 points will be awarded for a 1st place finish to 1 point being awarded for a 10th place finish. The head cook and team with the highest cumulative number of points in the contested barbecue meat categories will be named Grand Champion. Likewise, the head cook and team with the second highest cumulative number of points in the contested barbecue meat categories will be named Reserve Grand Champion. Large contests with sufficient prize money can pay down to 15 places. In those cases, the points scale for Grand Champion and Reserve Grand Champion will be adjusted to take this into account. BCA requires that contests with more than 50 submitted entries will use 15 points for a 1st place finish down to 1 point for a 15th place finish in each meat category.

Scores for all contestants by ticket number will be posted in the judging area after the awards ceremony and will be made available to BCA members on the Internet. Participants will be given sufficient time to taste the top entries in each contested category after the conclusion of the awards ceremony.

14. Tie Breakers

In the event of a tie in any meat category for any place in the top ten in the final round, the sample products will be re-evaluated by a panel of people who have already judged that meat in the final round. The BCA contest official will select the people who comprise each tie-break panel in such a way that there is always an odd number of judges. After tasting each tied entry a second time, judges will be asked to rank them in order of preference. Each judge will give the entry they like best a score of ten (10). Judges will then give the entry they like second best a score of nine (9). This procedure will continue with the third best entry getting an eight (8) and fourth best entry getting a seven (7), and

so forth until all the polled entries for a given tie are considered. The entry with the largest number of votes in each panel breaks the tie and finishes in the highest place. The entry with the second highest cumulative score finishes one place below the entry above, and so forth until all the tied places are finalized. This procedure will be repeated until all separate ties in the top ten are broken. The decision of these judges is final.

In the event of a tie for Grand Champion or Reserve Grand Champion, brisket shall be the first tiebreaker. The subsequent tiebreakers (in order) will be pork spareribs, chicken, and pork (if contested).

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