

## BBQ Competition Rules & Guidelines

Please note this is a BACKYARD BBQ Teams competition only with our all new HomeTown division. Any rules specific to a pro-division are not applicable under the normal guidance of the Backyard Team sanction of the Florida BBQ Association. If you have a question, please ask us. All rules apply to Backyard and HomeTown contestants. The HomeTown division is a choice for teams that may not compete on a regular basis. All teams will be scored and judged the same, with Backyard Teams scoring separately than HomeTown Teams.

1. **CONTESTANT** – A contestant is any individual, group, restaurant, etc. hereinafter referred to as a team that will prepare and cook an entry or entries for the purpose of being judged according to FBA rules at an FBA sanctioned contest. Each team will be comprised of a head cook and as many assistants as required. The contest organizer of an FBA sanctioned contest may not cook in any category in that contest. With the exception of the Triple Crown Championship, no team shall be allowed to compete in more than one FBA sanctioned contest on the same dates. No team shall enter more than one turn-in box per meat category in a contest. Neither a family member of a competing cook team nor any cook team member of that cook team may enter the judging area at any time during the contest. These rules apply to both Professional Division and Backyard Teams. All contestants must have at least one representative of their team present at the Cook Team Meeting held on the evening prior to the contest. In the event this is not possible, the team shall contact either the Contest Organizer or one of the FBA Reps at that contest and inform them of their absence. Cook teams absent from the meeting accept all responsibility for understanding these rules and any changes to them that may have occurred. Violation of these rules may result in disqualification from this contest.

2. **INTERPRETATION of RULES** – The interpretation of the FBA rules and regulations are those of the FBA Representative at the contest and his or her decisions are final. The FBA Representative may not deviate from nor change any FBA rule for any contest for any reason.

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. No team may share a cooker or grill with any other team.

4. **MEAT INSPECTION** – All meats must be USDA or state DA inspected and passed. No pre-seasoning, injecting, marinating or cooking of any entry is permitted until after inspection by the Official Meat Inspector as appointed by the FBA Representative or the contest organizer. The head cook or his representative shall sign a form stating the meat is USDA approved. Meat inspection begins at noon on the day prior to the contest. All meat must be maintained at a maximum temperature of 40 degrees F prior to inspection. Prior to cooking, all meat that is resting in preparation for cooking must be covered at all times. All meats must be cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 145 degrees F. After cooking all meat must be maintained at a minimum temperature of 140 degrees F in a covered container until turned in for judging. All contest meat, once inspected, may not leave the cook team's site until turn in.

5. **COOKING FUELS** – The only approved cooking media are wood, charcoal, or wood pellets. Gas of any kind or any electrical heating element may be used only to start the initial fire or to start burn barrels, charcoal chimneys, etc. A gas starter, gas flame, or electrical heating element may not be used in the cooker after the meat has entered the cooker or during the cooking process. Gas bottles must be disconnected from the cooker once the fire has started and must be removed from the immediate cooking area. A gas flame or electrical heating element may not be used in the cooker during any part of the cooking process.

6. APPROVED COOKERS – Any wood, charcoal, or wood pellet fired cookers homemade or commercially manufactured, will be allowed to be used in FBA contests. Electric or manual operated rotisseries or rotating shelves are permitted during the cooking process. Electric or manual operated wood, charcoal, or wood pellet augers are permitted during the cooking process. Electric or manually operated power draft devices are permitted during the cooking process. No electric, gas, wood, charcoal or wood pellet fryers are permitted during the cooking process. Frying with any form of fat, butter, or any type of oil is prohibited.

7. CONTESTANT'S SITE – Each team will be assigned a cook site. All equipment including cooker, canopy, trailer, etc. must be contained within this space. If additional space is required the team should contact the contest organizer and make satisfactory arrangements.

8. BEHAVIOR – Every team, including members and guests, are expected and required to exhibit proper and courteous behavior at all times. A quiet time will be in effect from 11:00 PM on the night prior to the contest judging, remaining in effect until sunrise on the following day. No alcoholic beverages will be distributed to the General Public. Teams will be informed of all local laws and will adhere to same. Failure to abide by these rules of behavior may result in expulsion from the contest and repeat offenders will be barred from competing in FBA sanctioned contests.

9. CLEANLINESS AND SANITATION – All teams are expected to maintain their cook sites in an orderly and clean manner and to use good sanitary practices during the preparation, cooking, and judging process. The use of sanitary gloves is required at all times while handling food. Failure to use sanitary gloves may result in disqualification. Teams are responsible for cleanup of their site once the competition has ended. All federal, state and local food safety rules and regulations must be adhered to at all times. A community shared barrel will be available to dump ash as well as grease buckets will be given to each team.

10. MEAT CATEGORIES – the following categories are sanctioned by the FBA:

- a. Chicken: The team may cook chicken whole, halved, or individual pieces.
- b. Pork Ribs: Loin back (baby back) or spare ribs only, meat on the bone. No country style ribs and no chopped, pulled, or sliced rib meat loose in the box.
- c. Pork: Whole shoulder, Boston butt or Picnic only which must weigh a minimum of four pounds. Must be cooked as a single piece of meat. Once cooked, it may be separated and returned to the cooker for finishing.

11. JUDGING – FBA sanctioning allows for blind judging only. Entries will be submitted in an approved container, with NO garnish, or decorating of any kind. Only the entry to be judged is allowed in the container. Marking of any kind will disqualify the entry. Each entry will be judged on PRESENTATION, TASTE / FLAVOR, and TENDERNESS / TEXTURE. Meat may be sauced or un-sauced. A minimum of 8 separate and identifiable portions must be submitted.

12. SCORING – Each entry will be scored by 6 FBA certified judges in the areas of PRESENTATION, TASTE / FLAVOR, and TENDERNESS / TEXTURE. Scoring ranges from a low of 5.0 to a high of 10.0 in increments of .5 points for each category. Using a weighted average, the maximum score for a category is 200 points. Any entry that is disqualified for being turned in after the designated time or not turned in shall receive a score of zero (0) for all three categories: appearance, taste, and tenderness. Any entry that is disqualified for any other reason shall receive a score of two (2) for all three categories from all six judges at that table.

13. DISQUALIFICATION – An entry can be disqualified by the FBA Representative only. An entry can be disqualified for any of the following reasons:

- a) There is evidence of marking or sculpting. Marking is defined as: any handwritten or mechanically made mark inside or outside the turn-in box that identifies the submitting team to any

judge. Sculpting is defined as: the carving, decorating, forming, or shaping of a meat entry contained in a turn-in box that identifies the submitting team to any judge.

- b) There is anything in the box besides the meat.
- c) There are not a minimum of 8 separate and identifiable portions.
- d) There is evidence of blood such that the meat is uncooked.
- e) The entry is turned in after the officially designated time.
- f) Gloves are not used while handling food products.
- g) Not cooking pork as a single piece of meat.
- h) Not cooking the meat that was inspected.
- i) All competition entry boxes must be placed on the turn in table with label up. Any box loaded upside down by the team may be submitted for judging. Teams are not permitted to modify the box in any way from its original configuration as provided by the contest REPS, including moving the label. Upon inspection by the Reps, if the label has been moved to the opposite side (bottom) of the box, the team will be DQ'd for modifying the box and the Judges will be instructed to score a (2) in each category for that entry. If the label is on the correct lid and the box must be turned over to have the label showing, the only score affected will be presentation.
- j) Posting pictures, videos, or description of a team's turn in boxes to social media or to a judge that is judging the contest before the awards ceremony.

14. JUDGING PROCEDURE – The table captain brings all the boxes to the table. He or she announces the number of the box to be judged, opens that box and checks for rules violations such as marking, insufficient number of samples, etc. All judges score this box for presentation. Each judge then takes a sample and scores this box for taste and tenderness. The table captain makes sure that all scores for that box are recorded before moving on to the next box. This procedure is repeated for boxes 2 through 6. After all the boxes have been scored the table captain will return the boxes to a designated area. The table captain will then collect the judging slips and turn them over to the FBA representative. The use of eating utensils is not allowed.

15. WINNERS – The winners in each meat category will be determined by adding all the scores together and the team with the most points will be 1st. place, the team with the next highest total will be 2nd. place, etc. The GRAND CHAMPION will be the team with the most total points, and the RESERVE CHAMPION will be the team with the second highest total points. To qualify for either GRAND CHAMPION or RESERVE CHAMPION a team must submit entries in all four sanctioned categories. Ties in any meat category, grand or reserve champion are allowed. In the event of a tie in a meat category the next lowest rank will be omitted and the tied teams will be awarded the same rank. In the event of tie for grand champion the tied teams will be declared grand champions and there will be no reserve champion. In the event of a tie for reserve champion the tied teams will be declared reserve champions. Any prize money for the tied rank and the next lowest rank will be combined and distributed evenly amongst the tied teams. For example a two way tie for 1st place in brisket with a \$500 prize for 1st place and \$400 prize for 2nd place would result in the two teams sharing 1st place and \$900; there would be no 2nd place award. The results of an FBA sanctioned contest are considered to be certified at midnight local time after the completion of the contest.

16. TURN IN TIMES – Each meat category turn in time will allow for a 10 minute window, that is 5 minutes before and 5 minutes after the time as suggested below:

- a. Chicken: 11:00AM
- b. Pork Ribs: 12:00PM
- c. Pork: 1:00PM

17. HEAD COOKS – A cook team may designate, with the Secretary of the FBA, two different individuals to be "head cooks". Such designation must be made prior to the beginning of a new cook season, which shall be designated as the first sanctioned contest following the Fun Cook on Labor

Day weekend. Once two cooks have been designated as "head cooks" for that team, they may not be named "head cooks" for any other team.

18. MULTIPLE TEAMS – No team shall be permitted to cook at the same contest as two separate teams using the same team name. Teams will be able to cook at different contests on the same date under the same name. However, the team must designate in advance, to the FBA Secretary, the contest for which they will receive TOTY points, and if applicable, designations to the American Royal, Jack Daniels Invitational, etc.

*Host rules:*

*A "People's Choice" contest starts at 2PM and runs until 4PM or teams are out of meat. This contest consists of BBQ cooked on site. You may prepare your pork in any manner you choose to provide to the public in 2 oz cups. We will provide all cups and spoons (if necessary) for you to present your pork to the public. The public tasters must have a wrist band on to sample from the teams. Each person with a wrist band has been given 2 tickets to vote for their favorite pork. If they don't have a wrist band on, they can not vote for you and you are wasting your sample. We anticipate over 3,000 attendees. We recommend preparing a minimum of 40 to 70lbs of pork or more, with a minimum of 20lbs please. The pork may be served wet or dry. Prizes for "Peoples Choice" will be awarded and are not included in point tallying for any FBA scorecards. All teams are expected to participate in this contest. No additional entry fees are required to participate. We appreciate your participation in this contest as this "peoples choice" is what draws the attendance numbers to our event and helps us raise money for our charity. Our goal is to have an event rep at your booth to hand out the samples if we have enough volunteers.*

*A fun "Mystery Cook" contest will run Friday evening. The host will provide you a meat of some sort. Mystery Cooks range from hot dogs to fish to you name it. Each team participating will be given 90 minutes to prepare the meat for turn in to the judges. A total of 5 portions must be prepared and turned in to the judges booth by 8pm in the containers the host will provide to the teams participating. Cash prizes will be awarded.*

*Over night stays are allowed. A limited amount of power is available in the cook areas. Please notify us if you need power for your cook area. If you need 50amp service, a fee is charged for the additional electric. If you have a separate camper/RV, a limited amount of power hook ups are available and must be requested in advance. All teams are provided a 30 x 20 space to compete in. Additional space is available for a small charge. We will provide a limited amount of water bibs for teams to use to clean and keep their sanitary needs at their booths.*

*If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the event organizer, Brian Gamble at 352-267-4580 or [brian@lakefirefightercharity.org](mailto:brian@lakefirefightercharity.org)*