



2024 U.S. Roaster Qualifying Competition Official Rules and Regulations

Written and approved by the U.S. Competitions Committee

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1. ORGANIZATION

- a. The U.S. Roaster Championship (“USRC”) is a program of the U.S. Chapter of the Specialty Coffee Association (“SCA US”) and the U.S. Coffee Championships (“USCC”).

2. RIGHTS

- a. All intellectual property related to all U.S. Coffee Championships (“USCC”) competitions, including these Official Rules and Regulations and the format of the competition, are the property of the Specialty Coffee Association U.S. Chapter. No part of this document may be used or reproduced without the expressed permission of the Specialty Coffee Association.

3. 2024 COFFEE CHAMPS ROASTER QUALIFYING COMPETITION

3.1 PARTICIPATION

3.1.1 Qualification

- a. U.S. CoffeeChamps Roaster Preliminaries (“Preliminaries”)
 - i. Each of the Preliminaries will be open to up to 12 competitors. Registration will be on a first-come, first-served basis, and is created by the Preliminaries Host. A competitor may register for any of the Preliminaries, regardless of where they live.
 - i. The Top 3 competitors from each of the Preliminaries will be awarded a reserved spot at one of the U.S. CoffeeChamps Qualifying Competitions. Competitors may choose at which Qualifying
 - ii. Competition they would like to compete during registration. These spots are only reserved, registration costs are not covered, unless otherwise noted by the Host. Competitors who do not place in the Top 3 may register for a Qualifying Competition via the Open Registration spots. Qualifying Competitions dates/locations are TBD.
 - iii. Competitors may compete at as many of the Preliminaries as they wish. Competitors will only be awarded 1 spot at the Qualifying Competitions. If a competitor places in the Top 3 at more than 1 of the Preliminaries, then their spot will be given to the next person in ranking order.
 - iv. For the Preliminaries, no waitlist will be maintained, if a Top 3 competitor passes on their reserved spot at the Qualifying Competitions the spot will be released back to Open Registration.
 - v. All Competitors and Judges are required to attend 1 Online Learning Session in order to participate in the preliminaries. U.S. CoffeeChamps Qualifying Competitions (“Qualifying Competitions”)
- b. U.S. CoffeeChamps Qualifying Competitions (“Qualifying Competitions”)
 - i. The Qualifying Competitions are open to the 32 competitors who register.
 - ii. The Top 3 competitors from each of the Preliminaries will be awarded a reserved spot at one of the U.S. CoffeeChamps Qualifying Competitions.
 - iii. Remaining spots will be available for Open Registration and Lottery.
 - iv. For the Qualifying Competitions, a waitlist will be kept based on the chronological order of registration of each registrant who was not initially assigned a competition registration

confirmation. The waitlist will be used to replace each confirmed competitor who cancels or cannot otherwise participate at the Qualifying Competition. The participant(s) will be selected from the waitlist based on the chronological order of their registration. This waitlist will be maintained until 3 weeks prior to the Qualifying Competition.

- v. At the conclusion, the top 16 competitors from the Qualifying Competition will be invited to compete in the 2024 USRC.
 - vi. The single highest scoring competitor from Qualifying Competition will be given free registration to the United States Roaster Championship.
 - vii. All Competitors and Judges are required to attend 1 Online Learning Session in order to participate at the Qualifying Competitions.
 - viii. In the event of 2 Qualifiers, competitors may only compete once in each competition within the season at the Qualifying level. For example, if a competitor competes in the first Roaster Qualifying Competition, that same competitor may not compete in the second Roaster Qualifying Competition. They may, however, compete in another competition (i.e., Barista, Cup Tasters, or Roaster) at the second Qualifying Competition.
- c. United States Roaster Championship
- i. The positions to compete at the USRC will be guaranteed until an invited competitor turns down their spot or fails to register for USRC within the designated registration window. Any unclaimed position(s) will be offered to the next highest scoring Roaster(s) from the Qualifying Competition in which the unclaimed position(s) came from. Positions will be offered in descending sequence until all positions are filled. This waitlist will be maintained until 2 weeks prior to USRC.
 - ii. All Competitors must compete in the 2024 Qualifying Competition to be eligible to compete in the 2024 USRC.
 - iii. All Competitors and Judges are required to attend 1 Online Learning Session and the Competitor Meeting on site in order to participate at the USRC. Any dispute relevant to the qualifications or eligibility of a competitor will be reviewed and resolved by the U.S. Competitions Committee or the National Competitions Manager.

3.1.2 Age Requirement

- a. Competitors must be at least 18 years of age at the time of competing.

3.1.3 Nationality

- a. Competitors must hold a valid U.S. Passport, U.S. Green Card, or have 24 months of documented employment or scholastic curriculum in the United States of America.

3.1.4 Competitor Registration and Fees

- a. Registration links for the Qualifying Competitions can be found at uscoffeechampionships.org or requested from the National Competition Coordinator (uscompetitions@sca.coffee).

- b. For the 2024 USRC Qualifying Event, a portion of the available registration spots will be selected by a weighted lottery and the remaining spots will be available during an open registration period.
- c. Competitors who are interested in competing in one of these events may select their preferred method of registration. If they wish to participate in the lottery, they may submit an application. Following the same protocol as last year, a random drawing will take place and the selected competitors will be notified by e-mail. Each competitor will be given a registration code following their selection. Lottery selection will take place 1-2 weeks prior to open registration. The remaining spots for each competition (including any spots that are left unclaimed by lottery recipients) will be available at a set time for online registration. Competitors must register and pay any registration fee to the SCA via the internet. Space is limited, and competitors will be admitted on a first-come, first-served basis. Once an entry form has been received, a confirmation letter will be sent to the competitor via email. Competitors who qualify to compete at the U.S. Coffee Championships through the Qualifying Competitions will receive an invitation and registration information via email following the Qualifying Competitions.
- d. Competitor registration is not complete until competitors have paid for their registration and filled out the registration form.
- e. Competitor registration belongs to the competitor listed on the registration form.
- f. **All registrations are non-refundable and non-transferable**

3.1.5 Expenses

- a. Competitors are fully responsible for any and all expenses personally incurred that are related to the competition including, but not limited to, travel, accommodations, and supplies needed for the competition. The USCC, SCA, the U.S. Chapter, or Hosts are not responsible or liable for any of the competitor's expenses. If a competitor cannot afford the aforementioned expenses, it is their responsibility to see that their company or other outside parties cover these expenses.

3.1.6 Judging

- a. It is not possible to compete and judge in the same competition, in the same season. Competitors from the Preliminaries may not judge at the Qualifying Competitions, USRC, or World Coffee Roasting Championship ("WCRC"), even if they do not advance. Competitors from the Qualifying Competitions may not judge at USRC or WCRC, even if they do not advance. Additionally, competitors may not judge at any World Coffee Events (WCE) sanctioned WCRC (world, national, regional) in any country, prior to the conclusion of that season's WCRC.

3.1.7 Conflict of Interest

- a. It is not possible to compete and judge in the same competition, in the same season. Competitors from the Qualifiers may not judge in the same competition at USCC or WCC, even if they do not advance. Additionally, competitors may not judge at any World Coffee Events (WCE) sanctioned competition (world, national, regional) in any country, prior to the conclusion of that season.
- b. Judges and competitors are encouraged to let their head judges or the U.S. Competitions Committee know of any potential conflicts of interest at the soonest opportunity, and prior to the commencement of any competitions by competitor, judges, and/or event organizer. Failure to declare a potential

conflict in advance of the competition could result in disqualification. Questions regarding conflicts of interest or clarification of the above policy should be directed to uscompetitions@sca.coffee.

- a. Judges and competitors are encouraged to let their head judges or the US Competitions Committee know of any potential conflicts of interest at the soonest opportunity, and prior to the commencement of any competitions by competitor, judges, and/or event organizer. Failure to declare a potential conflict in advance of the competition could result in disqualification. Questions regarding conflicts of interest or clarification of the above policy should be directed to uscompetitions@sca.coffee

3.2 COMPETITOR QUESTIONS

- a. All competitors must thoroughly read and understand these Rules & Regulations and the scoresheets without exception. All documents may be downloaded from the competition website at www.uscoffeechampionships.org
- b. Competitors are encouraged to direct any questions to the US Competitions Committee prior to arriving at the competition. If any competitor is unclear as to the intent of any of the Rules and Regulations, it is the competitor's responsibility to clarify that position with the US Competitions Committee prior to the competitions by contacting uscompetitions@sca.coffee Competitors will also have the opportunity to ask questions during the required Online Learning Session. Please see www.uscoffeechampionships.org for the dates/time of these Online Learning Sessions.

3.3 TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- a. Competitors and the winners of the U.S. Coffee Championships are representatives of the Specialty Coffee Association (SCA), the U.S. Chapter, and United States Coffee Championships (USCC).
 - i. Fully abide by the SCA's Code of Conduct, found here: sca.coffee/code-of-conduct
 - ii. Upon entry into any USCC competition and in exchange for the opportunity to win, each competitor undertakes that they will:
 1. Permit the SCA, the U.S. Chapter, and USCC to use the competitor's name and image in any format without charge for the purpose of promotion of the SCA, the U.S. Chapter, USCC, or any USCC competition.
 2. Without limiting the generality of clause (i), the formats referred to in clause (a) may include: photographic, video, print, Internet, and any electronic media.
 3. With fulfilling these terms and conditions, actively work to uphold the good reputation of the SCA, the U.S. Chapter, USCC, and any USCC competition.
 - iii. Upon entry into any USCC competition and in exchange for the opportunity to win, each competitor undertakes that, should they win or place in the top ranking positions, they will:
 1. For the Preliminaries, make themselves available to travel to compete in the CoffeeChamps Qualifying Competitions.
 2. For the Qualifying Competitions, make themselves available to travel to compete at the U.S. Coffee Championships.
 3. Include the name "Specialty Coffee Association U.S. Chapter", "SCA U.S. Chapter", "U.S. Coffee Championships", or "USCC" immediately before the name of the competition title (e.g., "U.S. Barista Championship", "U.S. Brewers Cup", "CoffeeChamps Coffee in Good Spirits Qualifying Competition", "U.S. CoffeeChamps Barista Preliminary", etc.) in each instance when the competition

- title is used.
4. Without limiting the generality of clauses (i) or (ii), the instances referred to in clauses (i) and (ii) include mention verbally, in print or via any electronic medium.
 5. Promote the Specialty Coffee Association U.S. Chapter and U.S. Coffee Championships at every opportunity without charge to the SCA.
 6. Promote the relevant U.S. CoffeeChamps Preliminaries as the pathway to the U.S. CoffeeChamps Qualifying Competitions at every opportunity without charge to the SCA U.S. Chapter or USCC.
 7. Promote the relevant U.S. CoffeeChamps Qualifying Competitions as the pathway to the U.S. Coffee Championships at every opportunity without charge to the SCA U.S. Chapter or USCC.
 - iv. Upon entry into any USCC competition and in exchange for the opportunity to win, each competitor undertakes that, should they win, they will:
 1. Fully abide by the USCC Champion's Code of Conduct.
 2. Make themselves available to travel to represent the U.S. at the World Coffee Championships.

3.4 Enforcement and Regulation

- a. The U.S. CoffeeChamps Qualifying Competitions will employ these Rules & Regulations throughout the competition.
- b. If a competitor violates one or more of the Rules & Regulations, they shall be automatically disqualified from the competition, except when the Rules designate a specific enforcement or consequence.
- c. If a judge or competition organizer causes the violation of one or more of these Rules, a competitor may submit an appeal, according to the process detailed in the section "Competitor Protest and Appeals."

4. COMPETITION SUMMARY

- a. The 2024 Qualifying Competition is comprised of 1 round and will have these components:
 - i. Pre-Roasting – lab practice, green evaluation, sample roasting, open cupping, and roast plan.
 - ii. Production Roasting
 - iii. Production Roast Evaluation
 - iv. On-Stage Q&A

5. STANDARDS AND DEFINITIONS

5.1 ON STAGE Q&A

- a. There is no scored speaking element to this competition, but the competitors will be asked questions by the emcee during the competition and should be available to respond to questions. Competitors will also be included in scheduled interviews by the emcee during the course of the event. Q&A will be 5-10 minutes and is mandatory. Any competitor not in attendance during their scheduled interview time will be disqualified. Competitors' coffee will be available during this time for

audience members to taste.

5.2 WHOLE BEAN COFFEE

- a. The compulsory coffee will be Specialty grade and will be graded/evaluated and approved by the U.S. Roaster Competition Committee.
- b. Whole bean coffee is the accumulation of roasted product of the seed of the fruit of a plant of the genus *Coffea*.
- c. Coffees may not have any additives, flavorings, colorings, perfumes, aromatic substances, liquids, powders, etc. of any kind added at any point between the time the coffee is roasted to when it is extracted into beverage.
- d. Competitors will be provided with 1 green coffee to be used specifically for a Single Origin coffee roast.

5.3 GREEN COFFEE SAMPLES

- a. 350-500 grams of green coffee will be provided to competitors for their green bean evaluation and sample roasting. The green coffee samples provided will be randomly pulled from the bulk quantity.
- a. Competitors may green grade the sample provided for their own reference during the lab practice time.

5.4 ROAST PLAN SCORE SHEET

- a. Competitors will submit a Roast Plan for their production roast that will be scored.
- b. Competitors should clearly describe the weight loss, temperature, color reading of their roasted coffee, and provide a description of the sensory results of the production roast by completing the descriptive assessment portion in the United States Roasting Championship Roast Plan Scoresheet taken from the SCA's Coffee Value Assessment (CVA).
- c. The CVA includes intensity ratings and check-all-that-apply (CATA) descriptors. The CATA descriptors correspond to the inner circles of the SCA/WCR/UC Davis Coffee Taster's Flavor Wheel.
- d. Competitors are also encouraged to add extra descriptors not present within the CATA boxes in the space provided. The descriptive assessment should be completed for each of the sensory attribute categories that judges assess (fragrance/aroma, flavor, aftertaste, acidity, sweetness, and mouthfeel).

5.5 ROASTED COFFEE SUBMISSION

- a. The roasted coffee product will be submitted by the competitor as their final product to be evaluated by judges.
- b. The submission must be completed by competitors before their production roasting time is finished. Competitors will be evaluated only on the work associated with the coffee(s) included in the roasted coffee submission, and no other work.
- c. Coffee submitted for judging must be from the selection offered by the competition officials.
- d. The roasted coffee submission must weigh a minimum of 300g presented in the packaging supplied for this purpose. The 300g submission will be used for sensory and physical evaluation and analysis.

- e. If a competitor has a post roast blend, an additional 100g of each component should be submitted in the supplied packaging.

6. MACHINERY, ACCESSORIES & RAW MATERIALS

6.1 WATER

- a. Competitors have the option to use the sponsored water or to supply their own brewing water during Open Service. Competitors must use the sponsored water during Compulsory Service.
- b. The sponsored official hot water machine will be dispensing sponsored water only. Competitors do not have the option of using their own water with the sponsored hot water machine.
- c. The sponsored water will be calibrated with the following standard as the target:
 - i. Odor: Clean/fresh and odor free
 - ii. Color: Clear color
 - iii. Total Chlorine/Chloramine: 0 mg/L
 - iv. TDS: 85 mg/L (acceptable range 50-125 mg/L)
 - v. Calcium Hardness: 3 grains or 51 mg/L (acceptable range 1-5 grains or 17-85 mg/L)
 - vi. Total Alkalinity: 40 mg/L (acceptable range at or near 40 mg/L)
 - vii. pH: 7.0 (acceptable range 6.5 to 7.5)
 - viii. Sodium: 10 mg/L (acceptable range at or near 10 mg/L)

6.2 SAMPLE ROASTING MACHINE

- a. A coffee roasting machine designed for roasting 100g-500g samples will be provided.

6.3 PRODUCTION ROASTING MACHINE

- a. The roasting machine provided will be manually operable, and will be installed according to local laws for safety and environmental effects.

7. PROVIDED EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

- a. The competition area will be equipped with the following:
 - i. Lab Station:
 - 1. Lab Tool Table (e.g., moisture measuring device, density measuring device, sizing screens, etc.)
 - 2. Green Evaluation Workstation (e.g., green grading table, mat, trays, etc.)
 - 3. Sample Roasting Machines
 - 4. Production Roasting Machines
 - 5. Cupping Station (e.g., grinder, water source, cupping supplies, scales, colorimeter etc.)
 - 6. Containers and accessories for competition

8. COMPETITOR INSTRUCTIONS

8.1 ONLINE LEARNING SESSIONS

- a. Prior to the Qualifying Competitions, Online Learning Sessions will take place. Taking part in one of these sessions is mandatory for all competitors. Any important onsite information will be given to you via email before the competition. The US Competitions Committee, Stage Manager, Asst. Stage Manager, and/or Head Judges will also be able to assist you with onsite event questions during the competition.

8.2 QUALIFIER COMPETITOR MEETING

- a. Prior to the start of the Qualifier Competition, a Competitor Meeting will take place. This meeting is mandatory for all competitors. During this meeting the National Competitions Coordinator, event staff, head judges, and Stage Managers will make announcements, explain the competition flow, discuss the competition schedule, and cover onsite logistics. This will be an opportunity for competitors to ask questions of the event staff and head judges. If a competitor does not make advanced plans with the National Competitions Coordinator and does not attend the orientation meeting, they are subject to disqualification by the presiding head judges.

8.3 PRE-ROASTING

- a. Competitors will have scheduled times for each part of Pre-Roasting. Competitors will not have access to the competition equipment or coffees except during scheduled times.

8.4 LAB PRACTICE AND GREEN EVALUATION

- a. Prior to Sample Roasting competitors will be scheduled for 1 hour of lab practice time.
- b. Competitors can use this time to familiarize themselves with the laboratory equipment and they may also use this time for green evaluation.
- c. Green evaluation is not scored and for the competitor's reference only.

8.5 SAMPLE ROASTING

- a. Competitors will have between 30 minutes - 1 hour of sample roasting time, depending on the sponsored machine type.
- b. Competitors will be given 350-500 grams of green coffee. Competitors may green grade these samples for their own reference during lab practice.
- c. Sample roasts are for the competitor's own personal use in order to determine roast parameters and green coffee attributes and will not be submitted for evaluation.
- d. Competitors are expected to work in an organized and respectful manner towards other competitors and technical officials.
- e. Competitors will receive time calls of 15 and 5 minutes remaining. Competitors may not start a new roast if they have less than 5 minutes remaining

8.6 OPEN CUPPING

- a. Competitors will have between 30 minutes and 1 hour of open cupping time, per the schedule determined by organizers.
- b. Competitors may examine and handle (e.g., grind, brew, evaluate color, cup, etc.) their roasted samples in the open cupping area during their scheduled time. Open cupping may be scheduled over multiple days.
- c. Competitors may bring 1 coach with them to Open Cupping. No more than 1 coach is permitted.
- d. Competitors, coaches, volunteers, etc. cannot remove any coffees used in the competition from the competition area. This includes roasted sample, practice, and production coffees.

8.6 PRACTICE ROASTING

- a. Competitors will have between 30 minutes and 1 hour of practice time on the roasting machines, per the schedule determined by organizers.
- b. The coffee will be provided for practice roasting. This will not be the same coffee that is supplied for the production roast, but a practice coffee for the purpose of allowing the competitor to gain working knowledge of the machines and roast logging system provided.
- c. Competitors will receive time calls of 15 and 5 minutes remaining. Competitors may not start a new roast if they have less than 5 minutes remaining.

8.7 ROAST PLAN

- a. Competitors will submit their Roast Plan at the scheduled time.
- b. The Roast Plan is a written log of the proposed roast profile(s) and the reasons for those selected roast profile(s). Competitors should clearly describe the weight loss, temperature, color reading of their roasted coffee, and provide a description of the sensory results of the production roast by completing a descriptive assessment form from the SCA's Coffee Value Assessment (CVA). The CVA includes intensity ratings and check-all-that-apply (CATA) descriptors. The CATA descriptors correspond to the inner circles of the SCA/WCR/UC Davis Coffee Taster's Flavor Wheel. Competitors are also encouraged to add extra descriptors not present within the CATA boxes in the space provided.
- c. The descriptive assessment should be completed for each of the sensory attribute categories that judges assess (fragrance/aroma, flavor, aftertaste, acidity, sweetness, and mouthfeel).
- d. Competitors will submit their roast plan for the Single Origin coffee.
- e. Competitors will be given the green coffee right before their production roasting time.
- f. If the competitor plans to do either a pre-roast or a post-roast blend, they should specify each roast profile on each Roast Plan, including the ratio of the blend and the timing of blending.

8.8 PRODUCTION ROASTING

- a. Competitors will have scheduled times for Production Roasting. Competitors will not have access to the competition equipment or coffees except during scheduled times.

8.8.1 ROASTING TIME

- a. Up to 5lb. of green coffee will be issued to the competitor. Green coffee will be issued before the

- competitor's production roasting scheduled time slot. If the competitor chooses to create a post-roast blend, the Roast Plan must state the quantities and order of each different roast profile, and the ratio and timing of blending.
- b. Competitors will have an assigned production roasting time and will be assigned 30 minutes for Single Origin.
 - c. Competitors are responsible for making sure they know when their competition time is and making sure they are there on time.
 - d. Competitors must place the coffee product on the provided table then raise their hand and call "time" to end their competition time. Competitors may call "time" to stop their roasting time before the end of the allotted time if they so choose.
 - e. Officials will warm up roasting machines for a period of 30 minutes before the first competitor is to begin roasting. The roasting machine warm-up temperature will be announced at the competitor orientation meeting. The machines will be returned to the same warm-up temperature before the next competitor competes. Competitors may be given 5 minutes of preparation time to adjust their own warm-up temperature before their sample roasting time begins. Competitors may not touch green coffee during the warm-up time.
 - f. Competitors will receive time calls of 15, and 5 minutes remaining. Competitors may not start a new roast if they have less than 5 minutes remaining for their competition time.
 - g. Start temperature is the temperature recorded when the coffee descends into the roast chamber. End temperature is the temperature recorded when the coffee releases into the cooling bin. Competitors should check the official temperature recordings with the technical official before leaving the competition station. More temperature recording information will be shared at the competitor meeting.
 - h. Roasting machines will have time/temperature logging systems, which will log and display real-time roasting information to the competitor and the technical officials. The roast log information will be recorded and saved for the Roast Plan evaluation.
 - i. Competitors will be given a demonstration and practice time on the time/temperature logging system prior to competition.
 - j. If the sponsored roasting machine allows for airflow adjustment, the competitor may choose to utilize this control if they want, however it will not be scored in any way. At the start of each competitor's competition time the airflow will be reset to a fixed setting announced at the orientation meeting.
 - k. If the competitor creates a post-roast blend, they must include information from all roast on the scoresheet (weight loss, start temperature, end temperature, color evaluation). If multiple roasts, an average of the components will be scored.
 - l. Competitors are responsible for and in charge of their roasting process during the competition time. The roasting process also includes charging, dropping, cleaning, and packaging. There will be no assistance provided by volunteers or technical officials.
 - m. Roast color will be measured by an official designated by the stage manager or head judge. The roast color measurement will be taken between 30 minutes and 4 hours after the submission is completed. If the competitor is post-roast blending, a 100g sample of each coffee must be submitted separately for roast color evaluation (Sec. 9.3).

8.9 INTERPRETERS

- a. Competitors may bring their own interpreter. When speaking to the competitor the interpreter is only allowed to translate what the emcee or head judge has said. When a competitor speaks, the

interpreter is only allowed to translate exactly what the competitor has said. No additional competition time will be allotted with the use of an interpreter. It is the competitor and coach's responsibility to read the Interpreters best practices document that is available from <http://www.worldbrewerscup.org/> Competitor and Coach will be required to sign a statement confirming they have read and understood what is required prior to the competition.

8.10 BE ON TIME

- a. Each competitor should be at the competition at least 10 minutes prior to their scheduled time and check in with their Stage Manager or Asst. Stage Manager. Any competitor who is not onsite at the start of their competition time will be disqualified.

8.11 STATION MAINTENANCE

- a. Competitors will be responsible for keeping their area clean and ready for the next competitor. There will not be "station maintenance" volunteers, so competitors should clean and organize the station at the end of their competition time.

8.12 END COMPETITION TIME

- a. Time ends either when the competitor raises their hand and announces "time."

9. ROAST PLAN SCORE SHEET

- a. The evaluation scale for the Roast Plan Scoresheet is 0 to 3.

- 0 - None to evaluate or out of acceptable range
- 1 - Not very accurate (acceptable/average)
- 2 - Somewhat accurate (good/very good)
- 3 - Very accurate (excellent/extraordinary)

9.1 WEIGHT LOSS EVALUATION SCALE (PERCENTAGE)

- a. The end weight of each roast will be measured by technical officials during the production roasting time and scored. Competitors will need to specify the expected weight loss percentage of each roast. To earn a score "Very Accurate", the expected weight loss will have no more than +/- 0 to 2% difference from the actual weight loss percentage measured by the technical officials. 1 point will be deducted for every subsequent +/- 2% of variance. A weight loss variance exceeding +/- 6.1% will result in 0 points.

- i. Weight Loss Percentage Evaluation Scale:
 - 3 = +/- 0 to 2%
 - 2 = +/- 2.1 to 4%
 - 1 = +/- 4.1 to 6%
 - 0 = more than +/- 6.1%

9.2 TEMPERATURE EVALUATION SCALE

- a. The start and end temperatures of each roast will be measured by technical officials during the production roasting time and scored. To earn a score of “Very Accurate”, the temperature will accurately be described on the Roast Plan Scoresheet. 1 point will be deducted for every subsequent 4°C of temperature variance. A temperature variance exceeding +/- 8.1°C will result in 0 points. Competitors who choose to use Fahrenheit degrees in their roasting plan and operations will be judged based on that scale, that allows for the same variance from their predicted temperature when scoring.

Temperature Evaluation Scale:

3 = Accurate

2 = +/- 0.1°C to 4°C /

1 = +/- 4.1°C to 8°C

0 = more than +/- 8.1°C

3 = Accurate

2 = .1 F - 7.2 F

1 = 7.3 F - 14.05 F

0 = more than 14.06 F

9.3 COLOR EVALUATION SCALE

- a. The roast color of each roast will be measured and scored. To earn a score of “Very Accurate”, the roast color will be described within 3 points of variance on the scale. 1 point will be deducted for every 3 points of variance. A roast color variance exceeding +/- 9.1 points will result in 0 points.

Color Evaluation Scale:

3 = +/- 0 to 3

2 = +/- 3.1 to 6

1 = +/- 6.1 to 9

0 = more than +/- 9

10. PRODUCTION ROAST EVALUATION

- a. The Production Roast Evaluation by judges for each coffee category may be scheduled on different days depending on the overall event schedule.
- b. All Production Roast Evaluations will be double blind. An official will mark each competitor's submitted coffee with a code and keep an answer key to decode the coffees. A second official will create a new code from the first official's set of codes, mix the order, and keep a separate answer key.
- c. 3 cupping judges and 1 non-scoring head judge who have overseen the previous day's competitions will cup together. Judges may not physically touch or lift the cups at any time, and judges will 'break crusts' (stirring the cups to collapse the coffee grounds) as arranged by the head judge. Only cupping judge scores will count towards the total scores.
- d. 4 to 5 cups of each coffee will be prepared to common industry cupping standards and practices, and the cupping will proceed according to the direction and protocol established by the head judge. All cupping judges and competitors should listen carefully to directions from the head judge and follow all directions and protocols
- e. Judges and competitors will be expected to follow standard SCA cupping protocols and may not physically touch or move cups at any time.

10.1 PRODUCTION ROAST EVALUATION PREPARATION

- a. All samples will have been rested for a minimum of 8 hours.
- b. The sample shall be ground as close to the cupping as possible. Samples should be covered between grinding and brewing.
- c. Samples should be weighed out as whole beans to the ratio of 8.25g per 150ml of water.
- d. Grind particle size will be slightly coarser than typically used for paper filter drip brewing. The grinder setting used for the Production Roast Evaluation will be announced on site at the orientation meeting at the discretion of the head judge. 4 to 5 cups from each sample should be prepared to evaluate sample uniformity.
- e. Prior to the first cup of each coffee, the grinder will be purged by grinding a cleansing quantity of the sample. Then the grinding of each cup will commence, individually into the cupping glasses or bowls, ensuring that the whole and consistent quantity of sample gets deposited into each cup. A lid will be placed on each cup immediately after grinding.
- f. Water used for cupping should be clean and odor free, but not distilled or softened. The water should be freshly drawn and brought to approximately 93°C (200°F) at the time it is poured onto the ground coffee.
 - Chlorine: None
 - Calcium Hardness: 50–175 ppm CaCO₃
 - Alkalinity: At or near 40–70 ppm CaCO₃
 - pH: 6–8
- g. Once the judges finish dry fragrance evaluation, the hot water should be poured directly onto the measured grounds to the rim of the cup, making sure to wet all the grounds. The grounds will be left to steep undisturbed for a period of 4 minutes before evaluation begins.

10.2 EVALUATION PROCEDURE

- a. First, judges will complete a descriptive assessment of the production roast, beginning with a visual inspection for roast color.
- b. For the following cupping steps, judges will first assess the overall intensity of the attribute category (fragrance, aroma, etc.). They may place a tick anywhere along the intensity scale, even between integer numbers. If the intensity changes over time, judges may add a second mark and show the direction of change with an arrow above the scale. Then they will mark the specified number of "check-all-that-apply" (CATA) descriptors for the category by ticking the relevant CATA boxes. Following that, the judges may also add other descriptors. This may be necessary if the judges would like to identify a very precise descriptor or when there is a clear note that does not belong to any category.
- c. Fragrance of the dry grounds is assessed, and its overall intensity rated. The characteristics found in fragrance are marked in the corresponding CATA section. The affective score of Fragrance is also marked at this point.
- d. After infusing with water, judges will assess the aroma of the crust and leave it unbroken for at least 4 minutes. Judges will again assess the aroma while the crust is broken, rating its overall intensity, and marking any additional characteristics found in the CATA section or adding any required additional descriptors.
- e. Flavor, Aftertaste, Acidity, Sweetness, and Mouthfeel: when the sample has cooled to 70°C (160°F), the sensory descriptive evaluation of the coffee should begin by assessing the brew in the mouth. A spoonful of brew from each cup is slurped into the mouth in such a way to cover as much area as possible, especially the tongue and upper palate. Judges assess each section, working their way down the descriptive assessment form.
- f. Judges will repeat the assessment at least three times, as the sample cools down. If the intensity or attributes of a section changes as the samples cool, judges will re-mark the section (intensity and/or CATA boxes) and draw an arrow to indicate the direction of the change.
- g. Descriptive assessment of the samples should cease when the samples reach approximately 20°C (70°F). H. Once the judges have completed each category of the descriptive assessment of the roasts provided, they will mark the remaining affective scores in the "affective coffee evaluation" section on the scoresheet (all but "Fragrance", that has been already assessed while the grounds were still dry). Judges will also score the production roasts in the "Overall" category at this time.
- h. Accuracy scores will be determined by the judge after the blind evaluation, in deliberation, by comparing the descriptive assessments provided by the competitor as a part of their roast plan with the judges completed descriptive assessments.

10.3 PRODUCTION ROAST CUPPING SCORESHEET

- a. Scoring is based on the Production Cupping Scoresheet. The scoresheet includes 2 types of scores: affective coffee evaluation and accuracy of coffee descriptors. Roast defects are also part of the scoresheet.

10.3.1 Coffee Evaluation

- a. The words in parentheses are meant to draw parallels to 9-point hedonic scale used to evaluate an assessor's perception of quality. Although the scoring range is a full 0-9, we do not anticipate the use of scores 1-3 in the context of the competition.

- 0 – None to evaluate
- (1 – Extremely Low)
- (2 – Very Low)
- (3 – Moderately Low)
- 4 – Acceptable (Slightly Low)
- 5 – Average (Neither High nor Low)
- 6 – Good (Slightly High)
- 7 – Very Good (Moderately High)
- 8 – Excellent (Very High)
- 9 – Extraordinary (Extremely High)

- b. Available scores range from 0 to 9. Half points are not allowed. A score of 0 indicates that nothing was available to score in this category (e.g., that no coffee was served to the judge to evaluate). Scores of 0-3 require the approval of the Head Judge. These scores and terms are reflective of the affective assessment completed under the SCA's Coffee Value Assessment (<https://sca.coffee/value-assessment>).
- c. Judges will rate their impression of the quality of each component on the scoresheet, based on their perception of the component and their understanding of how that component will be valued in the marketplace from a quality perspective. The Overall section takes into consideration the combination of the components.
- d. "Aroma" is defined as the smell of the coffee brew. Judges will first evaluate the intensity of the aroma, marking their perception of the sample's intensity using the scale on the scoresheet, before evaluating and noting their perception of the aroma's complexity and clarity. Finally, judges will note any descriptors that are especially associated with the aroma of the brewed coffee (e.g., "fruity," "sweet," "chocolate").
- e. "Flavor" is defined as the combined perception of basic tastes (including sweet, sour, salty, bitter, and umami) and aromatic qualities, mostly perceived retro-nasally. It represents the coffee's principal character, the "mid-range" notes, in between the first impressions given by the coffee's first aroma and acidity to its final aftertaste. It is a combined impression of all the gustatory (taste bud) sensations and retro-nasal aromas that go from the mouth to nose. The score given for Flavor should account for the intensity, quality, and complexity of its combined taste and aroma, experienced when the coffee is sipped into the mouth involving as much of the palate as possible

during evaluation.

- f. Closely related to “Flavor,” “Aftertaste” is defined in coffee cupping as the combined sensation of basic tastes and aromatic qualities that remain after coffee has left the mouth, either via swallowing or spitting. Judges will evaluate Aftertaste based on the length of positive flavor (taste and aroma) qualities emanating from the back of the palate and remaining after the coffee is expectorated or swallowed. If the Aftertaste detracts from the experience of the cup (e.g., astringency or bitterness), lower marks should be given; whereas if the aftertaste contributes positively to the experience of the cup, higher marks should be given.
- g. “Acidity” is defined as the perception of acid in coffee, often described as “brightness” when favorable or “sour” when unfavorable. At its best, acidity contributes to a coffee’s liveliness, sweetness, and fresh fruit character and is almost immediately experienced and evaluated when the coffee is first slurped into the mouth. Acidity that is overly intense or dominating may be unpleasant, however, and excessive acidity may not be appropriate to the flavor profile of the brewed coffee. Judges will first evaluate the intensity of acidity in the brewed coffee, from low to high, recording it in the corresponding scale, before noting any descriptors that are especially associated with the acidity of a coffee. Broadly understandable descriptors are most valuable.
- h. “Sweetness” is defined as the impression of a sweet taste or scent in brewed coffee. If a judge perceives a sample as “sweet,” they will evaluate the intensity of perceived sweetness in the brewed coffee, from low to high, before noting any descriptors that are especially associated with the perceived sweetness of the sample (e.g., “brown sugar,” “pleasant,” “overpowering”).
- i. “Mouthfeel” is defined as the tactile sensation of coffee in the mouth, based solely on a coffee brew’s thickness and texture (not flavor). “Thickness” refers to the perceived weight or viscosity of the brew (e.g., “thin” or “light,” “thick” or “heavy”), while “texture” refers to the perceived sensation of grittiness or smoothness (“rough,” “creamy,” “smooth,” “mouth-drying”). Judges will first evaluate the “thickness” (“weight” or “viscosity”) of the brewed coffee and mark this as “intensity” using the scale on the scoresheet, before noting any descriptors that are especially associated with the thickness or texture of the coffee. Brews with light or heavy mouthfeel may receive high scores relative to the quality of the tactile feeling in the mouth. Some brews with lighter mouthfeel may also have a pleasant feeling in the mouth. However, coffees expected to be high in body can receive equally high preference scores although their intensity rankings will be quite different.
- j. The “Overall” scoring aspect is meant to reflect the holistically integrated rating of the sample as perceived by the individual judge. The perception of “balance,” or how the various aspects of Flavor, Aftertaste, Acidity, Mouthfeel, and Sweetness of the sample work together and complement or contrast to each other, may factor into this score. A judge’s perception of the stability of the sample, or how well it “holds” its character over time as it cools, may also factor into this score. A sample with many highly pleasant aspects, but not quite “measuring up” would receive a lower rating. An exemplary example of preferred characteristics not fully reflected in the individual score of the individual attributes might receive an even higher score. This is the step where the judges make their personal appraisal.

10.3.2 Accuracy of Coffee Descriptors

- a. Available scores range from 0 to 3. Half points are not allowed. Judges should score as follows: A score of 0 indicates that nothing was available to score in this category (e.g., no descriptors were named). A score of 1 indicates that the elements in this category were incorrect or not very accurate (acceptable/average). A score of 2 indicates that elements in this category were somewhat accurate

(good/very good). A score of 3 indicates that elements in this category were mostly or all accurate (excellent/extraordinary). All scores are weighted and multiplied by 3. Scores of 0 require the approval of the head judge.

- 0 – None to evaluate or out of acceptable range
 - 1 – Not very accurate (acceptable/average)
 - 2 – Somewhat accurate (good/very good)
 - 3 – Very accurate (excellent/extraordinary)
- b. The judges will compare the information submitted by competitors in their roasting plans with their sensory experience for each of the components of the scoresheet to evaluate this category.

10.3.3 Roast Defects

- a. There are multiple Defects that may arise from the roasting process, which can affect the quality of the sample negatively. They are scored on a zero to five scale based on the intensity of the Defect as perceived by the judge. A score of zero would mean that the Defect was not present and a score of five would indicate that the Defect was overwhelming the sample. These Defects are: Underdevelopment, Overdevelopment, Baked, and Scorched.
- b. Underdevelopment: Underdevelopment relates to insufficient development of acidity, sweetness, and flavor through roasting. It tastes like aggressive acidity and flavors at the front of the palate with no finish or aftertaste. It may also be involved with green/vegetative notes in the SCA Flavor Wheel.
- c. Overdevelopment: Overdevelopment relates to the destruction of flavors via excessive roasting. It tastes like when all acidity and flavor have been muted. It may also be associated with Roasted references on the SCA Flavor Wheel.
- d. Baking: Baking relates to the stalling of the caramelization process. It tastes like popcorn, or hard cereal/oat flavors. It may also be involved with cereal notes in the SCA Flavor Wheel.
- e. Scorching: Scorching relates to the application of excessively high heat in roasting. It may taste like ashy or burnt notes in the SCA Flavor Wheel.
- f. The roasting defects listed above found by cupping judges and agreed upon by the head judge will be part of the cupping score evaluation.

11. DISQUALIFICATIONS

- a. Failure to declare a potential conflict in advance of the competition could result in disqualification.
- b. If a competitor violates one or more of the Rules & Regulations, they shall be automatically disqualified from the competition, except when the Rules designate a specific enforcement or consequence.
- c. If a competitor does not make advanced plans with the National Competitions Manager and does not attend the orientation meeting, they are subject to disqualification by the presiding head judges.
- d. Any competitor not in attendance during their scheduled interview time for the On-Stage Q&A will be disqualified.
- e. Any competitor who is not onsite at the start of their competition times will be disqualified.

12. SCOREKEEPING

- a. The official scorekeepers are responsible for adding all scores and for keeping all scores confidential.

12.1 COMPETITOR'S TOTAL SCORE

- a. The competitor's total score will be calculated by adding the Roast Plan scoresheet total(s) to the Production Cupping scores from each sensory judge, and then by subtracting any penalties.

12.2 ROUNDING

- a. Scores shall be rounded to the nearest hundredths-place (i.e., a total score of 85.583333 will be rounded to 85.58)

12.3 TIE SCORES

- a. If there is a tie between 2 or more competitors, the competitor with the higher total Single Origin Production Cupping score will be ranked higher.
- b. If there is still a tie the competitor with the higher Single Origin Roast Plan Scoresheet will be ranked higher.
- c. If there is still a tie, the competitor with the higher Accuracy of Coffee Descriptors Total on the Production Cupping Score Sheet will be ranked higher.

12.4 DEBRIEFING

- a. Following the awards ceremony, competitors will have an opportunity to review their scoresheets with the judges on-site in accordance with the announced schedule. Competitors are allowed to keep their original score sheets only if the Scorekeeper and National Competition Coordinator have scanned the scoresheets. Please be aware that your score sheets may be made public after the completion of the Qualifying Competitions.
- b. Digital copies are available to competitors upon request starting 30 days after the conclusion of the Qualifying Competition by emailing the National Competitions Coordinator at uscompetitions@sca.coffee. Only competitors may request digital copies and only of their own scoresheets.
- c. If a competitor objects to their scores given by one or more judges, the competitor can meet with their head judge during the competitor debriefing to explain their protest. The head judge and/or one or more representatives of the U.S. Competitions Committee will discuss the competitor's protest on-site with the judges who judged the competitor. They will make a decision on-site and a representative of the U.S. Competitions Committee will inform the competitor of the decision.

12.5 OVERTIME PENALTY

- a. If a competitor has not finished their roasting or submission during their allotted time period, they are allowed to proceed until the submission is completed and they have called time. One-quarter point will be deducted for every 1 second over the allotted time from the competitor's total score, up to a maximum penalty of 15 points (1 minute). Any coffee submitted 1 minute after the conclusion of the competition time (i.e. after 31 minutes) will be disqualified (i.e., the evaluation of the coffee submission will not be added to the other evaluations of the competitor).

13. ROASTER QUALIFYING COMPETITIONS JUDGING

13.1 WHO IS CERTIFIED TO JUDGE THE ROASTER QUALIFYING COMPETITION

- a. Individuals judging the U.S. Roaster must be certified by the U.S. Competitions Committee and the U.S. Roaster Competition Group as demonstrating a thorough understanding of these Rules, possessing the necessary skills and experience to effectively and consistently perform complete organoleptic evaluations of coffee extracts (of 2.00% strength or lower) to a standard suitable for a U.S. Roaster Championship.
- b. Judges must attend one of the scheduled Roaster Judges Online Learning Sessions
- c. Judges must attend and pass the Judges Certification Workshop scheduled the day prior to the Qualifying Competition.
- d. Judges must also participate in the morning calibration session of each competition day.
- e. 1-2 Head Judges will be designated by the U.S. Roaster Competitions Committee (based on judging and professional experience) to oversee deliberation of judges during the competition. The Head Judges will also take notes of the Roasting Plan given by the competitors. The Head Judges do not score.

13.2 GOALS AND PURPOSES FOR JUDGES

- a. To support the roasting profession.
- b. To promote specialty coffee and coffee excellence in the cup.
- c. To be neutral, fair, and consistent when evaluating.
- d. To select a worthy and highly professional Roaster Champion.

13.3 WHAT THE JUDGES ARE LOOKING FOR IN A ROASTER CHAMPION

- a. The judges are looking for a champion who:
 - i. Demonstrates the ability to evaluate green and roasted coffee.
 - ii. Demonstrates the ability to use and master roasting equipment.
 - iii. Demonstrates the ability to develop the roast to meet the planned taste.
 - iv. Describes accurately the final roasted product as defined in their Roast Plan.
 - v. Produces the best quality roast with the coffee provided.

13.4 MAIN TASKS FOR ROASTER JUDGES

- a. Evaluating and scoring fairly and without bias or prejudice.
- b. Demonstrating support by being constantly responsive and engaged (i.e., smiling, eye contact, answering questions enthusiastically).
- c. Showing respect to the competitor and their cultural background.
- d. Writing objective and respectful comments on the scoresheets. The competitors will be given their scoresheets after the competition.
- e. Participating in the mandatory debriefing (scoresheet review) with the competitors to emphasize opportunities for improvement.
- f. Being accessible to the competitor after the competition for further comments and debriefing.

13.5 WHAT THE JUDGES SHOULD EXPECT FROM THE COMPETITOR

- a. Competitors will have a firm understanding of these Rules.
- b. Competitors will perform within the competition time.

13.6 JUDGES DO'S AND DON'TS PRIOR TO JUDGING

- a. Judges should refrain from communicating with the competitors regarding specifics about their compulsory coffee or presentation, before and during all days of competition. Judges should always be encouraging and positive in interactions with competitors and not avoid them.
- b. Judges should try to only eat bland or neutral tasting food before judging.
- c. Please do not smoke before judging.
- d. Use non-perfumed deodorant.
- e. Do not wear perfume, cologne or scented aftershave.

13.7 JUDGES BEHAVIOR DURING THE COMPETITION

- a. All judges must be FAIR and HONEST.
- b. All judges must be POSITIVE and RESPECTFUL of the competitor at all times.
- c. Judges must focus only on the coffee they are evaluating during the Cupping..
- d. Judges must be prepared for and actively respond to any reasonable questions from the competitor.
- e. Judges should refrain from talking with one another during the evaluation process.

13.8 GUIDELINES FOR JUDGES

- a. Smile and welcome the competitor when the competitor greets them.
- b. Answer direct questions from the competitor.
- c. Take care to protect your palate by preventing burns from hot coffee.
- d. Always remember the psychological power and the impact a judge has on the competitor.
- e. Never share an evaluation with another judge on stage.
- f. Never do anything that can be interpreted negatively by the competitor or audience.
- g. Score in pencil and take legible notes.

13.9 JUDGES' CALIBRATION DAY

- a. Before the competition, the judges pool will engage in a mandatory coffee calibration session.
- b. Judges shall acquire different brewed coffee beverages of at least 150 mL each.
- c. Judges will taste each beverage a minimum of three times:
 - i. When the coffee beverage is served and has cooled to approximately 70°C ("hot").
 - ii. When the coffee beverage has cooled to approximately 40°C ("warm")
 - iii. When the coffee beverage has cooled to between room temperature and approximately 25°C ("cold").
- d. Judges will evaluate the beverages and record scores on a calibration scoresheet.
- e. The calibration exercise is for "priming the palate" and practicing using the scoresheets. Judges may confer during this period and ask questions at this time.

14. APPEAL

- a. If a competitor wishes to appeal a scoring decision or protest any other matter that arises during the competition which affects such competitor, the competitor shall address it to the National Competitions Coordinator. The National Competitions Coordinator. will then determine whether the issue can be resolved onsite at the competition, or whether the issue will require a written appeal following the competition.
- b. If the National Competitions Coordinator decides that the issue can be resolved onsite at the competition, the National Competitions Coordinator. will discuss it with applicable judges or any other parties involved to enable a fair presentation of the issue. A decision will be made onsite by the National Competitions Coordinator, who shall inform the competitor of the decision at that time.
- c. Possible resolutions to a competitor protest or appeal may include (but are not limited to):
 - i. Disqualification of another competitor
 - ii. An opportunity for one or more competitors to perform the relevant competition service to supersede the prior scores

- iii. Another solution, as determined by the National Competitions Coordinator.
- d. The National Competitions Coordinator shall operate under the purview of the Specialty Coffee Association management and Advisory Board.

14.1 APPEAL LETTER

- a. If any protest described above cannot be resolved onsite or the competitor wishes to appeal a decision made by the National Competitions Coordinator onsite, the National Competitions Coordinator will ask the competitor to submit their appeal in writing (which may be by email or hard copy) to the National Competitions Coordinator .
- b. The appeal letter must include the following:
 - i. competitor name
 - ii. date
 - iii. a clear and concise statement of the complaint
 - iv. date and time references (if applicable)
 - v. competitor's comments and requested resolution
 - vi. party/parties involved
 - vii. competitor's contact information
- c. Any written appeals, which do not include this information, will not be considered. Competitors must submit their written appeal to the National Competition Coordinator within 24 hours after the subject incident.

14.2 APPEAL DECISION

- a. The National Competitions Coordinator will review written appeals within 30 days of receipt and contact the competitor in writing via email with the final decision.