

2024 US Coffee in Good Spirits Qualifying Competition

Official Rules and Regulations



2024 US Coffee in Good Spirits

Qualifying Competition Rules and Regulations

Version 2023.9.24

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1. Conditions of Participation

1.1. Organization

The U.S. Coffee in Good Spirits Championship (“USCIGS”) is a program of the U.S. Chapter of the Specialty Coffee Association (“SCA US”) and the U.S. Coffee Championships (“USCC”).

1.2. Rights

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..

1.3. Conditions of Participation

1.3.1. Competition Body Qualifications

A. U.S. CoffeeChamps Coffee in Good Spirits 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.
- ii. The Top 4 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 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 4 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 4 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 4 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 at the Preliminaries.

B. U.S. CoffeeChamps Qualifying Competition (“Qualifying Competitions”)

i. The Qualifying Competition is open to the 24 competitors who register.

ii. The Top 4 competitors from each of the Preliminaries will be awarded a reserved spot at one of the U.S. CoffeeChamps Qualifying Competitions.

iii. All remaining spots will be available for either Lottery Selection or Open Registration (see 3.1.4b)

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 18 competitors from the Qualifying Competition will be invited to compete in the USCIGS.

vi. All Competitors and Judges are required to attend 1 Online Learning Session in order to participate at the Qualifying Competitions.

vii. Competitors may only compete once in each competition within the season at the Qualifying level. For example, if a competitor competes in the first Coffee in Good Spirit Qualifying Competition, that same competitor may not compete in the second Coffee in Good Spirits Qualifying Competition. They may, however, compete in another competition (i.e., Barista, Cup Tasters, Brewers Cup, Latte Art, or Roaster) at the second Qualifying Competition.

C. United States Coffee in Good Spirits Championship (“USCIGS”)

i. The positions to compete at the USCIGS will be guaranteed until an invited competitor turns down their spot or fails to register for USCIGS within the designated registration window. Any unclaimed position(s) will be offered to the next highest scoring Competitor(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 3 weeks prior to USCIGS.

ii. All Competitors must compete in 1 of the 2024 Qualifying Competitions to be eligible to compete in the 2024 USCIGS.

iii. The 2023 USCIGS champion will be eligible to compete in the 2024 USCIGS without competing in either of the 2024 Qualifying Competitions.

iv. All Competitors and Judges are required to attend 1 Online Learning Session and the Competitor Meeting in order to participate at the USCIGS.

D. Dispute

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.

1.3.2. Age requirement

A. Competitors and judges must be at least 21 years of age at the time of competing in any USCIGS event.

1.3.3. 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 State of America.

1.3.4. Expenses

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.

1.3.5. Competitor Registration and Fees

- A. Registration links for the Qualifying Competitions can be found at uscoffeechampionships.org or requested from the National Competition Manager (uscompetitions@sca.coffee). Competitors must register and pay any registration fee to the SCA via the internet. Space is limited, and competitors will be admitted 50% by open registration on a first-come, first-served basis, and 50% by weighted lottery. 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.
- B. For the US Coffee in Good Spirits Qualifying Events, 50% of the available registration spots will be selected by a weighted lottery and the remaining 50% of 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.

1.4. Conflicts of Interest

1.4.1. 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, USCIGS, or World Coffee in Good Spirits Championship (“WCIGS”), even if they do not advance. Competitors from the Qualifying Competitions may not judge at USCIGS or WCIGS, even if they do not advance. Additionally, competitors may not judge at any World Coffee Events (“WCE”) sanctioned WCIGS (world, national, regional) in any country, prior to the conclusion of that season’s WCIGS.
- B. WCIGS judges must not coach and judge at a WCIGS event. If a registered judge has acted as a coach for any competitor (either as the primary coach, supporting coach, or consultant) they must declare that conflict of interest prior to the event and during calibration. Failure to disclose a conflict of interest may result in the disqualification of the competitor. If a judge has coached a competitor in any capacity prior to the WCIGS in that competition year (which includes events in any previous calendar year that have been qualifiers to the current WCIGS) no communication, consultation, or judging can take place in any form with that competitor for the duration of the competition. Failure to comply during the event will result in the disqualification of the competitor and the judge’s removal from judging this competition.

- C. Competitors may not select or endorse judges within their Competition Body Competition.
- D. In any given year, coordinators or individuals who are involved in the management of their Competition Body Competition should not compete. A year is considered to begin from the time the Competition Body starts planning their event. If an individual would like to submit an exception to this rule, they must declare their position via email to WCE outlining their areas of involvement.

1.4.2. Calibration Baristas

- A. Competitors who participate as a calibration barista in a judge calibration for this competition are not eligible to compete in a sanctioned event until the completion of the competition year. This applies to both Competition Body WCE Sanctioned events as well as the World Competition.
- B. A competitor is allowed to be a calibration barista if they are not competing in that same competition year, for that championship. Additionally, a competitor is allowed to be a calibration barista at the World Championships in the same competition year if they have failed to qualify for the World Championships at their sanctioned Competition Body Championships.
- C. A competition year is relative to the World Championships for which a Competition Body event is qualifying a competitor to compete.

Correct example: A competitor acts as a calibration barista for the 2021 US Championships. They are allowed to compete in their Competition Body events, that would qualify them to compete in the 2022 US Championships.

Incorrect example: A competitor acts as a calibration barista for any 2021 sanctioned Competition Body championship event (even in a country that is not their own), and then competes in the same competition at the 2021 World Championships.

1.4.3. Other Conflicts of Interest

USCC encourages any potential conflicts of interest to be declared at the soonest opportunity, certainly prior to the commencement of any competition by competitor, judge and/or event organizer

Failure to declare a potential conflict in advance of a sanctioned event could result in

disqualification from events for an individual, or WCE removing endorsement for an event and its results that do not follow these guidelines. Questions regarding conflicts of interest, or clarification of the above policy should be directed to uscompetitions@sca.coffee.

1.5. Enforcement of Rules and Regulations

The USCC will employ these Rules & Regulations throughout the competition. If a competitor violates 1 or more of these Rules & Regulations, they may be automatically disqualified from the competition, except when the Rules designate a specific enforcement or consequence. If a judge or competition organizer causes the violation of 1 or more of these Rules, a competitor may submit an appeal, according to the process detailed in the “Appeals at the US Coffee in Good Spirits Championship” or “Appeals at a Competition Body Event” sections.

1.5.1. Health & Safety Clause

All Rules and Regulations are subject to change based on local and venue health and safety requirements or guidelines. USCC will share any Rules and Regulations changes via email ahead of the competition. These changes may include, but are not limited to changes to table sizes or layouts; material of provided vessels or cups; limits on coaches or helpers in the competitor preparation and practice rooms; mask or glove mandates; schedule changes for sanitization; etc.

1.5.2. Competitor Questions

All competitors are personally responsible for reading and understanding current USCC Rules & Regulations and scoresheets, without exception. All USCIGS documents are available at uscoffeechampionships.org. Competitors are encouraged to ask questions prior to arriving at the USCIGS. If any competitor is unclear as to the intent of any of the rules and regulations it is their responsibility to clarify that position with the Rules and Regulations Committee prior to the USCIGS by contacting uscompetitions@sca.coffee. Competitors will also have the opportunity to ask questions during the required Online Learning Session. Please see uscoffeechampionships.org for the dates/times of these Online Learning Sessions.

1.5.3. Terms & 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.

2. The Competition

2.1. Competition Summary

A. The Qualifying Competition is comprised of 2 separate rounds – Spirit Bar and Stage Presentations.

- i. Spirit Bar – The competitor will produce 2 coffee-and-alcohol-based mixology drinks, created using a randomly selected type of alcohol and/or ingredients provided by USCIGS sponsors.
- ii. Stage Presentation – The competitor will present 2 coffee-and-alcohol-based hot/warm designer drinks and 2 coffee-and-alcohol-based cold designer drinks.

B. The Spirit Bar score and Stage Presentation score will be combined to determine the ranking and overall winner.

2.2. Spirit Bar

A. Each competitor will use a randomly selected type of provided alcohol and/or ingredient, from a pre-selected list. Prior to the start of preparation time, the alcohol

and/or ingredient for the competitor's drink will be chosen by spinning a wheel, drawing a sheet of paper, or some other method of random selection (method to be determined by the organizers). Competitors must use this randomly selected alcohol and/or ingredient provided by USCC sponsors for the Spirit Bar to create their beverages.

- B. Only competitors are allowed in the bar area during the preparation and competition times. Spectators, photographers, etc., are to be kept at a suitable distance as to not interfere with the working barista.
- C. Once the alcohol has been randomly selected, each competitor will have 5 minutes of preparation time before their 6 minutes of performance time.
- D. During the competition time, the competitor is required to make 2 identical drinks in total. The drinks should be coffee and alcohol-based designer drinks, created within the 6 minutes performance time.
- E. Competitors must use a minimum of 10ml of the selected alcohol and/or ingredient, supplied by the USCC sponsor(s), in both beverages. Non-compliance with this will result in a "0" score being given in the drink's "balance" and "overall impression" section on the taste judge scoresheets. The beverage created must highlight the selected alcohol and any additional alcohols used must not overpower the featured alcohol.
- F. There will be a panel of 3 judges: 2 Spirit Bar judges and 1 head judge. 1 of the Spirit Bar judges may be chosen for their mixology expertise and may not be a World Coffee Events ("WCE") Certified Judge.
- G. Competitors should brew their coffee during their performance time. If coffee is brewed prior to the performance time, a 0 will be given in all taste and performance scores on the Spirit Bar judge scoresheets. Competitors will be allowed to add further brewed coffee elements to their drink (e.g., a cold brewed coffee that was prepared in advance of their presentation), as long as the main brewed element of their drink is prepared in the performance time.
- H. Competitors can choose any coffee and brewing method. Sponsored filter coffee grinders will be provided at the Spirit Bar. Competitors may use any brewing equipment provided by Qualifying Competition or bring their own filter brewing equipment. No espresso machine is provided at the Spirit Bar.

2.3. Stage Presentations

- A. Each competitor will be given 20 minutes at their assigned station, made up of the following segments:
 - i. 10 minutes Preparation Time
 - ii. 10 minutes Competition/Performance Time
- B. There will be a panel of 4 judges: 2 taste judges, 1 technical/visual judge, and 1 head judge.
- C. Competitors are required to make 4 drinks in total:
 - i. 2 identical coffee-and-alcohol-based hot/warm designer drinks,
 - ii. 2 identical coffee-and-alcohol-based cold designer drinks.
- D. Competitors must use the alcohol supplied by the USCC sponsor(s) for the current year in both the hot/warm and cold designer drinks. If the competitor does not use the sponsored alcohol a score of 0 will be given in all the drink's taste elements.
- E. Competitors must use the provided espresso machine during the performance time to produce at least 1 set of beverages. Competitors can choose any brewing method for the other set of drinks, but they must use the sponsored grinders for all beverages. If the espresso machine is not used for at least 1 set of beverages the competitor will receive a score of 0 in all taste elements of the hot/warm drink.
- F. Competitors should brew their coffee during their performance time. If coffee is brewed prior to the performance time, a "0" will be given in all taste scores for that beverage. Competitors will be allowed to add a further brewed coffee element to their drink (e.g., a cold brewed coffee that was prepared in advance of their presentation), as long as the main brewed element of their drink is prepared in the performance time.

2.4. Beverage Definitions

- A. Competitors are responsible for providing their own ingredients, including coffee and alcohol (except for the sponsored alcohol(s) and/or ingredients).
- B. Competitors are allowed to add ingredients or alcohol to the provided alcohols and/or

ingredients, with the exception of controlled or illegal substances. If these substances are found in the beverage, a score of “0” will be given in all taste elements of the drink.

- C. Competitors are free to use any vessels for serving the drinks.
- D. Edible garnishes may be used but the drink must be drinkable. The “balance” and “overall impression” scores will be deducted if the drink is deemed more “edible” than “drinkable”, at the head judge’s discretion.
- E. Competitors may need to detail the ingredients of their beverages before and/or after their performance to the USCC staff. USCC reserves the right to publish competitor’s drink recipes after the conclusion of the competition (with credit given to the competitor whenever possible).

2.4.1. Coffee-and-Alcohol-Based Designer Drinks

- A. In the Stage Presentation, 1 set of beverages must be served cold, the other set of beverages must be served hot/warm. If a competitor serves 2 sets of cold beverages or 2 sets of hot beverages, the competitor will receive a “0” in all taste categories of the higher scoring set of beverages.

3. Competition Procedure

3.1. Competition Stage Area

- A. The competition space will consist of a stage with competition stations. The layout of the competition stations may change from year to year and may also be shared with other competitions.
- B. Each competitor will be assigned a start time and station number.

3.2. Spirit Bar

- A. The Spirit bar may be held at a separate bar within the venue or may be held off the event site. If the Spirit Bar is held outside the event site, USCC will announce the location on the website at least 4 weeks prior to the championships.
- B. The competition space will consist of a bar area that can be viewed by the public. A barrier should exist around the bar to allow the competitor to work unhindered by spectators, photographers, etc., although still allowing good vision for them.
- C. Each competitor will be assigned a start time and station number.

4. Machinery, Accessories, and Raw Materials

4.1. Espresso Machine

Competitors must use the espresso machine supplied by the official USCIGS espresso machine sponsor. The USCIGS-provided espresso machine has a fixed technical configuration and cannot be altered by the competitors. The espresso machine will be calibrated to the following specifications: the temperature will be set between 90.5-96 degrees Celsius (195-205 degrees Fahrenheit), and the pump pressure set between 8.5 and 9.5 bar.

4.1.1. No Liquids or Ingredients on Machine

No liquids or ingredients of any kind can be placed, or poured, on top of the espresso machine (e.g., no water in cups, no pouring or mixing liquids or ingredients, no warming ingredients). If a competitor places or pours liquid or ingredients on top of the machine, they will be disqualified.

4.1.2. Disqualification

Competitors may not change, adjust, or replace any element, setting, or component of the espresso machine. Any changes or adjustments made may be grounds for disqualification (e.g., the portafilters, basket inserts, temperature, pressure, steam wand tips, etc.). Any damage to the competition equipment due to misuse or abuse is grounds for disqualification at the discretion of the presiding head judge.

4.2. Grinder

- A. Competitors must use the USCIGS sponsored grinders to produce drinks during the competition. There will be 1 grinder designated for espresso and 1 grinder designated for filter brewing. Both espresso and filter grinders will be provided for use onsite. Grinders that are provided onsite have a fixed technical configuration including the hopper and cannot be opened/altered internally by the competitors. Competitors may adjust the grind particle size and dose from the external controls. The provided grinders will be calibrated to the same specifications for each competitor. The use of a competitor's own grinder is allowed, as long as the grinder model is identical to the sponsored models, within each category (i.e., espresso or

filter). Not following this Rule is grounds for disqualification.

- B. Competitors should grind the coffee during their performance time. Otherwise, a score of “0” will be given in the “coffee brewed professionally” section on the technical/visual judge scoresheet. Competitors may not use more than 2 grinders during their performance, otherwise the competitor will receive “0” points for the “coffee brewed professionally” category on the technical/visual judge scoresheet.

4.3. Provided Equipment & Supplies

Each competitor’s stage station will be equipped with the following:

- A. Machine table (For espresso machine and grinders)
- B. Worktable (for trays, glassware; additional electrical equipment, and accessories)
- C. Presentation table (Judges’ table)
- D. Espresso machine
- E. Espresso grinder
- F. Filter grinder
- G. Knock box
- H. Trash can
- I. Ice

4.4. Recommended Equipment & Supplies

Competitors are required to bring all additional necessary supplies for their presentation. Competitors should make allowances for breakage during travel and/or during the competition. Competitors are responsible for and in charge of their own equipment and accessories while at the competition. The USCIGS, volunteers and event staff are not responsible for the safety of items left in the competitors’

preparation room or competition area. The list of supplies the competitor may bring include (but is not limited to) the following:

- Brewing equipment
- Tamper
- Shot glasses

- Steaming pitchers
- Glassware & crockery for drinks
- Any specific utensils required
- Bar towels/clean cloths (for practice and the competition)
- Cleaning supplies (counter brush, grinder brush, etc.)
- Tray(s) (for serving drinks to the judges)

4.5. Additional Electrical Equipment

In addition to their grinder(s), competitors may use up to 2 additional pieces of electrical equipment during their performance provided their combined draw is not more than 20 amps. Two 120v outlets will be provided at the work table. Competitors must notify the USCIGS event manager prior to arriving at the Qualifying Competition of any electrical equipment they are bringing (e.g., hot plate, hand mixer, etc.), otherwise the competitor is at risk of their equipment not being allowed in their performance. Competitors are responsible for ensuring their electrical equipment can operate in the place where the event is held, and for any adapters or converters necessary for operation of the equipment. USCIGS will not provide electrical adapters or converters.

4.6. Sponsored Alcohol

Competitors must use the alcohol supplied by the USCIGS sponsor(s) for the current year in their designer drinks. The alcohol and/or ingredient sponsors will be announced on the USCC website no later than 4 weeks prior to the event.

If a sponsor is not designated for 1 of the rounds, USCC will notify competitors at least 4 weeks before the championship. If the competitor does not use the sponsored alcohol a score of "0" will be given in all the drink's taste elements.

4.7. Sponsored Equipment

In the event there are additional equipment sponsors, competitors will not be required to utilize them. Competitors may not remove or change the position of the sponsoring equipment on stage. If the competitor wishes to move the sponsoring equipment they must request aid from the Stage Manager or Lead Runner to do so. Such pieces of equipment will

not count toward their 2 pieces of additional electrical equipment. Additional equipment sponsors will be announced on the USCC website no later than 4 weeks prior to the event.

5. Competitor Instructions Prior to Preparation Time

5.1. Online Learning Sessions

Prior to the Qualifying Competition, Online Learning Sessions will take place. Taking part in one of these is mandatory for all competitors. These meetings may be led by the National Competitions Manager, Head Judges, or other USCIGS Committee members. They will go over the competition Code of Conduct, rules, structure, and hold a Q&A at the end. Any important onsite information will be given to you via email before the competition. The National Competitions Manager, Stage Manager(s), and/or Head Judges will also be able to assist you with onsite event questions during the competition.

5.2. Competitors Orientation Meeting

Prior to the start of the event (typically the day before the Qualifying Competition), a Competitor Orientation Meeting will take place, either online or in person. Meeting details will be emailed to competitors ahead of the event. This meeting is mandatory for all competitors. During this meeting the Event Manager will make announcements, explain the competition flow, cover the competition schedule, and share other pertinent information. This will be an opportunity for competitors to ask questions and/or voice concerns to the Event Manager. If a competitor does not attend the orientation meeting and has not made advance plans with the Qualifying Competition event organizer to address their absence, they are subject to disqualification by the presiding head judges.

5.3. Preparation Practice Room

There will be a staging area designated as the competitors' preparation/practice room. This area will be reserved for the competitors, a maximum of 2 coaches, volunteers, and any USCIGS officials. USCIGS judges, press/media, competitor's family members and supporters, may not be present in this area without consent from the Qualifying Competition Stage Manager. Competitors will be able to store their equipment, accessories, ingredients, etc. in this room. Refrigerators will be provided for any ingredients that need to stay cold. This room will also include a dishwashing station for competitors to use to wash glass and

barware. Competitors are responsible for cleaning their own dishes and glassware and keeping track of these items. Runners and event staff are not responsible for breakages, or loss of dishes or competitor items.

5.3.1. Practice Time

The preparation/practice room will have 2-group espresso machines and grinders identical to the competition equipment on stage. Each competitor will have a scheduled practice time. Practice times will be scheduled based on competition time (e.g., the first scheduled competitors will have the earliest scheduled practice times). Competitors will be emailed a practice schedule prior to arriving at the Qualifying Competition. The USCC does not guarantee access to practice space outside of assigned practice time slots. If a competitor misses their scheduled practice time, no additional practice time will be provided. If unforeseen events prevent the competitor from attending their scheduled practice time it is the competitor's responsibility to contact the event manager or stage manager as soon as possible.

5.4. Competition Music

Competitors may bring their own music for any round of the competition. The delivery method(s) will be communicated to competitors ahead of the competition. Music cannot contain profanity. Competitors must mark their music clearly with their name. It is the competitor's responsibility to give the Qualifying Competition Stage Manager or Audio-Visual staff their music prior to the start of the competition. It is also the competitor's responsibility to retrieve the music from the Stage Manager or Audio - Visual staff after the competition. Media that are not retrieved will be discarded after the competition.

Online performances will be streamed with rights-free music.

5.5. Be on Time

Competitors should be in the preparation/practice room a minimum of 45 minutes prior to their scheduled preparation time. Any competitor who is not onsite at the start of their scheduled preparation time may be disqualified. If the schedule is delayed, the competitor should still be prepared at their scheduled time.

5.6. Station Set-Up

The head runner will be responsible for ensuring that each competitor's station is set as the competitor has requested prior to their preparation time (e.g., the head runner will make sure each competitor's grinder is placed to the right or the left of the espresso machine per the competitor's request).

5.6.1. Set-Up Grinder and Additional Electrical Equipment

If a competitor has brought additional electrical equipment, the competitor needs to inform the Qualifying Competition event manager prior to the start of competition. The head runner will contact the competitor prior to the start of their preparation time. If the competitor would like to help the head runner take the electrical equipment to the station, this will be allowed; however, once the item(s) is in place and plugged in, the competitor will not be allowed to touch the item(s) and must leave the stage immediately. Please note: no coffee beans may be placed in the hopper until the competitor's preparation time.

5.7. Supporters/Assistants Not Allowed on Stage

No person(s) other than the competitor, their interpreters, authorized event personnel, Qualifying Competition volunteers and officials may be on stage during the competitor's preparation, performance, and clean-up time.

5.8. Interpreters

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. The competitor is judged based on the translation of the competitor, not based on the competitor's spoken words. It is the competitor and coaches' responsibility to read the Interpreters best practice document that is available from uscoffeechampionships.org.

6. Preparation Time

6.1. Begin Preparation Time

Each competitor will have 5/10 (Spirit Bar/Stage Presentation) minutes of preparation time. Once the prior competitor begins their competition time, the next scheduled competitor may begin their 5/10- minute preparation time upon advisement from the Stage Manager and/or the preparation timekeeper. The purpose of the preparation time is to set up the station and prepare the bar for competition.

Once the competitor has arrived at their assigned station and agreed that the station is set to their specifications, the official preparation timekeeper will ask the competitor if they are ready to begin. Before the competitor is allowed to touch anything at their station, the competitor will raise their hand and call “time” to begin their 5/10 minutes of preparation time. The designated official preparation timekeeper will begin a stopwatch the moment the competitor starts their time.

6.2. Cart

If a competitor chooses to use a cart, the competitor must unload their supplies off the cart on their own. The preparation timekeeper will wheel the cart off stage at the end of the competitor’s preparation time. The waiter’s cart will not be allowed on stage during the performance/competition time. If items are left on the cart after the competitor’s preparation time has ended, the competitor may not remove any items off the cart. Competitors will be able to retrieve items left on the cart once their competition time has begun (See “Forgotten Accessories” below).

6.3. Judges Presentation Table

The USCIGS wants to focus on the competitor’s skills and minimize the expense in entering the competition. Tablecloths, water, napkins, and decorations are not required and will lose you points in the hospitality section, at the discretion of the head judge, depending on the severity. Items involved in the construction or presentation of the actual drink are permissible. This rule is designed to help competitors by preventing them purchasing and transporting unnecessary equipment.

6.4. Practice Shots

Competitors are allowed and encouraged to pull practice shots during their preparation time. “Pucks” (also known as “cakes”) are allowed to be left in the portafilters at the start of the competitor’s competition time.

6.5. Pre-Heated Cups

Cups can be preheated during the competitor’s preparation time. However, no water may be present in cups at the start of the competitor’s competition time. At no point may there be

cups with liquid in them on top of the espresso machine (see “No Liquids or Ingredients on Machine”).

6.6. End of Preparation Time

Competitors may not exceed their allotted 5/10 (Spirit Bar/Stage Presentation) minutes of preparation time. The timekeeper will give the competitor a 3-minute, 1-minute, and 30-second warning during their preparation time. At 5/10 minutes, the official preparation timekeeper will indicate that time has expired and ask the competitor to step away from the station.

7. Competition Time

7.1. Introduction by the Master of Ceremonies

Once the 5/10-minute (Spirit Bar/Stage Presentation) preparation time has elapsed and the judges are ready, the Master of Ceremonies will introduce the competitor. Each competitor will be required to wear a wireless microphone throughout their competition performances.

7.2. Begin Competition Time

The Master of Ceremonies will ask the competitor if they are ready to begin. Before the competitor introduces themselves to the judges, the competitor will raise their hand and call “time” to begin their 6/10 (Spirit Bar/Stage Presentation) minutes of performance time. The designated competition timekeeper will begin a stopwatch the moment the competitor starts their time.

Tracking the time elapsed during the 6/10-minute competition time is the responsibility of the competitor, though they may ask for a time check at any point. The competition timekeeper will give the competitor a 3-minute, 1-minute, and 30-second remaining warning during their 6/10 minutes of competition time. The timekeeper is required to give these warnings as they happen and may be given to the competitor while they are speaking.

Please note: If the competitor’s clock has malfunctioned for any reason, competitors may not call a technical timeout or stop their time. In the case that the clock has malfunctioned, the timekeeper’s time is the official time for the competition. The competitor will receive the

same warnings as noted above.

7.3. Serve Required Beverages

All drinks must be served at the judges' presentation table. The competitor decides the order in which the drink categories are served; however, any category of drinks must be completed before a

competitor may serve another category of drinks, otherwise the drinks in the incomplete category will be disqualified. Preparation of drink elements is allowed at any time during the competition time.

7.4. Runners Clear the Served Drinks

After each set of drinks has been served to and evaluated by the judges, a runner will clear the drinks from the judges' presentation table upon the head judge's signal. If a competitor has special instructions for the runner, they will need to explain these instructions to the Qualifying Competition Stage Manager and the runner before the start of their competition time. The runner will make every effort to avoid impeding the competitor, but it is the competitor's responsibility to navigate their station successfully.

7.5. Station Perimeters

Competitors may only utilize the work area provided by the Qualifying Competition: the machine table, worktable, and presentation table. The introduction of any other furniture and/or equipment that is placed directly on or over the competition area floor (e.g., a stand, table, dumbwaiter, bench, etc.) will result in automatic disqualification. Competitors may not utilize any space under any competition tables for storage. The only exception to this is the allowance of a free-standing knockbox.

7.6. End Competition Time

Competition time will be stopped when a competitor raises their hand and says "time". It is the competitor's responsibility to call "time" clearly to allow the time to be recorded accurately.

The competitor may choose to end their performance at any time. Competitors can stop their

time once their final drink is placed on the presentation table to be served to the judges or may choose to go back to their station to clean before stopping their time. Only the time recorded by the competition timekeeper or head judge will be used for scoring purposes.

Competitors will not be penalized or rewarded for finishing early.

7.7. Communication After the Competition Time

Competitors should not continue to talk to the judges once their competition time has ended. Any conversation after the competitor's competition time will not count towards their total score. Competitors may continue to talk to the Master of Ceremonies after the competition time has ended; however, the judges will not consider any conversation or explanation given after the competition time.

7.8. Overtime Penalties

- A. If the competitor has not finished their presentation during the allotted 6-minute period (Spirit Bar) or 10-minute period (Stage Presentation), they are allowed to proceed until the presentation is completed.
- B. For the Spirit Bar round, 0.25 points will be deducted from the final score for every second, or part thereof, that a competitor goes over the allotted 6-minute period.
- C. For the Stage Presentation, 1 point will be deducted from the final score for every second, or part thereof, that a competitor goes over the allotted 10-minute period.
- D. The maximum number of points that can be deducted from a competitor's total score is 15 points for the Spirit Bar round and 60 points for the Stage Presentation.
- E. Any competitor whose Stage Presentation performance period exceeds 11 minutes will be disqualified.
- F. Any competitor whose Spirit Bar Presentation exceeds 7 minutes of performance time will receive a 0 score in total from both Spirit Bar judges.

7.9. Coaching

Instructions or 'coaching' may not be provided to a competitor during their competition time under penalty of disqualification. USCC encourages audience participation and enthusiastic fan support that does not interfere with the competition. Coaches, supporters, friends, or family members are not allowed on stage or to interfere with the competition while it is in

progress, otherwise the competitor is subject to disqualification by the stage manager or presiding head judge.

8. Technical Issues

- A. A competitor may raise their hand and declare a “technical time out” in the event that they believe there is a technical problem with any of the following WCE-provided equipment:
- i. The espresso machine (including power, steam pressure, control system malfunction, lack of water or drain malfunction)
 - ii. The grinders
 - iii. Any additional electrical equipment (excluding the competition clock)
 - iv. The audio-visual equipment (such as the competitor’s music or microphone)
- B. Preparation or competition time will be paused by the stage manager (during preparation time) or the head judge (during competition time). The official timekeeper will make note of time when the “technical time out” is called. It is the head judge’s responsibility to ensure the timekeeper is aware of making note of “technical time out” being called.
- C. If the event manager/head judge agrees there is a technical problem that can be easily resolved, they will decide the appropriate amount of time for the competitor to be credited. Once the technician has fixed the problem, the competitor’s time will resume.
- D. If the technical problem cannot be solved in a timely manner, the event manager/head judge will make the decision whether or not the competitor should wait to continue their performance or stop the performance and start again at a reallocated time.
- E. If a competitor must stop their competition time, the competitor along with the head judge and stage manager will reschedule the competitor to compete in full again at a later time.
- F. If it is determined that the technical issue is due to competitor error or the competitor’s personal equipment, the head judge may determine that no additional

time will be given to the competitor, and the preparation or competition time will resume without time being credited.

- G. Unfamiliarity with competition equipment is not grounds for a technical timeout. No time credit will be issued for technical issues caused by improper use; therefore, it is the responsibility of all competitors to understand and follow the correct use of all competition equipment.
- H. Inconsistency or variation between group heads requiring adjustment is only grounds for technical timeout during preparation time.

8.1. Obstructions

If any individual, such as volunteers, judges, audience members, or photographers are of an obvious hindrance to a competitor, then the competitor will be given additional time. The head judge is responsible for overseeing this and will decide how much additional time should be credited.

8.2. Forgotten Accessories

- A. If a competitor has forgotten some of their equipment and/or accessories during their preparation time, the competitor may exit the stage to retrieve the missing items; however, their preparation time will not be stopped.
- B. If a competitor has forgotten some of their equipment and/or accessories during their competition time, they must inform the head judge that they have forgotten an item(s) offstage and then retrieve the missing item(s) themselves. The competition time will not be stopped.
- C. Nothing may be delivered by the runners, supporters, team members or the audience, otherwise the competitor is subject to disqualification by the presiding head judge.

9. Clean-Up

Once a competitor has finished their competition time, they should begin cleaning up the station. If a waiter's cart was used, a station runner will bring the waiter's cart back out on stage for the competitor to load their supplies. If a competitor brought their own electrical equipment, the station runner can help the competitor remove these items from the station. Competitors are expected to remove all their personal equipment and supplies and

thoroughly wipe down their station. The judges do not evaluate the clean-up time.

10. Post Competition

10.1. Scorekeeping

10.1.1. USCIGS Official Scorekeeping

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

10.1.2. Competitor's Total Score

The competitor's total score will be tallied by adding the total of the Spirit Bar, technical/visual, and taste scoresheets for the Stage Presentation, including any time penalty subtracted from the total. Please note: the head judge scoresheet does not count towards the competitor's total score.

10.1.3. Tie Scores

If there is a tie between 2 or more competitors, the competitor with the highest score in "Balance and combination of flavors" will win the tie and will place above any other competitor with the same total competition score.

If the tied competitors have the same "Balance and combination of flavors" score, then the higher placement will be awarded to the competitor with the highest "Overall impression of the taste of the drink" score.

10.2. Debriefing

Following the competition, competitors will have an opportunity to review their scoresheets with the judges by the schedule announced by the event organizer, this may be in person or online. Competitors will not be allowed to keep their original scoresheets before the Qualifying Competition event manager scans the copy of the scoresheets.

Digital copies are available to competitors upon request starting 30 days after the conclusion of the Qualifying Competition by emailing the National Competitions Manager uscompetitions@sca.coffee. Only competitors may request digital copies and only of their

own scoresheets.

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 USCC 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 USCC will inform the competitor of the decision.

11. Judging Criteria

11.1. Competition Area

The technical/visual judge will evaluate the competition area for cleanliness at the beginning and end of the performance/competition time and also workflow and organization of the area.

11.2. Taste Evaluation

Points will be awarded for the taste of each individual drink. Competitors should strive to combine coffee with other ingredients to create a quality coffee-and-alcohol-based beverage. Coffee may not be the dominant flavor of the final drink but must be clearly identifiable. Competitors are advised to explain verbally to the judges why they chose their particular coffee, the coffee profile, the beverage constituent structure, the major taste elements, the ingredients used in the signature beverage, and the philosophy behind the drinks served to the judges.

11.3. Beverage Presentation

Points will be awarded based on the visual presentation of the drinks.

11.4. Technical Skills

Points will be awarded based on the competitor's technical knowledge and skill.

11.5. Performance

Points will be awarded based on the judges' overall impression of the competitor, their skills, flair, and personal and beverage presentation.

12. Evaluation Scale

There are 2 types of scoring:

- Yes/No
- Numeric Scores: 0-6

The evaluation scales are the same for taste and technical/visual judges.

Yes = 1 No = 0

Unacceptable = 0

Acceptable = 1

Average = 2

Good = 3

Very Good = 4

Excellent = 5

Extraordinary = 6

12.1.1. Yes/No Score

The competitor receives 1 point for a score of Yes on this item, and 0 points for a score of No.

12.1.2. Numeric scores

Available scores range from 0 to 6. Half-points are permissible in the range from 1 to 6. Judges are encouraged to use the full range of scores. Low numbers indicate a poorer presentation and higher indicates a better presentation. Certain scores are weighted and multiplied by 2 or 4.

13. Technical/Visual Evaluation Procedure

The following is an explanation of the visual/technical scoresheet. Each competitor will be evaluated by 1 technical judge.

13.1. Technical/Visual Evaluation – Stage Presentation

13.1.1. Visual Creativity

The judge will review both drinks presented. The judge should look for originality in the aesthetic look of the drinks. The judge will take into consideration consistency between both drinks presented, when evaluating visual creativity of these beverages.

13.1.2. Overall Visual Appeal

How enticing and appealing the drink is from a visual perspective.

13.1.3. Overall Presentation

Visually, how appealing is the competitor's presentation of their beverage. This includes how the competitor demonstrates bartending skill by inviting the customer into the creation of the drink. Evaluation will include the confidence, flair, and style the competitor displays in the production of their drinks.

13.1.4. Workspace Organized and Clean at Start

- A. The cleanliness and organization of the competitor's workstation (worktable, prep table, top of machine) will be evaluated on a scale between 0 and 6. Points will be deducted for disorganized workspaces (e.g., grounds on counter or machine, spills, broken glassware, smudges, etc.)
- B. It is permissible to have a small amount of coffee grounds around the grinder.
- C. Verify the competitor's ability to organize the working area in a practical and efficient way.
- D. Competitors may have pucks (used coffee grounds) in the portafilters at the start of their competition time. This will not count against a clean area at start up.

13.1.5. Coffee Brewed Professionally

Competitors can use any brewing method. The competitor's coffee brewing techniques (e.g., knowledge of the coffee selected, consistent grinding and dosing, coffee waste management, extraction time, brewing time, expertise with brewing equipment, etc.) will be taken into account.

13.1.6. Spirits Prepared Professionally

- A. Competitors can use any cocktail creation method. The competitor's bartending techniques (e.g., pouring, shaking, blending, mixing, measuring, stirring, etc.) will be taken into account. Higher scores will be awarded to competitors who measure, pour, and mix their cocktail ingredients on stage.
- B. Higher scores are awarded for creativity, smoothness, control of tools and ingredients; accuracy of mixing, shaking, or blending; measuring of spirits and ingredients; and pouring into the beverage vessel.
- C. Spills, drops, fumbles, or breakage (during the drink's preparation) will also have an overall effect on this scoring category.
- D. Ice may not be put into glasses or beverage vessels prior to the start of the performance time.

13.1.7. Professional Use of Ingredients

Competitors should demonstrate their professional use of ingredients through selection, quality, preparation, and suitability to the overall flavor balance and style of the drink. Competitors will receive higher scores if their ingredients, garnishes, or creams are prepared during the performance time.

13.1.8. Professional Performance

The competitor's performance will be scored based on the service skills, flair, and style they display in the production of the drinks.

Professionalism is evaluated by observed qualities relevant to the barista and bartending professions, good customer service skills, and the ability to manage workflow and time. The competitor must demonstrate they are a hospitality professional who has command over

their performance.

13.1.9. General Hygiene Throughout Presentation

The judge will determine this score based on the competitor's sanitary practices throughout their entire presentation. Examples of unacceptable practices include, but are not limited to, touching hands to face, mouth, etc. and then using the hands for beverage preparation; touching the floor and then using the hands for beverage preparation; touching ice with bare hands; etc.

14. Spirit Bar Evaluation Procedure

14.1. Visual/Taste Evaluation

14.1.1. Balance and Combination of Flavors

Judges will evaluate how well the flavors work together and are balanced within the drink. Judges will evaluate the drink based on how well the taste components of the coffee, provided alcohol, and/or ingredients fit together and complement each other. The combination of components must complement the selected alcohol and/or ingredients while creating an interesting taste experience. Both the coffee and the selected alcohol should be easy to identify within the drink. Judges must follow drinking instructions, if the competitor provides them.

14.1.2. Creativity

Judges will look for originality in the combination of ingredients, methods, and presentation. Judges will evaluate competitors' creativity based on the originality of their concept, and any new methods, techniques, or ingredients used in the preparation or presentation of the drink.

14.1.3. Overall Impression

Judges will review the beverage presented to them. Judges should review the look and taste of the drink in its totality based on its personal impact on them. When judges are scoring this section, they will also consider how a customer may score the presented beverage. Judges will also look for pleasant mouthfeel and enjoyable sensory experience in this category.

14.1.4. Professional Impression

- A. Professionalism is evaluated by the observed qualities relevant to the barista and bartending professions. Good hospitality skills and the ability to manage workflow and time. Judges will look for a strong correlation between what is explained and what is delivered.
- B. The judge will determine this score based on the competitor's sanitary practices throughout their entire presentation. Examples of unacceptable practices include, but are not limited to, touching hands to face, mouth, etc. and then using the hands for beverage preparation; touching the floor and then using the hands for beverage preparation; touching ice with bare hands; etc.

15. Taste Evaluation Procedure

15.1. Stage Presentation – Taste Evaluation

For “Overall Impression”, “Creativity”, and “Balance and Combination of Flavors”, see the Spirit Bar Evaluation Procedure section.

15.1.1. Pleasant Drinking Temperature (Hot/Warm or Cold)

The temperature of the drink should be scored when it is presented to the judges. Competitors should describe the temperature of the drink and its influence on taste before judges are served the drinks. No description being given will result in this category receiving a 0 score.

15.1.2. Quality of Coffee Distinctly Tasted in Drink

Judges will evaluate if the coffee can be tasted and the quality of that coffee. Lower scores will be given for poor quality coffee flavor and/or for a lack of coffee flavor. Coffee does not have to be the dominant flavor within the drink but does have to be clearly identifiable.

15.1.3. Body/Mouthfeel of the Drink

- A. Judges should decide if the body/mouthfeel of the drink is pleasant and expected for that style of drink.

- B. Competitors are encouraged to explain the body/mouthfeel of their beverage. Competitors may override the expected body/mouthfeel style of that drink in their explanation.
- C. Higher points are awarded for accuracy of body/mouthfeel description.
- D. The quality of the body is based upon the tactile feeling of the liquid in the mouth, especially as perceived between the tongue and roof of the mouth. Drinks with light or heavy body may receive high scores relative to the quality of the tactile feeling in the mouth.

15.1.4. Commercially Applicable

Judges should assess if the method of preparing the drink, the ingredients used, and the drink's final presentation are applicable to commercial markets. Higher points will be awarded where judges believe the drink would have the widest consumer appeal and practical application.

Competitors are free to explain to the judges the market their drink is aimed at and any information on its commercial applicability.

15.1.5. Professional Performance

The competitor's performance will be scored based on the service skills, flair, and style they display in the production of the drinks.

Professionalism is evaluated by observed qualities relevant to the barista and bartending professions, good customer service skills, and the ability to manage workflow and time. The competitor must demonstrate they are a hospitality professional who has command over their performance.

16. 2024 Rule Changes and Updates

16.1. Previous: no Spirit Bar round was included at the Qualifying competitions.
2024: the Spirit Bar round has been added to the Qualifying competitions. See Sections 2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 6.1 and 14.

16.2. Previous: Practice times were stated to be 20 minutes in length
2024: Practice times and specific lengths will be emailed to competitors. See Section 5.3.1.

16.3. Previous: Competitors were required to be present in the preparation/practice room 60 minutes before their preparation time.
2024: Competitors are required to be present in the preparation/practice room 45 minutes before their preparation time. See Section 5.5.

16.4. Previous: Tablecloths, water, napkins, and decorations were permitted, but did not impact the competitor's score in any way.
2024: Tablecloths, water, napkins, and decorations are not required and will lose you points in the hospitality section, at the discretion of the head judge, depending on the severity. See Section 6.3.

16.5. Previous: One point was deducted from the competitor's total score for each second they went over their allotted 10 minute preparation time.
2024: No point penalties for going over preparation time. See Sections 6.1 and 6.6.

16.6. Previous Ensuring the timekeeper is aware of a technical timeout being called was the responsibility of the competitor.
2024: Ensuring the timekeeper is aware of a technical timeout being called is the responsibility of the Head Judge. See Section 8.B.

17. Grounds for Disqualification

17.1. Placing any liquids or ingredients on top of the espresso machine. (See Section 4.1.1)

17.2. Making changes to espresso machine or damaging of any competition equipment.
(See Section 4.1.2)

17.3. Using a grinder that is not the sponsor grinder. (See Section 4.2.A)

17.4. Failure of the competitor to attend the Competitors Orientation Meeting (See Section 5.2)

17.5. Failure of the competitor to be onsite at the start of their preparation time. (See Section 5.5)

17.6. The utilization of any furniture or equipment that is not provided by the Qualifying Competition. (See Section 7.5)

17.7. Exceeding 11 minutes of competition time. (See Section 7.8.E)

17.8. Receiving instruction, coaching, or interference during the competition time. (See Section 7.9)

17.9. The delivery of any forgotten accessory to the stage during competition time. (See

18. Appeals at the USCIGS Qualifying Competition

18.1. Judge Related Issues

Most scorekeeping questions will be answered during competitor debrief. If a competitor objects to the scores given by 1 or more judges, the competitor can meet with their head judge during the competitor debriefing to explain their protest. If the head judge is unavailable, the competitor may discuss with the Judge Operations Lead onsite. If the issue is not solved, the competitor may protest in writing to USCC (see Appeals below). This will be reviewed by judge leadership and the USCC Competition Strategic Committee. They will make a decision on-site and a representative of the USCC Competition Strategic Committee will inform the competitor of the decision.

If in the unlikely event that the head judge or any other USCC personnel discovers or suspects potential dishonest behavior by a Qualifying Competition judge during a competitor's evaluation, then the following will apply:

- The head judge will request the return of all applicable scoresheets from the official scorekeeper.
- The head judge will meet with the Qualifying Competition judge(s), Qualifying Competition Staff, and USCC Competition Strategic Committee Chair(s) to evaluate the situation.
- The Qualifying Competition Staff and USCC Competition Strategic Committee Chair(s) will then rule upon the matter in a closed meeting.
- If the matter of dishonesty is extensive, the USCC Competition Strategic Committee Chair(s) has the power to rule that the Qualifying Competition judge will be excluded from judging in any future USCC sanctioned competitions.
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18.2. Competitor Related Issues

If a competitor has an issue or protest to make regarding the Qualifying Competition during the competition, the competitor should contact the Qualifying Competition event organizer. The event organizer will then determine whether the issue can be resolved on-site at the Qualifying Competition, or whether the issue will require a written appeal following the

Qualifying Competition.

If the Qualifying Competition event organizer decides that the issue and/or protest can be solved on-site at the event, the Qualifying Competition event organizer will contact the involved party or parties to ensure fair representation. The competitor's issue and/or protest will be discussed, and a decision will be made jointly, on-site by the Qualifying Competition event organizer and the designated onsite representative of the USCC Judge Operations Lead. The Qualifying Competition event organizer will inform the competitor of the decision.

18.3. Appeals

If a person does not agree with a decision, they may appeal the decision in writing to the USCC Competition Strategic Committee. All decisions made by the committee are final.

The appeal letter must include the following:

- Name
- Date
- A clear and concise statement of the complaint
- Date and time references (if applicable)
- Comments and suggested solution
- Party/Parties involved
- Contact information

Any written protests/appeals omitting this information will not be considered. All persons must submit their written complaint or appeal to the USCC Competition Manager via email to uscompetitions@sca.coffee within 24 hours of the incident.

18.4. Appeals Reviewed by the Competition Strategic Committee

The USCC Competition Strategic Committee will review written complaints or appeals and endeavor to respond as soon as possible. Please note that the final resolution will be delivered within 30 days of receipt. The USCC Competition Strategic Committee will contact the person in writing via email with final rulings.