

Beef Empire Days Tailgate in the Park – Smoked Brisket Competition

2025 Rules, Regulations, and Judging Procedures

1. The decision and interpretations of the Rules and Regulations are at the discretion of the GCPR representatives and the community judges at the contest. Their decisions and interpretations are final to the extent consistent with the rules.
2. Each backyard competition entry fee of \$50 shall cover a chief cook and one assistant.
3. Each corporate competition entry fee of \$100 shall cover a chief cook and three assistants.
4. Additional assistants beyond those covered by the competition entry fees must pay the General Public admission fee of \$15.
5. Chief cooks and/or assistant cooks may only cook for their designated team during the contest.
6. Each team will be assigned a cooking space. Cookers, props, or any other equipment (including generators) shall not exceed the boundaries of the team's assigned cooking space. Teams shall not share an assigned cooking space or cooking device.
7. Campers, trailers, and motor homes are not permitted at the competition.
8. Contestants shall provide all needed equipment and supplies. Electrical will be provided by the organizers of the competition.
9. It is the responsibility of the contestant to see that the team's assigned cooking space is clean and orderly following the contest. All fires must be put out and all equipment removed from site. It is imperative that clean-up be thorough. Any team's assigned cooking space left in disarray or with loose trash, other than at trash containers, may result in a fine being levied against the team.
10. Wood, wood pellet, charcoal, and electrical smokers are permitted. Fires must be in an enclosed grill or smoker. No open pits or holes are permitted. Fires shall not be built on the ground.
11. Whole briskets shall be provided by the organizers of the competition. Briskets must be picked up by the competitor at Klaus Wood Pellets and Outdoor Living, 401 N Main Street, by 5pm on Saturday, June 7th.
12. Due to time constraints, briskets may be trimmed and seasoned before arrival at the competition location of Steven's Park on Sunday, June 8th.
13. Parboiling, sous-vide, and/or deep-frying competition meat is not allowed.
14. Meat shall not be sculptured, branded, or presented in a way to make it identifiable. Rosettes of meat slices are not allowed.
15. Setup of cooking spaces may begin at 11:30pm on Saturday, June 7th and must be completed by 7:00am Sunday, June 8th. Overnight security will be provided by GCPD, who will be patrolling the area.
16. Judging will start at 4pm on Sunday, June 8th, 2025. Any modification of turn in times will be announced by the GCPR reps. The allowable turn-in time will be five (5) minutes before to five (5) minutes after the posted time with no tolerance.
17. Garnish is optional. If used, it is limited to chopped, sliced, shredded or whole leaves of fresh green lettuce, curly parsley, flat leaf parsley, curly green kale and/or cilantro. PROHIBITED GARNISHES ARE lettuce cores, kale stems and other vegetation, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO endive, red tipped lettuce.

18. Sauce is optional. If used, it shall be applied directly to the meat and not be pooled or puddled in the container. No side sauce containers will be permitted in the turn-in container. Chunky sauce will be allowed. Chunks are to be no larger than a fine dice, approximately 1/8 inch cubed.
19. Entries will be submitted in a numbered container, provided by the contest organizer. The number must be on top of the container at turn-in. The container shall not be marked in any way so as to make the container unique or identifiable. Aluminum foil, toothpicks, skewers, foreign material, and/or stuffing are prohibited in the container.
20. Each contestant must submit at least five (5) portions of meat in the approved container. Brisket may be submitted chopped, pulled, sliced, or diced as the cook sees fit, as long as there is enough for five (5) judges.
21. The following cleanliness and safety rules will apply:
 - a. No use of any tobacco products while handling meat.
 - b. Cleanliness of the cook, assistant cooks, cooking device(s) and the team's assigned cooking space is required.
 - c. Shirt and shoes are required to be worn.
 - d. Sanitizing of work area should be implemented with the use of a bleach/water rinse (one cap/gallon of water). Each contestant will provide a separate container for washing, rinsing and sanitizing of utensils.
 - e. Prior to cooking, meat must be maintained at 40° F or less.
 - f. After cooking, all meat: Must be held at 140° F or above OR cooked meat shall be cooled as follows: Within 2 hours from 140° F to 70° F and within 4 hours from 70° F to 41° F or less.
 - g. Meat that is cooked, properly cooled, and later reheated for hot holding and serving shall be reheated so that all parts of the food reach a temperature of at least 165° F for a minimum of 15 seconds.
22. There will be no refund of entry fees for any reason, except at the election of the contest organizer. CAUSES FOR DISQUALIFICATION & EVICTION of a team, its members and/or guests: A cook team is responsible jointly and severally for its head cook, its team members and its guests.
 - a. Excessive use of alcoholic beverages or public intoxication with a disturbance.
 - b. Serving alcoholic beverages to the general public.
 - c. Use of illegal controlled substances.
 - d. Foul, abusive, or unacceptable language or any language causing a disturbance.
 - e. Excessive noise, including but not limited to that generated from speakers, such as radios, CD players, TVs, public address systems or amplifying equipment, will not be allowed during quiet time, designated to start at 11:00 p.m. on contest nights and will last until 7:00 a.m. unless otherwise determined by the event.
 - f. Fighting and/or disorderly conduct.
 - g. Theft, dishonesty, cheating, or any act involving moral turpitude.

Excessive or continued complaints from teams on any of the above rule infractions shall be considered grounds for immediate disqualification from the contest by GCPR Representatives, Organizers and/or Security.

JUDGING PROCEDURES:

1. Winners will be determined by blind judging. Entries will be submitted in a numbered container provided by the contest organizer.
2. Judging will be done by a team of 5 persons who are at least 16 years of age.
3. Only Judges, Contest Reps and necessary support staff are allowed in judging area during the judging process. No other activities are permitted in the judging area during judging process.
4. Each judge will first score all the samples for appearance of the meat. Judges shall not lick their fingers while taking samples; paper towels, non-scented wipes or damp wash cloths are preferred. The judge will then score each entry for taste and tenderness, before moving on to the next entry.
5. The scoring system is from 9 to 2, all whole numbers between two and nine may be used to score an entry. 9 excellent, 8 very good, 7 above average, 6 average, 5 below average, 4 poor, 3 bad, and 2 inedible.
6. A score of one (1) is a disqualification and requires approval by a GCPR Rep.

Grounds for disqualification: All judges will give a one (1) in Appearance for prohibited garnish, pooled sauce or less than 6 samples of meat. All judges will give a one (1) in all criteria for sculptured meat, a marked turn-in container, foreign object in the container. All judges not receiving a sample will give a one (1) in all criteria.

7. The weighting factors for the point system are: Appearance – 0.5, Taste – 2, Tenderness – 1.
8. Total points per entry will determine the champion.

Rules are designed to be fair and equal to all cooks. Integrity of the Contestants, Judges, and Organizers is essential.