



OFFICIAL CONTEST RULES

2/13/2024

Section A: General Rules

1. NEBS Rules and Regulations are applied at the discretion and reading of the NEBS Contest Official(s), at each individual contest. Their decisions and interpretations are final, and are not debatable.
2. The organizer will assign each team a well-defined area. All teams' equipment must fit inside this area. Sharing of any space OR cooker is not allowed.
3. Contestants shall provide all needed equipment and supplies, including an approved ABC fire extinguisher (minimum weight 5 lbs), electricity, water, and ash, grease, and trash disposal (except as arranged by the contest organizer). Once available, organizers of the contest will provide all participating teams with essential details concerning electricity, water usage, and the proper disposal procedures for ashes, grease, and trash. Additionally, they will furnish safety information, which might encompass adherence to local Board of Health regulations, as well as fire and electrical codes. Contest packet rules and regulations at all times take precedence over NEBS rules when and where a conflict may arise.
4. Cooking media can consist of wood, wood pellets, or charcoal. Allowance of any alternate cooking media including gas or electricity, are allowed ONLY at the discretion of the contest organizer, with the approval by the NEBS Board of Directors, and must be designated in the cook's packet. Electric augers, spits or forced drafts are allowed. Contestants may prepare and cook sauces, stuffing, and/or garnishes in advance. They may be cooked and/or reheated on any heat source, without specific allowance in the cook's packet, except where specifically excluded by the contest organizer in the approved cook's packet. For example:

“all preparation/cooking must be done on site” or “all cooking must be done on XX type of heat source” or other clearly defined wording.

5. Contest categories and garnish applicable to each category are to be determined by the contest organizer, listed in the cook's packet, and presented to the NEBS Sanctioning Committee for review and approval preferably no less than 60 days before contest date. Any changes to the approved cook's packet must be approved by the NEBS Sanctioning Committee.
6. Either the organizer or an officially delegated party will inspect every team's competition ingredients. Contest proteins must be raw and unseasoned at the time of inspection, except for uncooked sausage. Products that were enhanced or injected at the provider's processing plant in its original package are permitted as long as no specific flavorings were added. Only AFTER inspection can entries begin to be seasoned, flavored, injected, marinated and/or cooked. Once inspected, these items must stay at the contest. Sauces may be cooked in advance.

When a contest organizer supplies the meat, the contestant is required to enter only the provided meat.. Substitution of the provided meat is not allowed. Competition meat not meeting these qualifications shall be disqualified.

7. A contest category shall allow one and only one of the following types of garnish:
 - a. STANDARD GARNISH - Only green leaf or romaine lettuce, Italian or flat leaf parsley, curly parsley, or green kale. Sauces, if used, shall be on the entry. No sauce containers are allowed. Chunks in any sauce must be finely diced. For NEBS purposes, "finely diced" is defined as less than 1/8 inch in size. Non-edible objects are NOT allowed in the entry box. Shellfish entries can include their own, and only their own, shells, heads, and tails if desired.
 - b. OPEN GARNISH - Anything goes. Chefs Choice or Dessert must use Open Garnish. Stuffing, wrapping, skewers, and decorations of any kind, edible or not, are allowed. Any size chunks or ingredients can be used. Cooks should remember the judges will be instructed to evaluate how well the cook has represented the contest category.
 - c. NO GARNISH - Only edible portions of the category item may be in the box. Shellfish entries can include their own, and only their own, shells, heads, and tails if desired.

Garnish for each category shall be clearly indicated in the cook's packet, at time of presentation to the NEBS Sanctioning Committee for approval.
 - d. Garnish is at all times optional. A contestant may present his/her entry without garnish under any designated category without penalty.
 - e. Any entry's disqualification due to a garnish violation will receive a 1 from the judges in not only appearance, but also in taste and texture.

8. Only contest-provided containers may be used for all turn-ins. 9x9 take-out containers, pizza boxes, ½ size aluminum pans, or other containers, may all be used under the discretion of the contest organizer. Cooks cannot use their own platters, dishware, or any other container not provided by the contest organizer, unless clearly designated in the cook's packet.
9. Identifiable sauce marks or other markings on or in the container or shaping of the entry with the intent to identify the cook team that supplied the entry is not allowed.
10. The contest organizer shall declare in advance and in writing to each cook:
 - a. The contest categories.
 - b. The turn-in time for each contest category.
 - c. The garnish rules for each contest category.
11. The turn-in window shall be exactly 10 minutes in length. The posted time for a given entry will mark the exact middle of this window. This will be strictly enforced, according to the contest official clock, located at the judging tent, with no exceptions. EXAMPLE: Announced chicken breast turn in time: 12:00 p.m. The turn in window would be from 11:55 a.m. until 12:05 p.m. These windows are overseen by the Contest Official at the turn in table. An official clock will be available at the cooks meeting and at the turn in table.
12. Entries must contain at least six separate and distinguishable portions of each entry (one portion per judge seated at one table). Table captains or judges are not allowed to cut any entries.
13. All cooking areas MUST BE cleaned up BEFORE teams leave the contest. All live coals must be disposed of properly, according to the organizers directive. Sites shall be left at the conclusion of a contest in the same, or better, condition than they were upon arrival. Failure to obey this rule may result in further action against a team, such as, but not limited to forfeited fees or disqualification from future NEBS events.
14. Contest organizers alone determine the entrance fee, whether or not they are refundable.
15. Exceptions to the rules may be allowed upon authorization of the NEBS Board of Directors. The NEBS Board shall require any exceptions to the rules to be clearly defined in the cook's packet at the time of presentation to the NEBS Board of Directors for approval.
16. A Cooks Meeting will be conducted by the NEBS Contest Official(s), at each contest to explain the rules and regulations of the contest and to answer any questions the contests

may have. The time and location of the Cooks Meeting shall be included in the Cooks Packet. Sample contest lineup:

Chicken Wings, Standard Garnish: 12:00pm

Sausage, No Garnish: 12:30pm

Salmon, Open Garnish: 1:00pm

Chefs Choice, Open Garnish: 1:30pm

Section B: Judging Procedures

1. Judges should not be impaired in any way prior to judging a contest. (ie alcohol or drugs). Judges are allowed to walk around and socialize with teams at a distance, but may not sit down and socialize in a cooking area.
2. All NEBS-Sanctioned contests shall use a “double-blind” judging system. A previously delegated table captain will present each entry to a table of six judges, and the judges will not know which team’s entry that they are judging at any time.
3. The designated judging area shall be clearly defined, and shall contain a visible and obvious area for teams to turn in entries. Admission into the judging area shall be at the sole discretion of the NEBS Contest Officials.
4. Entries are judged according to the following criteria, in this order:
 - a. Appearance. Appearance is based on the visual presentation of the category entry itself. The appearance score should not take into account the condition of the box itself or the garnish.
 - b. Taste. Taste is based on the flavor and experience of the sample.
 - c. Texture. Texture is based on the correct preparation of the sample with regards to tenderness or toughness.

Judges shall evaluate how well the cook has represented the contest category.

5. Each entry box is shown by the table captain to each judge at the assigned table who then score the entry on its appearance. Next, a sample of each turn-in box is taken by each judge and put on their judging placemat in the assigned spot. Once the judge has received a sample from each entry box for that particular category, the judge samples and scores each sample separately, for taste and texture, before moving on to the next sample. Each sample should be judged solely on its own merits, NO comparisons should be made between contest entries.
6. NEBS scoring system is based on whole number values with the highest possible score being 9, incrementally down to 5. A score of two (2) is inedible and requires approval

by a Contest Official. A score of one (1) is a disqualification and requires approval by a Contest Official.

7. Any entry that is thought to be in violation of any rule must be brought to the attention of the Contest Official. The Contest Official is the only person who is able to disqualify an entry. Cooking contest entries can be disqualified for:
 - a. Use of an unapproved turn-in container
 - b. Marking of the turn-in container
 - c. Use of unapproved garnish
 - d. Marking, designing or shaping the contest entry
 - e. Not enough portions for judges (at least six)
 - f. Violation of sauce rules
 - g. Late turn in
 - h. Turn in of an entry other than the designated category
 - i. Unapproved meat or materials in the turn-in box (skewers, toothpicks, etc.)

An entry that is disqualified after turn in will receive a 1 (one) across the board, for appearance, taste and texture.

A late turn in or no turn in will receive no score.

8. Each entry's score will be calculated out of a possible 180 maximum points, with the following breakdown:

Appearance – 14.286%

Taste – 57.143%

Texture – 28.571%

9. Each judge's scores will be calculated using a total of 36 points, using the same breakdown as listed above. The lowest score will be dropped. If two entries receive the same total after the lowest score is dropped, the tie will be broken in the following order until the tie is broken:
 - a. The team with the higher sum of taste scores (not including the dropped judge's score).
 - b. The team with the higher sum of texture scores (not including the dropped judge's score).
 - c. The team with the higher sum of appearance scores (not including the dropped judge's score).
 - d. The team with the higher score from the dropped judge's score.
 - e. If teams are still tied, the computer will randomly assign values to each team, the higher of these randomly generated values will break the tie.

10. Total points per entry will determine the rankings within each contest category. Tiebreakers will determine the finishing order when needed. They will not affect a team's point total in a given category.
11. The sum of points of the applicable categories in each event shall count towards NEBS Grand Champion, Reserve Grand Champion, and Team of the Year points. Additional categories can be held as separate contests.

Section C: Food Safety & Sanitation Rules

Throughout the entire event, proper food safety and food handling will be of the utmost importance. Failure to follow proper Food Safety guidelines can/will result in disqualification. The NEBS Contest Official(s), will have the final judgment and decision regarding the present contest and NEBS Board of Directors will have judgment over future contests.

1. Absolutely no smoking is allowed during the prepping, handling, cooking or presenting of the contest entries.
2. Cleanliness of all team members, all cookers and the cooking area is mandatory.
3. Proper hand washing and the use of disposable food safe gloves shall be used at all times when handling food products, raw or cooked. Gloves should be changed often, especially when working with different products and when handling ready to eat foods after handling raw foods.
4. Clothing, including, but not limited to, shirts and shoes must be worn in all food preparation areas, and while handling any food.
5. Teams must have three bins set up for the washing, rinsing and sanitizing of utensils. Bin #1 shall have hot soapy water, bin # 2 shall have clean water for rinsing, and bin # 3 shall have a bleach/water disinfectant rinse (one cap of bleach/gallon of water). Sanitizing of all prep and work areas is mandatory. Use a bleach/water rinse (one cap of bleach/gallon of water).
6. Contest organizer must inform all contestants and Contest Officials in the cook's packet as to whether or not First Aid is available.
7. All perishable food items must be maintained at 40 degrees or less, refrigerated or packed in ice, before being cooked.
8. After cooking, all perishable food items:
 - a. Must be held at 140 degrees or above, or
 - b. Cooked perishable food items shall be cooled:

- Within 2 hours from 140 degrees F to 70 degrees F, and
 - Within 4 hours from 70 degrees F to 40 degrees F or less
9. Perishable food items that are 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 degrees F for a minimum of 15 seconds.
 10. Any team not complying with safety and sanitation rules may be disqualified and/or expelled from the NEBS event, as well as future NEBS events.

Section D: Reasons for Disqualification

Cooking teams can be disqualified from the event for the actions of any of its members or guests for infractions relating to:

1. Abusive use of alcoholic beverages or non-prescription drugs.
2. Serving alcoholic beverages to the general public.
3. Use of illegal substances.
4. Any excess language that is foul, abusive, coarse, or unacceptable.
5. Excessive noise. Quiet time will start at 11:00 p.m. on contest nights and will last until 7:00 a.m. Radios must be kept at a volume not to be heard outside of a team's own site during quiet hours.
6. Fighting and/or disorderly conduct.
7. Use of unapproved heat sources inside the cooking device. In addition, if disqualified for this reason, the team and its members will be banned from competing in NEBS events for one year.

NEBS Contest Officials, Contest Organizers and/or Security personnel reserve the right to **immediately** disqualify any team, if there are ongoing complaints from other teams or guests, or continued disregard for the above rules.

For clarification or any questions regarding these Contest Rules, please email the NEBS Judging Committee at judging@nebs.org.