



BEER JUDGE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

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JUDGE INSTRUCTIONS

How To Use the New BJCP/AHA Scoresheet

Please make sure to fill out your **Name** and **Judge Qualifications** on every sheet. If you don't know what to fill in here, you should probably fill in **Apprentice/Novice**. You may give contact information so that the entrant can respond to you with praise or constructive criticism. This is a great way to get feedback on your judging.

As you know, beers are judged largely by how well they conform to the characteristics of their indicated style. The style adherence part of the scoring is separated into four sections: **Aroma, Appearance, Flavor, and Mouthfeel**. These are essentially the same as the first four sections on the old AHA sheet, but there are a few differences. One difference is the maximum scores assigned to each of these four sections. Another change is the expansion of the old **Body** section. Renamed **Mouthfeel**, this section includes body and other beer characteristics that are more feeling than flavor, such as alcoholic warmth, astringency, creaminess or fizziness, etc. You may still comment on carbonation as it impacts flavor in the Flavor section.

The final section, **Overall Impression**, largely ignores stylistic considerations and represents how much you enjoyed the beer. Another good use of this section is giving suggestions on how to improve the beer. It may also be used to summarize your feelings on aspects of the beer that don't fit neatly into one of the other four sections. The difference between an **Excellent** beer and a **World Class** beer can often be in subtle or intangible details. Likewise, beers with no easily discernible flaws can be lacking in specialness or "magic." This section is used to give such feedback.

The **Scoring Guide** represents the biggest change on the new scoresheet. Under the old scoresheet, beers nearly always scored between 19 and 42, so although the sheet purported to have a 50 point range, it really only had a 24 point range. The new scoresheet expands the useful range of scores in two ways. First, a sixth category, **World Class** has been added. This is for those beers that everyone talks about after the competition. Beers that not only are lacking flaws, but that also have great character or that hard-to-define "magic" great beers have.

The second change to the ranges is an expansion of the points associated with each range, with the result that problem beers should now receive a score of less than 14 (A score of 13 is a courteous lower limit). With these changes you will have to get used to assigning slightly different scores. In general, better beers will score a few points higher on the new sheet. Conversely, mediocre and problem beers will score lower than they would have on the old sheet. For example, a beer in the middle of the **Drinkable** range on the old sheet (20-24) should now be in the middle of the **Fair** range. The new scoresheet provides more separation in the lower ranges than the old scoresheet.

Here is the full description of the ranges as given on the new BJCP/AHA coversheet:

World Class (45-50) - A world class example of the style. A beer with great character and no flaws.

Excellent (38-44) - Beers in this range may have no flaws but may be missing the intangibles for that world class beer.

Very Good (30-37) Beers in this range may have a minor flaw (technical or stylistic), or may be lacking in balance or complexity.

Good (21-29) A satisfactory beer that generally fits the style parameters. Scores near the upper end of this range may have only a few minor flaws or be slightly out of style and also may be lacking in balance or complexity. Scores near the lower end of this range tend to have more flaws and are likely to have stylistic inconsistencies as well.

Fair (14-20) This beer has its share of problems that may include missing the style parameters, off flavors and aromas, balance problems, contamination, or other major flaws. Scores near the lower end of this range exhibit more major flaws.

Problem (0-13) A beer with a major problem (usually contamination) that overwhelms all other flavors and aromas.

A new feature has been added that allows you to give a different form of feedback. In a box to the right of the **Scoring Guide** there are three sets of checkboxes that let you quickly summarize the areas where you felt the beer was strong and where you felt it was weak. This should not be used as a substitute for descriptions and helpful comments in the five scored sections, but as a summary and a way to break down the information along different lines.

What is meant by these three scales? **Stylistic Accuracy** and **Technical Merit**: The aroma of Cascade hops in a Bohemian Pilsener would be an example of a problem in **Stylistic Accuracy**. This can be thought of as recipe feedback. Oxidation would usually indicate a problem with technique and would be classified under **Technical Merit**. This can be thought of as process feedback. Some characteristics don't fall neatly into one category, for example phenolic aroma and flavor might be from the yeast strain used (stylistic) or from wild yeast contamination (technical merit). Here you will have to make the best guess for these ratings. **Intangibles** rates the same characteristic of "magic" discussed above in **Overall Impression**.

The choice of which box to check has been left a little bit vague. We don't want judges or entrants trying to subject the ratings in this section and the five scored sections to a detailed quantitative analysis. Try to sum up all the stylistic issues you have considered in the scoring, and decide whether the beer does particularly well or poorly, and choose an appropriate box to check. Continue likewise with the other scales. Please don't hesitate to forward your comments on this new scoresheet design to the BJCP Competition Committee.