



# 2023 U.S. Roaster Preliminaries Competition Official Rules and Regulations

Written and approved by the U.S. Competitions Committee  
VERSION 2022.07.08

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## 1.0 ORGANIZATION

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

## 2.0 RIGHTS

- a. All intellectual property related to the U.S. Roaster Championship, 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 U.S. Chapter.

## 3.0 2023 COFFEECHAMPS ROASTER PRELIMINARIES COMPETITION

### 3.1 PARTICIPATION

#### 3.1.1 Qualification

- a. U.S. CoffeeChamps Roaster Preliminaries (“Preliminaries”)
  - i. Each of the Preliminaries will be open to up to 12 competitors. Registration will be on a first-come, first-served basis, and is created by the Preliminaries Host. A competitor may register for any of the Preliminaries, regardless of where they live.
  - ii. The Top 3 competitors from each of the Preliminaries will be awarded a reserved spot at one of the U.S. CoffeeChamps Qualifying Competitions. 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 3 may register for a Qualifying Competition via the Open Registration spots. Qualifying Competitions dates/locations are TBD.
  - iii. Competitors may compete at as many of the Preliminaries as they wish. Competitors will only be awarded 1 spot at the Qualifying Competitions. If a competitor places in the Top 3 at more than 1 of the Preliminaries, then their spot will be given to the next person in ranking order.
  - iv. For the Preliminaries, no waitlist will be maintained, if a Top 3 competitor passes on their reserved spot at the Qualifying Competitions the spot will be released back to Open Registration.
  - v. All Competitors and Judges are required to attend 1 Online Learning Session in order to participate at the Preliminaries.
- b. U.S. CoffeeChamps Qualifying Competitions (“Qualifying Competitions”)
  - i. The Qualifying Competitions are open to the 72 competitors who register. There will be 36 competitors at each of 2 competitions, held at separate times and places. Roasters may compete at either competition regardless of company or geographic location. Competitors may only register to compete in 1 Roaster Qualifying Competition.
  - ii. The Top 3 competitors from each of the Preliminaries will be awarded a reserved spot at one of the U.S. CoffeeChamps Qualifying Competitions.
  - iii. The Top 6 finalists from the 2022 USRC will receive a reserved spot at 1 of the 2023 U.S. CoffeeChamps Qualifying Competitions.
  - iv. Remaining spots will be available for Open Registration.
  - v. 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.
  - vi. At the conclusion, the top 12 competitors from each of the 2 Qualifying Competitions will be invited to compete in the USRC.
  - vii. The single highest scoring competitor from each Qualifying Competition will be given a travel and accommodations stipend to United States Roaster Championship plus free registration.
  - viii. All Competitors and Judges are required to attend 1 Online Learning Session in order to participate at the

#### Qualifying Competitions.

- ix. Competitors may only compete once in each competition within the season at the Qualifying level. For example, if a competitor competes in the first Roaster Qualifying Competition, that same competitor may not compete in the second Roaster Qualifying Competition. They may, however, compete in another competition (i.e., Barista, Cup Tasters, or Roaster) at the second Qualifying Competition.
- c. United States Roaster Championship (“USRC”)
- i. The positions to compete at the USRC will be guaranteed until an invited competitor turns down their spot or fails to register for USRC within the designated registration window. Any unclaimed position(s) will be offered to the next highest scoring Roaster(s) from the Qualifying Competition in which the unclaimed position(s) came from. Positions will be offered in descending sequence until all positions are filled. This waitlist will be maintained until 2 weeks prior to USRC.
  - ii. All Competitors must compete in 1 of the 2023 Qualifying Competitions to be eligible to compete in the 2023 USRC.
  - iii. All Competitors and Judges are required to attend 1 Online Learning Session and the Competitor Meeting in order to participate at the USRC.
- d. Any dispute relevant to the qualifications or eligibility of a competitor will be reviewed and resolved by the U.S. Competitions Committee or the National Competitions Manager.

#### 3.1.2 Age requirement

- a. Competitors and judges must be at least 18 years of age at the time of the Roaster Preliminaries.

#### 3.1.3 Nationality

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

#### 3.1.4 Competitor Registration and Fees

- a. Registration and fees will be determined by and paid to each U.S. CoffeeChamps Preliminaries Host. The fee will be a minimum of \$10 and a maximum of \$40 per competitor, per competition.

#### 3.1.5 Expenses

- a. Competitors must pay their own expenses related to the competition including, but not limited to, travel, accommodations, supplies, and ingredients needed for the competition. The Preliminaries, Qualifying Competitions, USRC, Hosts, and SCA are not responsible or liable for any of the competitor’s expenses. If a competitor cannot afford these expenses, it is their responsibility to see that their company or other outside parties cover these expenses.

#### 3.1.6 Judging

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

#### 3.1.7 Conflicts of Interest

- a. Judges and competitors are encouraged to let USRC Head Judges or the National Competitions Manager know of any potential conflicts of interest at the soonest opportunity, and prior to the commencement of any competitions by competitor, judges, and/or event organizer. Failure to declare a potential conflict in advance of the competition could result in disqualification. Questions regarding conflicts of interest or clarification of the above policy should be

directed to [uscompetitions@sca.coffee](mailto:uscompetitions@sca.coffee).

### 3.2 COMPETITOR QUESTIONS

- a. All competitors must thoroughly read and understand the Preliminaries Rules & Regulations and scoresheets without exception. All Roaster and U.S. CoffeeChamps documents may be downloaded from the competition website at [www.uscoffeechampionships.org](http://www.uscoffeechampionships.org)
- b. Competitors are encouraged to ask questions prior to arriving at the competition. If any competitor is unclear as to the intent of any rule or regulation, it is their responsibility to clarify that position with the U.S. Roaster Competition Committee or the National Competitions Manager prior to the competitions by contacting [uscompetitions@sca.coffee](mailto:uscompetitions@sca.coffee) .  
Competitors will also have the opportunity to ask questions during the Online Learning Sessions.

### 3.3 TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- a. Roaster competitors and the winner of the United States Roaster Championship (USRC) are representatives of the Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) and United States Coffee Championships (USCC).
  - i. Upon entry in the Roaster Competition and in exchange for the opportunity to win, each competitor undertakes that they will:
    1. Permit the SCA to use the competitor's name and image in any format without charge for the purpose of promotion of the SCA, USRC, or the Roaster Qualifying Competition.
    2. Without limiting the generality of clause (i), the formats referred to in clause (a) may include: photographic, video, print, Internet, or any electronic media.
    3. When fulfilling these terms and conditions, actively work to uphold the good reputation of the SCA, U.S. Roaster Championship and the Roaster Qualifying Competition.
  - ii. Upon entry in the U.S. Roaster Championship or Roaster Qualifying Competition and in exchange for the opportunity to win, each competitor in the Competition undertakes that, should they win the Roaster Competition, they will:
    1. (For the Qualifying Competition) Make themselves available to travel to Portland, OR to compete in the United States Roaster Championship.
    2. Include the name "Specialty Coffee Association" or "SCA" immediately before the name "Roaster Qualifying Competition" or "United States Roaster Championship" in each instance in which the name "Roaster Qualifying Competition" or "United States Roaster Championship" is mentioned.
    3. Include the name "United States Roaster Championship" or "USRC" in each instance in which the name "Roaster Qualifying Competition" is mentioned.
    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 at every opportunity without charge to the SCA.
    6. Promote the relevant Roaster Qualifying Competition and CoffeeChamps as the pathway to the United States Roaster Championship at every opportunity without charge to the SCA.

### 3.4 ENFORCEMENT OF RULES AND REGULATIONS

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

## 4.0 COMPETITION SUMMARY

- a. The Preliminaries consist of 3 components: Cup-To-Profile Presentations, Judges Cupping, and Audience Service. i. Cup-To-Profile Presentations: competitors will have 5 minutes of competition time to present their compulsory coffee to

- the judges. Presentations should be based on the Roast Plan Practice Sheet. Coffee is not served to judges during the Cup-To-Profile Presentation.
- ii. Judges Cupping: In a blind cupping, judges will evaluate each competitor's roasted compulsory coffee. iii. Audience Service: 20-30 minutes for competitors to serve their compulsory coffee the Preliminaries audience.
- b. Each competitor will be given 10 minutes at their assigned station, made up of the following segments:
- i. 5 minutes Preparation Time
  - ii. 5 minutes Presentation Time
- c. Hosts must provide competitors with 20 lbs of green compulsory coffee. Hosts will share the following details about the coffee: green coffee supplier, origin, elevation, farm details, and wash process.
- d. Each competitor will receive a total of 20 lbs of green compulsory coffee. No substitutions are permitted. e. A full schedule of competition flow will be made available for competitors 1-2 weeks prior to the event. f. Before the start of the competition, the competitor's roasted coffee must be physically submitted to the Host or Stage Manager. Exact submission day/time will be shared by the Host.
- g. Coffees cannot be mailed to the event space nor to the Host. All coffees must be hand delivered by the competitor. h. Competitors must submit 2 pounds of the compulsory coffee roasted by the competitor from the 20 pounds green compulsory coffee provided by The Host prior to the event.
- i. 2-3 weeks prior to the Preliminaries competitors will pick up or be shipped 20 pounds of green compulsory coffee from The Host.
- j. An official bag for coffee submissions will be provided onsite by the Host.
- k. Competitor's compulsory coffees will be judged in a blind Cupping prior to the competitor's Presentation. l. During their Presentation and Judges Cupping, competitors will be evaluated by 1 scoring Head Judge and 2 sensory judges.
- m. Competitor's coffee will be brewed on batch brewers by volunteers before the start of their Audience Service time. The Host will confirm details on model, size, and recipe.
- n. Before their Presentation, competitors must arrive to the competition stage 10 minutes prior to their competition time and check in with the Stage Manager.
- o. The Roast Plan Practice Sheet is provided to competitors as a guide for their Presentation, it is not scored and does not have to be submitted.

## 5.0 STANDARDS AND DEFINITIONS

### 5.1 CUP-TO-PROFILE PRESENTATION

- a. Competitors must arrive to the 10 minutes prior to their scheduled Presentation time.
- b. Competitors will have 5 minutes of competition time to present their compulsory coffee to 2 sensory judges and 1 head judge.
- c. No coffee will be served during the Presentation.
- d. The competitor's compulsory coffee will be evaluated in Roast Evaluation by the sensory judges prior to the competitor's Presentation time (see relevant section below).
- e. Competitors that do not give a Presentation will be disqualified.
- f. Visual aids for Presentations are welcome. No power is provided and no projectors are permitted.

### 5.2 AUDIENCE SERVICE

- a. Competitors will be scheduled to provide sample sized beverage portion of their compulsory coffee to Preliminary attendees.
- b. 20-30 minute Audience Service time slots will be scheduled for each competitor. Attendance during the time slot is mandatory. Competitors that do not participate in Audience Service will be disqualified.
- c. Competitors will be given 1 air pot or dispenser with their coffee for Audience Service. Competitors must at their station for the entire scheduled Audience Service time or until their air pot/dispenser is empty, whichever comes first. d. Competitors may present their coffee in any manner they choose with any accompanying presentation. The format of this time is entirely up to the competitor. It is time allotted for each competitor to engage with attendees and let people taste their coffee.
- e. Competitors may hand out free items to audience members, if they wish (e.g., whole bean coffee samples, stickers,

pins, etc.)

### 5.3 WHOLE BEAN COFFEE

- a. The compulsory coffee will be Specialty grade.
- b. Whole bean coffee is the accumulation of roasted product of the seed of the fruit of a plant of the genus *Coffea* . c. Coffees may not have any additives, flavorings, colorings, perfumes, aromatic substances, liquids, powders, etc. of any kind added at any point between the time the coffee is roasted to when it is extracted into beverage. d. Ground coffee will not be allowed, compulsory coffee must be submitted as whole bean coffee. The same rules regarding additives apply.

### 5.4 COMPULSORY COFFEE

- In the spirit of the competition and fairness to all competitors, the U.S. Roaster Competition Committee requests competitors **not** buy additional green compulsory coffee for practice from the green coffee sponsor until the conclusion of the Preliminaries .
- a. Each competitor will be provided with 20 pounds of green compulsory coffee 2-3 weeks prior to their Preliminary. The Host will provide coffee details to all competitors (e.g., origin, farm, elevation, wash process, etc.) b. Competitors will pick up their green compulsory coffee in person or it will be shipped to them by The Host. c. Competitors are required to supply 2 pounds of whole bean compulsory coffee. This coffee **must** be roasted from the 20 pounds green coffee sample sent to competitors. No substitutions are allowed. Competitors that substitute green coffee will be disqualified.
  - d. Competitors must bring this supply of coffee with them to present to the Host, Stage Manager, or designated volunteer at the Host specified time. Failure to supply the required amount of whole bean coffee will result in disqualification.

### 5.5 ROAST PLAN PRACTICE SHEET

- a. The Roasting Plan Practice Sheet is provided to competitors as a guide for their Presentation, it is not scored and does not have to be submitted. Competitors will be required to use the Roast Plan Scoresheet at the 2020 USRC, so it is suggested that competitors use the Roast Plan Practice Sheet as practice.
- b. The Roasting Plan Practice Sheet is a written log of the coffee roast profile and the reason for selected roast profile. c. Competitors should clearly describe the quantity of each roast profile and description of what the results were in terms of taste and flavor, including the intensity of acidity and body.
- d. Competitors are recommended to use the SCA standard flavor wheels as a reference tool.

## 6.0 COMPETITION AREA

- a. The full competition area for the Preliminaries Competitions will consist of 2-3 separate areas: i.
  - Coffee Brewing Area
  - ii. Audience Service Area
  - iii. Presentation stage
- b. Individual stations will be similarly organized as shown in the figure below, however the station and tables may be placed in a way that will best suit the space and constraints of the Host's venue keeping in mind the ease of use, the route from the coffee brewing area to the stations, the vantage points for spectators, and any camera positions that may be present.
- c. The Coffee Brewing Area will have a sponsored grinder and batch coffee brewer. This area is restricted to authorized volunteers, The Host, and judges.

## 7.0 COMPETITOR INSTRUCTION PRIOR TO PREPARATION TIME

### 7.1 ONLINE LEARNING SESSIONS

- a. Prior to the Preliminaries, Online Learning Sessions will take place. Taking part in 1 of these sessions is mandatory for all

competitors and judges. Any important onsite information will be given to you via email before the competition. The Host, Stage Manager, Asst. Stage Manager, and/or Head Judges will also be able to assist you with onsite event questions during the competition.

## 7.2 BE ON TIME

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

## 7.3 EVENT AUDIO SYSTEM / COMPETITOR MUSIC

- a. Competitors may or may not have mics, and may or may not be able to play music during their presentation, depending on the venue and the Host.

## 7.4 STATION MAINTENANCE

- a. Competitors will be responsible for keeping the preparation area clean and ready for the next competitor. There will not be "station maintenance" volunteers, so competitors must clean and organize the station at the end of their competition time. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.

## 7.5 START/END COMPETITION TIME

- a. Presentation starts when the competitor raises their hand and announces "time." b. Presentation time ends either when the competition time has elapsed or when the competitor raises their hand and announces "time," whichever occurs first.

# 8.0 SCOREKEEPING

## 8.1 OFFICIAL SCOREKEEPING

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

## 8.2 SCORING

### 8.2.1 Roast Evaluation

- a. In order to calculate the Roast Evaluation the scores for each of the eight components are to be summed (with the scores for Sweetness and Balance being doubled).
- b. The competitor's total Roast Evaluation score will be tabulated by adding the total of the 3 scoresheets, 1 from each judge, and dividing the total by 3. (i.e., scores of 85.25, 82.00, and 89.50, for a combined total of 256.75 will result in a total score of 85.58).
- c. The maximum possible Roast Evaluation score per judge is one hundred (100).

### 8.2.2 Rounding

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

### 8.2.3 Tie Breaking

- a. If there is a tie between 2 or more competitors, the procedure to determine placement be the following:
  - i. The competitor with the higher sum of Cup-To-Profile Presentation scores will be ranked higher.
  - ii. If a tie still exists, the competitor with the higher sum of the Balance scores will be ranked higher.
  - iii. If a tie still exists, the competitor with the higher sum of the Sweetness scores will be ranked higher.

### 8.3 DEBRIEFING

- a. Following the awards ceremony, competitors will have an opportunity to review their scoresheets with the judges on-site in accordance to the announced schedule. Competitors are allowed to keep their original scoresheets only if the Scorekeeper and Host have scanned the scoresheets.
- b. Digital copies are available to competitors upon request starting 30 days after the conclusion of the Preliminary Competition by emailing the National Competitions Manager [competitions@sca.coffee](mailto:competitions@sca.coffee). Only competitors may request digital copies and only of their own scoresheets.
- c. If a competitor objects to their scores given by one or more judges, the competitor can meet with the Presiding Head Judge during the competitor debriefing to explain their protest. The Presiding Head Judge will discuss the competitor's protest on-site with the judges who judged the competitor. They will make a decision on-site and the Presiding Head Judge will inform the competitor of the decision.

## 9.0 ROASTER PRELIMINARIES COMPETITIONS JUDGING

### 9.1 WHO IS CERTIFIED TO JUDGE THE ROASTER PRELIMINARIES COMPETITION

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

### 9.2 GOALS AND PURPOSES FOR JUDGES

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

### 9.3 WHAT THE JUDGES ARE LOOKING FOR IN A ROASTER CHAMPION

- a. The judges are looking for a champion who:
  - i. Roasts coffee to exemplary quality.
  - ii. Can articulate the taste experience offered by the coffee they roasted.
  - iii. Delivers an exceptional overall coffee experience
  - iv. Demonstrates knowledge of green coffee
  - v. Exhibits insight and understanding of roasting theories

### 9.4 MAIN TASKS FOR ROASTER JUDGES

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

improvement.

f. Being accessible to the competitor after the competition for further comments.

## 9.5 WHAT THE JUDGES SHOULD EXPECT FROM THE COMPETITOR

- a. Competitors will have a firm understanding of these Rules.
- b. Presentation will be in accordance with these Rules.
- c. Competitors will perform within the competition time.

## 9.6 JUDGES DO'S AND DON'TS PRIOR TO JUDGING

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

## 9.7 JUDGES BEHAVIOR DURING THE COMPETITION

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

## 9.8 GUIDELINES FOR JUDGES

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

## 9.9 JUDGES' MORNING CALIBRATION

- a. Each competition day, before the competition, the judges pool will engage in coffee calibration. i. Judges shall acquire different brewed coffee beverages of at least 150 mL each.
- ii. Each beverage should be divided into three portions, one for each judge, and labeled properly. iii. Judges will taste each beverage a minimum of three times:
  - 1. When the coffee beverage is served and has cooled to approximately 70°C ("hot").
  - 2. When the coffee beverage has cooled to approximately 40°C ("warm")
  - 3. When the coffee beverage has cooled to between room temperature and approximately 25°C ("cold").
- iv. Judges will evaluate the beverages and record scores on a calibration scoresheet.
- v. The calibration exercise is for "priming the palate" and practicing using the scoresheets. Judges may confer during this period and ask questions at this time.

## 10.0 ROAST EVALUATION PROCEDURE

## 10.1 EVALUATION PROCEDURE

- a. Samples should first be visually inspected for roast color. This is marked on the sheet and may be used as a reference during the rating of specific flavor attributes. The sequence of rating each attribute is based on the flavor perception changes caused by the decreasing temperature of the coffee as it cools.
- b. Fragrance/Aroma: Within 15 minutes of samples having been ground, the dry fragrance of the samples should be evaluated by lifting the lid and sniffing the dry grounds.
- c. After infusing with water, the crust is left unbroken for at least 4 minutes. Breaking of the crust is done by stirring 3 times. The Fragrance/Aroma score is then marked on the basis of dry and wet evaluation.
- d. Flavor, Aftertaste, Acidity, Body, Sweetness, and Balance: When the sample has cooled to 160° F (71° C), about 8-10 minutes from infusion, evaluation of the liquor should begin. The liquor is aspirated into the mouth in such a way as to cover as much area as possible, especially the tongue and upper palate. Because the retro nasal vapors are at their maximum intensity at these elevated temperatures, Flavor and Aftertaste are rated at this point.
- e. As the coffee continues to cool (160° F - 140° F), Acidity, Body, Sweetness, and Balance are rated next. Sweetness is the quality of the development of sugars from roasting that are present in the sample. Balance is the judge's assessment of how well the Flavor, Aftertaste, Acidity, and Body fit together in a synergistic combination.
- f. The different attributes are evaluated at several different temperatures (2 or 3 times) as the sample cools. To rate the sample on the scale, circle the appropriate tick-mark on the form. If a change is made (if a sample gains or loses some of its perceived quality due to temperature changes), re-mark the horizontal scale and draw an arrow to indicate the direction of the final score.
- g. Evaluation of the liquor should cease when the sample reaches 70° F (21° C) and the Cup-To-Profile score is determined by the judge after the blind evaluation, in deliberation, compared to ALL of the combined attributes and tasting descriptions on the Roast Plan submitted by competitors.

## 10.2 PRODUCTION ROAST EVALUATION SCORESHEET

- a. Scoring will be based on the WCRC production roast evaluation form. Each scoresheet will be scored out of 100.

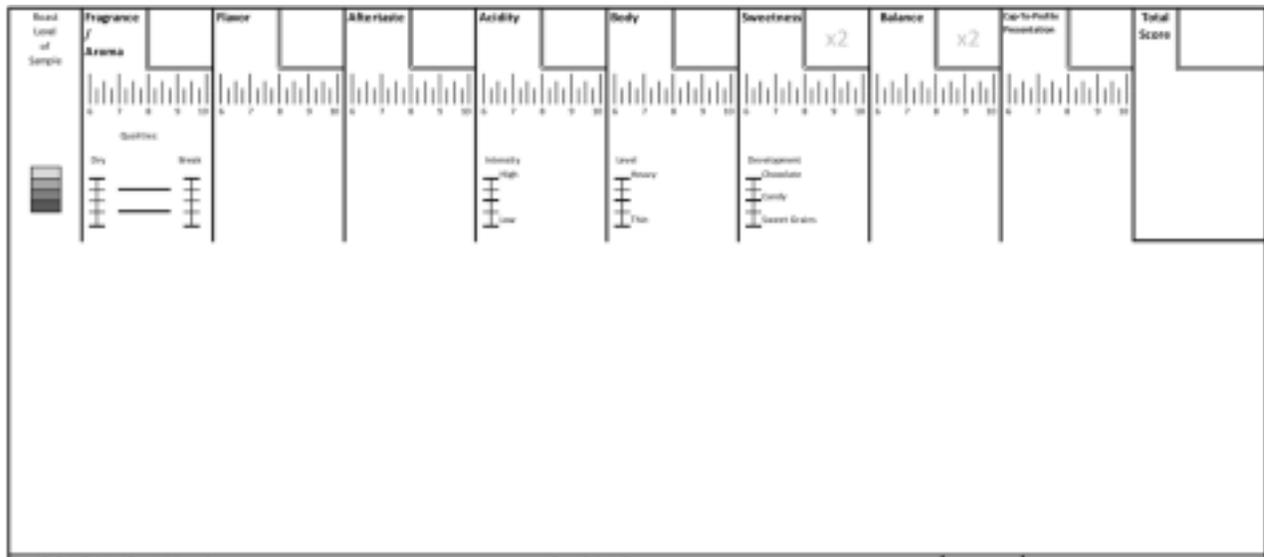
6.00 Good 7.00 Very Good 8.00 Excellent 9.00 Extraordinary 6.25 7.25 8.25 9.25

6.50 7.50 8.50 9.50

6.75 7.75 8.75 9.75 – 10.00

Judges should consider the numerical score to be a code that corresponds with each descriptive word.

- b. The production roast evaluation form provides a means of recording important flavor attributes in coffee: Fragrance/Aroma, Flavor, Aftertaste, Acidity, Body, Sweetness, Balance, and Roasted Defects. Judges base scores on the quality of these attributes by scoring higher for increased quality and lower for decreased quality. The Cup-To-Profile Presentation score is based on the accuracy of taste description provided by competitors.
- c. Each evaluation component is marked with a horizontal (left to right) scale, which is used to rate the judge's perception of relative quality of the particular component based upon their perception of the coffee and experiential understanding of quality as a filter coffee product.
- d. Some components are marked with vertical scales. The vertical (up and down) scales are used to rank the intensity of the sensory component and are marked for reference and notation, and are not included in the score. In the case of the vertical scale for the Sweetness category, the scale is used as a reference not as intensity, but as the development of sugars during roasting (from sweet grains, to candy, to chocolate).
- e. The SCA flavor wheel is to be used as a reference tool for the cupping judges to create a common language for competitor feedback.



### 10.2.1 Fragrance/Aroma

- a. The aromatic aspects include Fragrance (defined as the smell of the ground coffee when still dry) and Aroma (the smell of the coffee when infused with hot water). One can evaluate this at 3 distinct steps in the cupping process: (1) sniffing the grounds placed into the cup before pouring water onto the coffee; (2) sniffing the aromas released as the coffee steeps and crust is formed; and (3) sniffing the aromas released while breaking the crust. Specific aromas can be noted under “qualities” and the intensity of the dry, break, and wet aroma aspects noted on the vertical scales. The score finally given should reflect the preferences of all three aspects of a sample’s Fragrance/Aroma evaluation.

### 10.2.2 Flavor

- a. Flavor represents the coffee's principal character, the "mid-range" notes, in between the first impression given by the coffee's first aroma and acidity to its final aftertaste. It is a combined impression of all the gustatory (taste buds) sensations and retro-nasal aromas that go from the mouth to nose. The score given for Flavor should account for the intensity, quality and complexity of its combined taste and aroma, experienced when the coffee is slurped into the mouth vigorously so as to involve the entire palate in the evaluation

### 10.2.3 Aftertaste

- a. Aftertaste is defined as the length of positive flavor (taste and aroma) qualities emanating from the back of the palate and remaining after the coffee is expectorated or swallowed. If the aftertaste were short or unpleasant, a lower score would be given, and vice versa.

### 10.2.4 Acidity

- a. Acidity is often described as "brightness" when favorable or “sour” when unfavorable. At its best, acidity contributes to a coffee's liveliness, sweetness, and fresh- fruit character and is almost immediately experienced and evaluated when the coffee is first slurped into the mouth. Acidity that is overly intense or dominating may be unpleasant, however, and excessive acidity may not be appropriate to the flavor profile of the sample. The final score marked on the horizontal tick-mark scale should reflect the judge’s perceived quality for the Acidity.

### 10.2.5 Body

- a. The quality of Body is based upon the tactile feeling of the liquid in the mouth, especially as perceived between the tongue and roof of the mouth. Most samples with heavy Body may also receive a high score in terms of quality due to the presence of brew colloids and sucrose. Some samples with lighter Body may also have a pleasant feeling in the mouth, however. Coffees expected to be high in Body, such as Sumatran coffee, or coffees expected to be low in Body,

such as a Mexican coffee, can both receive equally high quality scores although their intensity rankings will be quite different.

#### 10.2.6 Sweetness

- a. Sweetness refers to a pleasing fullness of flavor as well as any obvious sweetness, and its perception is the result of the presence of certain carbohydrates. The opposite of sweetness in this context is sour, astringency or “green” flavors. This category is directly affected by how the coffee was roasted and how the sugars were developed during roasting, and the score is multiplied by 2.

#### 10.2.7 Balance

- a. How all the various aspects of Flavor, Aftertaste, Acidity, Sweetness, and Body of the sample work together and complement or contrast each other is Balance. If the sample is lacking in certain aromas or taste attributes or if some attributes are lost or overpowering, the Balance score would be reduced.

#### 10.2.8 Cup-To-Profile Presentation

- a. Judges should take the taste descriptions and intensity into consideration after the cupping evaluation. Competitors should describe details regarding the sensory experience of their roasted coffee. Higher marks will be given when the competitor’s description of taste is both accurate and detailed. However, this is an evaluation of the quality, accuracy, and relevance of their descriptions, not the quantity.
- b. The judges will evaluate the Cup-To-Profile Presentation score on the accuracy of competitor’s taste descriptions of the final product, considering the taste descriptors and the intensity of acidity, body, and sweetness written on their Roast Plan Practice Sheet.

#### 10.2.9 Defects

- a. There are multiple Defects that may arise from the roasting process, which can affect the quality of the sample negatively. They are scored on a 0 to 5 scale based on the intensity of the Defect as perceived by the judge. A score of zero would mean that the Defect was not present and a score of five would indicate that the Defect was overwhelming the sample. These Defects are: Underdevelopment, Overdevelopment, Baked, and Scorched.
  - i. Underdevelopment relates to insufficient development of acidity, sweetness, and flavor through roasting. It tastes like aggressive acidity and flavors at the front of the palate with no finish or aftertaste. It may also be involved with green/vegetative notes in the SCA Flavor Wheel.
  - ii. Overdevelopment relates to the destruction of flavors via excessive roasting. It tastes like when all acidity and flavor have been muted. It may also be involved with bland and roasty notes in the SCA Flavor Wheel.
  - iii. Baking relates to the stalling of the caramelization process. It tastes like popcorn, or hard cereal/oat flavors. It may also be involved with cereal notes in the SCA Flavor Wheel.
  - iv. Scorching relates to the application of excessively high heat in roasting. It may taste like ashy or burnt notes in the SCA Flavor Wheel.
- b. The roasting defects listed above found by all judges and agreed upon by the head judge will be part of the cupping score evaluation.

## **11.0 COMPETITOR PROTEST AND APPEALS**

### **11.1 PROTEST**

- a. If a competitor wishes to appeal a scoring decision or protest any other matter that arises during the competition which affects such competitor, the competitor shall address it to the Presiding Head Judge. The Presiding Head Judge will then determine whether the issue can be resolved on site at the competition, or whether the issue will require a written appeal following the competition.
- b. If the Presiding Head Judge decides that the issue can be resolved on site at the competition, the Presiding Head Judge will discuss it with applicable judges or any other parties involved to enable a fair presentation of the issue. A decision

- will be made on site by the Presiding Head Judge who shall inform the competitor of the decision at that time. c.
- Possible resolutions to a competitor protest or appeal may include (but are not limited to):
- i. Disqualification of another competitor
  - ii. An opportunity for 1 or more competitors to perform the relevant competition service to supersede the prior scores,
  - iii. Another solution, as determined by the National Competitions Manager
- d. The Presiding Head Judge and the National Competitions Manager shall operate under the purview of the Specialty Coffee Association management and Advisory Board.

## 11.2 APPEAL LETTER

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

## 11.3 APPEAL DECISION

- a. The National Competitions Manager will review written appeals within 30 days of receipt and contact the competitor in writing via email with the final decision.
  - i. Disqualification of another competitor
  - ii. An opportunity for 1 or more competitors to perform the relevant competition service to supersede the prior scores,
  - iii. Another solution, as determined by the National Competitions Manager
- b. The National Competitions Manager shall operate under the purview of the Specialty Coffee Association management and Advisory Board.