

## Barbecue Cook-off Rules and Guidelines

This is intended to inform cook-off teams of the rules and guidelines for the Houston Metro Go Texan Committee/Subcommittee barbecue cook-offs. In an effort to standardize the method of cooking and judging throughout the seven-county, 23 subcommittee areas, these rules will be followed by all subcommittees.

These rules apply to barbecue contest meat only, i.e., brisket, ribs and chicken. Other categories such as beans, gumbo, etc., will be judged at the discretion of the subcommittee cook-off director, and may vary from subcommittee to subcommittee.

### WCBBQ – Houston Metro Spaces

Five barbecue contest cook-off spaces (complete with electricity) at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest at Reliant Park are provided to the Houston Metro Go Texan Committee. **To earn a spot in Houston, you don't have to be the best cook just the most active at subcommittee cook-offs.**

The five spaces will be distributed based on **Participation Points** as follows:

- Houston Metro Go Texan is a promotional committee, and the cook-off spaces awarded by Houston Metro Go Texan at the World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest are used to generate support of the Show and the various Metro subcommittee events.
- Houston Metro Go Texan Committee will award the five cook-off spaces to five separate teams. A team will earn one **Participation Point** for each Metro Go Texan Subcommittee cook-off in which it enters and actually participates by cooking and turning in meat entries. Payment of entry fee alone does not earn a **Participation Point**. Any disqualifications at any subcommittee cook off will not earn a **Participation Point**. Two spaces to one team or to any team that consists of the same members as another will only be awarded one space. The act of entering the same team under a different head cook's name does not constitute a separate team. Double entering any Houston Metro Go Texan cook-off for this purpose is not allowed. Any team, in the opinion of Houston Metro Go Texan management, found in violation of this policy is subject to disqualification and removal from further Metro competitions.
- Cooking teams must participate in at least three subcommittee cook-offs to be eligible for a space based on the **Participation Points**. The term for earning **Participation Points** for the 2013 Show year BBQ Cook-off in Houston will be from November 1, 2011 to October 31, 2012. The term for earning **Participation Points** in for the 2014 Show year will be from April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013. In case of a tie, a drawing will be held to determine the winners.
- In October or November, prior to the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest at Reliant Park, a decision will be reached for those wanting to represent Houston Metro Go Texan at cook-off for three of the spaces. The top three teams based on **Participation Points** shall be given one spot each. The top team shall have first choice if the spots assigned, the second point team shall then select its spot and the third place team will select its spot. The remaining two teams chosen at the Chairman's discretion will then be assigned the two remaining slots. Cook Teams wanting their name placed in the

**“Participation Point Competition”** must notify the Ambassador or Captain of Cook-off’s by September 30 and must commit to pay all cost necessary for the spot awarded, including the entry fee. There will be no points given based on awards at cook-offs. Your qualified participation is your point earned.

- Winning Teams will be notified by the Chairman.
- Cooking teams will be responsible for all required cost incurred for participation in the World Championship Bar-B-Que Contest.
- Houston Metro Go Texan cook-off spaces at the World Championship Bar-B-Que Contest cannot be sold, transferred or given to anyone without prior written approval by the chairman of Houston Metro Go Texan.
- The final decision for each cook off space will be determined by the chairman of Houston Metro Go Texan.

### Definition of Terms

**HOST:** The host of the cook-off space is the business owner/manager of the venue where the cook-off is being held.

**CONTEST COMMITTEE:** Individuals who are serving in official organizational capacity at this cook-off. Local health inspectors/fire inspectors are considered as members of the contest committee.

**HEAD COOK:** The person designated by the cooking team to be in charge and responsible for that team. When registering, the team must sign up using the same head cook at each Houston Metro Go Texan subcommittee cook-off. If the team fails to register using the same head cook's name, the points earned at that cook-off go to the individual who is checked in as head cook (no exceptions).

**HEAD JUDGE:** The person designated by the contest committee to be in charge of the cook-off judging. The head judge is responsible for organizing the judging process to ensure fair and impartial judging. The head judge should advise their judges to refrain from tasting contest meats before judging.

The head judge from the contest committee will make the final ruling on any cook-off related discrepancies.

**CONTEST MEATS:** Contest meats must be raw or uncured beef brisket, pork ribs and whole chicken.

### General Barbecue Cook-Off Rules

1. This is an amateur cooking contest and it is intended there be no further distinctions regarding entry classifications.
2. Only ONE team per barbecue pit will be allowed. Where cooking rigs contain two separate pits, two teams may cook (one team per pit). Multiple entries for contest meats from any one team will not be allowed.
3. Barbecue, for the purpose of this contest, is defined as raw or uncured meat prepared over a wood or charcoal fire, basted or not, as the cook sees fit.

4. No pre-seasoning or pre-cooking of the meat is allowed until it has been inspected and approved for cook-off use. Any meat found not in compliance with this rule will be disqualified.
5. Once meat and chicken have been inspected, approved and tagged, they must not leave the contest area. The contest committee will tag up to two briskets, three slabs of ribs and two whole chickens for each team.
6. All entries must be prepared in as sanitary a manner as possible. All applicable local health department rules and regulations must be complied with. The health department inspector is regarded as a member of the contest committee.
7. All applicable local fire department rules and regulations must be complied with. The fire department inspector/fire marshal is regarded as a member of the contest committee.
8. All fires used to prepare meat in this contest must be of wood or charcoal. No gas or electric cooking equipment will be allowed. However, electrical powered accessories such as spits may be permitted after receiving contest committee approval.
9. Fires are not to be built on the ground. Holes or pits will not be allowed except when approved by the contest committee.
10. Absolutely no firearms or explosives will be allowed.
11. There will be no refund of entry fees for any reason and the decision(s) of the host contest committee head judge and judges are final.

#### Cook/Team Responsibilities

1. Each team is responsible for the maintenance and cleanup of its cooking area. The head cook will be responsible for the conduct and behavior of team members and guests. Any team leaving its space in such a condition that the space requires additional clean-up will be disqualified from participation at future sanctioned events.
2. Each cooking team will designate one person as head cook and one person as an alternate. The head cook and alternate must be the same at all HMGT cook-offs. There may be as many assistants as the head cook deems necessary.
3. Each team should be equipped with a readily available and visible working fire extinguisher. Minimum suggested is 5lb. ABC.

4. All amplified sound systems should be used in moderation throughout the cook-off. A "quiet time" period will be in effect between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. on contest nights. The excessive and/or continued disturbing use of equipment will not be allowed during this time period. Anyone refusing to abide by this rule will be removed from the cook-off site.
5. The excessive use of alcoholic beverages will be grounds for disqualification. Under NO circumstances are alcoholic beverages to be sold or offered in any form to the general public.
6. Competing cooks are not allowed to judge and judges are not allowed to cook. Judges must not be associated with any cooking team or team member in any way that would cast suspicion upon the integrity of the judging process. These rules are intended to be fair and equitable to each and every contestant.  
  
If a cook or team member is needed to judge open entries, i.e. chili, gumbo, sausage, etc., it will be left to the discretion of the head judge in charge of cook-off judging to determine who is eligible to judge.

#### Judging Turn-In Requirements

1. No sauces, garnishes or foil will be allowed in the judging container. Sauces may be used during the cooking process but cannot be applied for entry presentation or judging.
2. Each contestant should submit sufficient product, sliced to facilitate adequate judging of the entry by 10-15 judges.

At events with a large number of entries that may require a preliminary judging round, the contest committee will inform the cook at the head cook's meeting of the expected number of judges so that sufficient product can be turned in for the preliminary judging and the final judging round. If not enough product is provided, the judges will be instructed to do the best they can but not penalize the other contestants they are judging.

The chicken turn-in will be from one chicken and half will be sliced into bite-size pieces stacked around the remainder of the chicken. The chicken can be butterfly but will remain in one piece throughout the cooking process.

3. A blind judging system is based on a duplicate numbered ticket (e.g. theatre ticket) which will be utilized in all judging categories.

Blind judging consists of one-half of the double ticket being enclosed in a small envelope and being secured (usually by duct tape) to the BOTTOM of the turn-in container. The second half of the ticket is placed inside the judging container.

When receiving the judging containers, the head cook prints his name on his half of the ticket in the presence of contest committee personnel.

Any container that appears to have been deliberately marked or altered will be referred to the head judge who will rule on disqualification.

Damaged containers will be replaced by the head judge. Damaged containers and all tickets must be turned in to the head judge at this time in order to receive a new container.

4. All entries will be scored on a scale of 1 through 10 in each of the judging criteria, with 10 being the best.
5. Until announcements are made, the taped envelope should remain attached to the top three category winners' judging containers. At the time winners are announced, the taped envelope will be removed from the container (on stage) and opened by one contest official. A, second official will announce the number. The head cook or team member must present the corresponding half of that ticket to the head judge who will confirm that the numbers match, and announce the head cook's name and team name.
6. There should be no tags remaining on meat after it has been cut and put into containers.
7. If there is a tie, the brisket score will be used to break the tie. If there is still a tie, the ribs score will be used next as the tie breaker. The chicken score will be used as last tie breaker.

#### Contacts:

For questions involving spots in Houston and the determination of the Winners, please contact the Chairman of Metro Go Texan by email only at [metro@folgerlaw.net](mailto:metro@folgerlaw.net). For questions about individual contest rules please contact David Campbell at [dcampbell@alliedelectrical.com](mailto:dcampbell@alliedelectrical.com).