



2023 U.S. Roaster Championship Official Rules and Regulations

Written and approved by the U.S. Competitions Committee
VERSION 2021.08.10

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1. Conditions of Participation

1.1. Organization

The U.S. Barista Championship (“USBC”), U.S. Brewers Cup (“USBrC”), U.S. Coffee in Good Spirits Championship (“USCIGS”), U.S. Cup Tasters Championship (“USCTC”), U.S. Latte Art Championship (“USLAC”), and U.S. Roaster Championship (“USRC”) are programs of the Specialty Coffee Association (“SCA”) U.S. Chapter and the U.S. Coffee Championships (“USCC”).

1.2. Rights

All intellectual property related to all U.S. Coffee Championships competitions, 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.

1.3. Participation

1.3.1. Qualification

- a. U.S. Coffee Championships
 - i. The positions to compete at the USCC will be guaranteed until an invited competitor turns down their spot or fails to register for USCC within the designated registration window. Any unclaimed position(s) will be offered to the next highest scoring competitor(s) from the Qualifier 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 USCC.
 - ii. All Competitors are required to attend 1 Online Learning Session in order to participate at the USCC.
 - iii. Any dispute relevant to the qualifications or eligibility of a competitor will be reviewed and resolved by the U.S. Competitions Committee.

1.3.2. Age Requirement

Competitors must be at least 18 years of age at the time of competing in any USCC event (at least 21 years of age for U.S. Coffee in Good Spirits).

1.3.3. Nationality

All 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.

1.3.4. Expenses

Competitors are fully responsible for any and all expenses personally incurred that are related to the competition including, but not limited to, travel, accommodations, and supplies needed for the competition. The USCC, SCA, the U.S. Chapter, or Hosts are not responsible or liable for any of the competitor’s expenses. If a competitor cannot afford the aforementioned expenses, it is their responsibility to see that their company or other outside parties cover these expenses.

1.4. Conflicts of Interest

1.4.1. Judging

It is not possible to compete and judge in the same competition, in the same season. Competitors from the Qualifiers may not judge this competition at USCC or WCC, even if they do not advance. Additionally, competitors may not judge this competition at any World Coffee Events (WCE) sanctioned WCC (world, national, regional) in any country, prior to the conclusion of that competition’s season.

1.4.2. Calibration Baristas

- a. Competitors who participate as a calibration barista in a judge calibration for this competition are not eligible to compete in a sanctioned event until the completion of the competition year. This applies to both Competition Body WCE Sanctioned events as well as the World Competition.
- b. A competitor is allowed to be a calibration barista if they are not competing in that same competition year, for that championship. Additionally, a competitor is allowed to be a calibration barista at the World Championships in the same competition year, if they have failed to qualify for the World Championships at their sanctioned Competition Body Championships.

1.4.3. Other Conflicts of Interest

Judges and competitors are encouraged to let their USRC head judges or the U.S. Competitions Committee 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.

1.5. Enforcement of Rules and Regulations

USCC will employ these Rules & Regulations throughout the competition. If a competitor violates 1 or more of the Rules & Regulations, they may be automatically disqualified from the competition, except when the Rules designate a specific enforcement or consequence. If a competition organizer causes the violation of 1 or more of these Rules, a competitor may submit an appeal, according to the process detailed in the section "Competitor Protest and Appeals."

1.5.1. COVID-19 Addendums

All Rules and Regulations are subject to change based on local and venue health and safety requirements or guidelines. USCC will share any Rules and Regulations changes via email ahead of the competition. These changes may include, but are not limited to changes to table sizes or layouts; material of provided vessels or cups; limits on coaches or helpers in the competitor preparation and practice rooms; mask or glove mandates; schedule changes for sanitization; etc.

1.6. Application

1.6.1. Competitor Registration Fees

Registration information for USCC will be emailed to qualified competitions. Competitors must register and pay any registration fee to USCC via the Internet. Competitor registration is not complete until competitors have paid for their registration and filled out registration form. Competitor registration belongs to the competitor listed on the registration form.

All registrations are non-refundable and non-transferable.

1.6.2. Competitor Questions

- a. All competitors must thoroughly read and understand these Rules & Regulations and scoresheets without exception. All USCC documents may be downloaded from the competition website at www.uscoffeechampionships.org
- b. Competitors are encouraged to direct any questions to USCC prior to arriving at the competition. If any competitor is unclear as to the intent of any of the Rules and Regulations, it is the competitor's responsibility to clarify that position with USCC prior to the competitions by contacting uscompetitions@sca.coffee. Competitors will also have the opportunity to ask questions during the required Online Learning Session. Please see www.uscoffeechampionships.org for the dates/time of these Online Learning Sessions.

1.6.3. Terms & Conditions

- a. Competitors and the winners of the U.S. Coffee Championships are representatives of the Specialty Coffee

Association (SCA), the U.S. Chapter, and United States Coffee Championships (USCC).

- i. Fully abide by the SCA's Code of Conduct, found here: [sca.coffee/code-of-conduct](https://www.sca.coffee/code-of-conduct)
- ii. Upon entry into any USCC competition and in exchange for the opportunity to win, each competitor undertakes that they will:
 1. Permit the SCA, the U.S. Chapter, and USCC to use the competitor's name and image in any format without charge for the purpose of promotion of the SCA, the U.S. Chapter, USCC, or any USCC competition.
 2. Without limiting the generality of clause (i), the formats referred to in clause (a) may include: photographic, video, print, Internet, and any electronic media.
 3. With fulfilling these terms and conditions, actively work to uphold the good reputation of the SCA, the U.S. Chapter, USCC, and any USCC competition.
- iii. Upon entry into any USCC competition and in exchange for the opportunity to win, each competitor undertakes that, should they win or place in the top-ranking positions, they will:
 1. For the Preliminaries, make themselves available to travel to compete in the Qualifiers.
 2. For the Qualifiers, make themselves available to travel to compete at the U.S. Coffee Championships.
 3. Include the name "Specialty Coffee Association U.S. Chapter", "SCA U.S. Chapter", "U.S. Coffee Championships", or "USCC" immediately before the name of the competition title (e.g., "U.S. Barista Championship", "U.S. Brewers Cup", "CoffeeChamps Coffee in Good Spirits Qualifier", "U.S. CoffeeChamps Barista Preliminary", etc.) in each instance when the competition title is used.
 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 U.S. Chapter and U.S. Coffee Championships at every opportunity without charge to the SCA.
 6. Promote the relevant U.S. CoffeeChamps Preliminaries as the pathway to the U.S. CoffeeChamps Qualifiers at every opportunity without charge to the SCA U.S. Chapter or USCC.
 7. Promote the relevant U.S. CoffeeChamps Qualifiers as the pathway to the U.S. Coffee Championships at every opportunity without charge to the SCA U.S. Chapter or USCC.
- iv. Upon entry into any USCC competition and in exchange for the opportunity to win, each competitor undertakes that, should they win, they will:
 1. Fully abide by the USCC Champion's Code of Conduct.
 2. Make themselves available to travel to represent the U.S. at the World Coffee Championships.

2. The Competition

2.1. Competition Summary

The championship is comprised of 1 round and will have these components:

- a. Pre-Roasting – Lab Practice, Green Evaluation, Sample Roasting, Open Cupping, and Roast Plan.
- b. Production Roasting
- c. Production Roast Evaluation

2.2. Standards and Definitions

2.2.1. Green Coffee Information

- a. All green coffee in the competition will be of the species *Coffea Arabica*, produced in various countries or regions. Competitors will be provided with green coffee designated for the competition. Competitors will be informed of the provided coffee on site before the start of the competition.
- b. Green Coffees may have been processed by any of the different processing methods (e.g., washed [wet-process], natural [dry-process], semi-washed, etc.)

2.2.2. Green Coffee Samples

350 grams of green coffee, one from each available option, will be provided to competitors for their Green Evaluation and sample roasting. The green coffee samples provided will be randomly pulled from the bulk quantity of each green coffee option. Competitors may green grade any of the samples provided for their own reference.

2.2.3. Green Coffee for Competition

- a. Up to 6.0kg in quantity of each green coffee will be provided to competitors at their production roasting time, which corresponds to their green coffee needs. The Stage Manager will ensure green coffees are randomly pulled from the bulk On!
- b. Only green coffee provided may be used during competition.
- c. Non-compliance with these requirements will result in a score of 0 being given in all categories on the Production Roast Evaluation scoresheet for that coffee.

2.2.4. Roast Color

Roasted and ground coffee will be evaluated for roast color using the provided colorimeter. Instructions and the grind size for the roast color evaluation will be given during the competitor tutorial time. Competitors may bring their own roasted coffee sample to be calibrated with the provided colorimeter. If the sponsored colorimeter has multiple reading settings, the setting to be used will be agreed upon and communicated during Lab Practice time

2.2.5. Roasted Coffee Submission

The roasted coffee product will be submitted by the competitor as their final product to be evaluated by judges. The submission should be completed by competitors before their production roasting time is finished. Competitors will be evaluated only on the work associated with the coffee included in the Roasted Coffee Submission, and no other work. Coffee submitted for judging must be from the selection offered by the competition officials. The roasted coffee submission must weigh a minimum of 2 lbs each, presented in the packaging supplied for this purpose. If a competitor plans post-roast blend, the coffee submitted should be the final, completely blended product.

2.2.6. Roast Plan

Competitors will submit a Roast Plan for each production roast. Competitors should clearly describe the weight, temperature, color reading of their roasted coffee, and provide a description of what the taste and flavor results of the production roast will be, including the intensity of acidity and body. Competitors are recommended to use the SCA standard flavor wheels as a reference tool.

2.2.7. Coffee Density

A density-measuring device may be provided by a sponsor to measure the density of green coffee. The density calculation protocol below will be used if the device is not provided:

A measurement of mass density of green coffee is calculated by the mass of coffee (in grams) divided by the volume of coffee (in liters), as measured in a container of known volume. It is not necessary to calculate for interstitial space (air between individual beans), which is treated as a constant and is ignored. In this competition, the weight of the coffee will be measured in a 250mL vessel.

2.2.8. Coffee Moisture

A moisture-measuring device may be provided by a sponsor to measure the water content in green coffee. A measurement of water content in green coffee is calculated as the mass of water content divided by the total original mass of green coffee. The unit for coffee moisture is a percentage (%), and will be calculated to the nearest hundredths (e.g., 10.33%).

2.2.9. Screen Size

A stack of sizing screens is used to physically separate a green coffee sample by bean size. The screen sizes are increments of 1/64th of an inch, (e.g., screen 15 has holes of 15/64 inch). The resulting data should be notated as one, two, or three screen-numbers (no more than three of mass retained on that particular screen, if and only if as they occur above 10% of the total sample mass).

2.2.10. Defect Count

Green coffee defects should be identified and counted from an industry-standard 350g sample. Competitors will be provided a

350g separate sample of Single Origin green coffee, and identify and count the defects listed in the Green Evaluation scoresheet: full black, partial black, full sour, partial sour, etc. Competitors should submit all the defects (except quakers) they found from the Single Origin sample in the provided bag when they submit their Green evaluation scoresheet. Quaker(s) will be identified and counted from the Single Origin production roast and evaluated by judges after the submission. Competitors should submit any quaker(s) found from their Single Origin production roast which will be submitted for evaluation, in a separate provided bag that will be provided when they submit their Single Origin production roast.

3. Competition Procedure

3.1. Roasting Stage Area

a. During competition time, non-competitors should not give assistance or input to competitors, or interfere in any way with the competitor, judges, Stage Manager or the competition procedure. Failure to comply with this may lead to disqualification of the competitor.

b. Officials will warm up roasting machines for a period of 30 minutes before the first competitor is to begin roasting. The roasting machine warm-up temperature will be announced during Lab Practice time. The machines will be returned to the same warm-up temperature before the next competitor competes. Competitors may be given 5 minutes of preparation time to adjust their own warm-up temperature before their sample roasting time begins.

c. All green coffee will be given to competitors by the Stage Manager or technical officials right before each activity starts.

d. No coffee may leave the venue from the beginning of the competition until the competition ends. All coffees for the competition will be collected by officials immediately after each activity (e.g., sample roasting, practice roasting, production roasting, etc.). Competitors are allowed to take some of their sample roast or practice roast coffees to the open cupping area.

e. Competitors will be allowed to collect their roasted coffee after the awards ceremony.

f. Competitors will be assigned the competition times for sample roasting, Green Evaluation, roasting practice and production roasting. Competitors will not have access to the competition equipment, the competition coffees, or equipment except during the allotted competition and practice times.

g. Competitors should be at the competition area 30 minutes prior to any scheduled competition or practice time. Any competitor who is not onsite at the start of their competition time may be disqualified by the Stage Manager or presiding head judge. If the schedule is delayed, the competitor should still be prepared at their designated time.

a. During Green Evaluation and competition times, coaches and non-competitors cannot give assistance or input to competitors, or interfere in any way with the competitors, judges, Stage Manager, or the competition procedure. Failure to comply with this may lead to disqualification of the competitor.

4. Machinery, Accessories, and Raw Materials

4.1. Sample Roasting Machine

A coffee roasting machine that can roast 100-500g samples may be provided. The roasting machine for Sample Roasting and Production Roasting may be the same.

4.2. Production Roasting Machine

The roasting machines provided will be manually operable, between the advertised 2-6kg capacity and will be installed according to local laws for safety and environmental effects. No use of automation mode will be allowed during the competition.

USCC will make every effort to ensure that competitors can use the same roasting machine for both practice and production, but this will not be guaranteed.

The Sample Roasting Machine & Production Roasting Machine may be the same

4.3. Provided Equipment and Supplies

The competition area will be equipped with the following:

a. Lab Station:

i. Lab Tool Table (e.g., moisture measuring device, density measuring device, sizing screens, etc.)

- ii. Green Evaluation Workstation (e.g., Green Evaluation table, mat, trays, etc.)
- b. Sample Roasting Machines
- c. Production Roasting Machines
- d. Cupping Station (e.g., grinder, water source, cupping supplies, scales, colorimeter etc.)
- e. Containers and accessories for competition

4.4. Optional Equipment & Supplies

- a. Competitors may bring their own cupping spoon and manual note-taking implements (e.g., notebook, papers, pens, etc.). No electronic devices or items that can provide any additional resources for competitors are allowed to be used during any competition time. Stopwatches or flashlights may be used as long as that is their sole purpose (e.g., no cell phone for use as a stopwatch).
- b. Competitors may only use items provided by the competition (or listed as optional above) during the competition time, no other resources may be utilized.
- c. Competitors may wear ear plugs. However, time cues may be verbal only so these competitors will need to be mindful of time cues from volunteers. Headphones are not permitted.
- d. Competitors may wear headlamps. However, competitors may not attach anything to the roasting equipment (e.g. magnets or lights). Anything added to the roasting machine made may be grounds for disqualification.

5. Competitor Instructions Prior to Competition

5.1. Online Learning Session

Prior to the USRC, Online Learning Sessions will take place. Taking part in one 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 National Competitions Coordinator, Stage Manager, Head Runner, and/or Head Judges will also be able to assist you with onsite event questions during the competition.

5.2. Coaches

- a. Instructions or 'coaching' may not be provided to a competitor during their Green Evaluation or production roasting times under penalty of disqualification.
- b. 1 coach or helper may be with the competitor during their open lab, practice, and cupping times.
- c. USCC encourages audience participation and enthusiastic fan support that does not interfere with competition.
- d. Please note: coaches, supporters, friends, or family members are not allowed on stage, in the grading room or in the roasting area while the competition is in progress, otherwise the competitor is subject to disqualification by the presiding head judge.

5.3. Emcees

There is no emcee for this competition.

5.4. Interpreters

Competitors may bring their own interpreter. When speaking to the competitor the interpreter is only allowed to translate what the head judge or scoring judge(s) has said. When a competitor speaks, the interpreter is only allowed to translate exactly what the competitor has said. No additional competition time will be allotted with the use of an interpreter.

5.5. Be on Time

Competitors should be at the competition area 15 minutes prior to their scheduled competition and practice times. Any competitor who is not onsite at the start of their competition time will be disqualified. If the schedule is delayed, the competitor should still be prepared at their scheduled time.

5.6. Clean and Organized Area

Competitors should keep their stations clean and organized. If a competitor is disorganized, disruptive, or otherwise unprofessional the head judge may charge a 1-point deduction on the Overall Scoresheet.

6. Pre-Roasting

Competitors will have scheduled times for each part of Pre-Roasting. Competitors will not have access to the competition equipment or coffees except during scheduled times.

6.1. Open LabTime

- a. Prior to Sample Roasting competitors will be scheduled for 30 minutes to 1 hour of lab time.
- b. Competitors can use this time to familiarize themselves with the laboratory equipment. Competitors should work around each other and keep the stations clean and organized. If a competitor is disorganized, disruptive, or otherwise unprofessional during this time they may be asked to leave the lab. This time is for competitors to become familiar with the laboratory and roasting equipment.
- c. The production roasting machine sponsor will be onsite during this time to answer competitor questions about roasting equipment.

6.2. Green Evaluation

Competitors are given 30 minutes to 1 hour to evaluate the provided green coffee for moisture, density, screen size, and defect count. Competitors will submit the Green Evaluation sheet of the Single Origin coffee when the Green Evaluation time is finished. This portion of the competition is scored through the Single Origin Green Evaluation scoresheet. The coffee provided for Green Evaluation must be a washed arabica.

6.3. Sample Roasting

- a. Competitors will have between 30 minutes - 1 hour of sample roasting time, depending on the sponsored machine type.
- b. Competitors will be given 350-500 grams of each green coffee option. Sample roasting must come from these provided samples. Competitors may green grade these samples for their own reference during lab practice.
- c. Sample roasts are for the competitor's own personal use in order to determine roast parameters and green coffee attributes and will not be submitted for evaluation.
- d. Competitors are expected to work in an organized and respectful manner towards other competitors and technical officials.
- e. Competitors will receive time calls of 15 and 5 minutes remaining. Competitors may not start a new roast if they have less than 5 minutes remaining.

6.4. Open Cupping

- a. Competitors will be scheduled for 30 minutes open cupping time.
- b. Competitors may examine and handle (e.g., grind, brew, evaluate color, cup, etc.) their roasted samples in the open cupping area during their scheduled time. Open cupping may be scheduled over multiple days.
- c. Competitors may bring 1 coach with them to Open Cupping. No more than 1 coach is permitted.
- d. Competitors, coaches, volunteers, etc. cannot remove any coffees used in the competition from the competition area. This includes roasted sample, practice, and production coffees.

6.5. Practice Roasting

- a. Competitors will have between 30 minutes and 1 hour of practice time on the roasting machines.
- b. USCC will provide coffee for practice roasting.
- c. Competitors can choose a selected profile from their practice time as a reference curve for their competition roast if they prefer; they will need to clearly make note of this on their Roast Plan and inform the Stage Manager or technical officials of their preferred roast profile number.

d. Competitors will receive time calls of 15 and 5 minutes remaining. Competitors may not start a new roast if they have less than 5 minutes remaining.

6.6. Roast Plan

- a. Competitors will submit their Roast Plan at the scheduled time.
- b. The Roast Plan is a written log of the proposed roast profile(s) and the reasons for those selected roast profile(s). Competitors should clearly describe the weight, temperature, color reading of their roasted coffee, and provide a description of what the taste and flavor results of the production roast will be, including the intensity of acidity and body. Competitors are recommended to use the SCA standard flavor wheels as a reference tool.
- c. Each green coffee option will be given to competitors right before their production roasting time. Therefore, competitors should clearly write their required quantity of green coffee for each roast profile.
- d. If the competitor plans to do a post-roast blend they should specify each roast profile on separate Roast Plans, including the ratio of the blend.
- e. The judges will evaluate "Cup-to-Profile" based on the accuracy of the competitor's taste descriptions. Judges will consider the taste descriptors and the intensity of acidity, body, and sweetness written on the Roast Plan. The expected Cup-to-Profile information from the competitor's Roast Plan will be disclosed by the Stage Manager to the judges during deliberation and judges will score the Cup-to-Profile based on their notes from the cupping. If multiple roasts are blended, competitors should describe the final product.

7. Production Roasting

Competitors will have scheduled times for Production Roasting. Competitors will not have access to the competition equipment or coffees except during scheduled times.

7.1. Roasting Time

- a. Up to 6kg of green coffee will be issued to the competitor. Green coffee will be issued before the competitor's production roasting scheduled time slot. If the competitor chooses to create a post-roast blend, the Roast Plan must state the quantities and order of each different roast profile, and the ratio and timing of blending.
- b. Competitors will have an assigned production roasting time and will be assigned 30 minutes for their roasts. Competitors are responsible for making sure they know when their competition time is and making sure they are there on time.
- c. Competitors must place the coffee product on the provided table then raise their hand and call "time" to end their competition time. Competitors may call "time" to stop their roasting time before the end of the allotted time if they so choose.
- d. Officials will warm up roasting machines for a period of 30 minutes before the first competitor is to begin roasting. The roasting machine warm-up temperature will be announced during Lab Practice time. The machines will be returned to the same warm-up temperature before the next competitor competes. Competitors may be given 5 minutes of preparation time to adjust their own warm-up temperature before their sample roasting time begins. Competitors may not touch green coffee during the warm-up time.
- e. Competitors will receive time calls of 15 and 5 minutes remaining. Competitors may not start a new roast if they have less than 5 minutes remaining for their competition time.
- f. Start temperature is the temperature recorded when the competitor moves the green coffee hopper lever, and the coffee descends into the roast chamber. End temperature is the temperature recorded when the competitor opens the roast chamber. Competitors should check the official temperature recordings with the technical official before leaving the competition station. More temperature recording information will be shared during Lab Practice time.
- g. Roasting machines will have time/temperature logging systems, which will log and display real-time roasting information to the competitor, the technical officials, and to the audience.
- h. The roast log information will be recorded and saved for the Roast Plan evaluation. For accurate recording, competitors should push the stop button on the logging system immediately after they dump the roasted beans into the tray, or at the same time. In case of any technical issues on the logging system, technical officials will manually log the roasting information, and this will replace the data from the logging system when agreed upon by the presiding head judge and Stage Manager.
- i. Competitors will be given a demonstration and practice time on the time/temperature logging system prior to

competition. It is the responsibility of the competitor to ensure the roasting log system is ready, enabled, and logging the roast accurately. Any roasts not logged will be discarded. If the competitor attempts to change the system setting the competitor will be disqualified.

j. If the sponsored roasting machine allows for airflow adjustment, the competitor may choose to utilize this control if they want, however it will not be scored in any way. At the start of each competitor's competition time the airflow will be reset to a fixed setting announced during the Lab Practice time.

k. If the competitor creates a post-roast blend, they must submit a Roast Plan for each roast. The final Roast Plan score for the post-roast blend will be the average of all submitted Roast Plans.

l. Competitors are responsible for and in charge of their roasting process during the competition time. The roasting process also includes charging, dropping, cleaning, and packaging. There will be no assistance provided by volunteers or technical officials.

m. Roast color will be measured by an official designated by the Stage Manager or head judge. The roast color measurement will be taken between 30 minutes and 4 hours after the submission is completed. If the competitor is post-roast blending, a 100g sample of each coffee must be submitted separately for roast color evaluation.

7.2. Roasted Coffee Submission

a. The roasted coffee product is submitted by the competitor as their final product to be evaluated by judges. The submission must be completed by competitors before their production roasting time is finished. Competitors will be evaluated only on the work associated with the coffee included in the roasted coffee submission. Coffee submitted for judging must be from the provided green coffee. Competitors will submit 2 lbs of the roasted coffee in the provided bag(s).

b. Competitors will submit any quaker(s) found from their production roast in a separate provided bag.

c. No coaches or helpers may assist the competitor during their setup, production roasting, or clean-up times.

8. Roast Plan & Green Evaluation Scoresheets

The evaluation scale for the Roast Plan Scoresheet is 0 to 6.

Unacceptable = 0

Acceptable = 1

Average = 2

Good = 3

Very Good = 4

Excellent = 5

Extraordinary = 6

8.1. Weight Evaluation Scale

The end weight of each roast will be measured by technical officials during the production roasting time and scored. In order to earn a score of extraordinary the roasted coffee will have no more than a +/- 200 grams of variance. 1 point will be deducted for every subsequent 100g of weight variance. A weight variance exceeding +/- 701 grams will result in 0 points.

Weight Evaluation Scale:

6 = +/-200g

5 = +/-201g to 300g

4 = +/- 301g to 400g

3 = +/- 401g to 500g

2= +/-501g to 600g

1= +/-601g to 700g

0= More than +/- 701g

8.2. Temperature Evaluation Scale

The start and end temperatures of each roast will be measured by technical officials during the production roasting time and scored. In order to earn a score of extraordinary the temperature will accurately be described on the Roast Plan Scoresheet. 1 point will be deducted for every subsequent 2°C of temperature variance. A temperature variance exceeding +/- 10.1° will

result in 0 points. Competitors who choose to use F degrees in their roasting plan and operations will be judged based on that scale, that allows for the same variance from their predicted temperature when scoring.

Temperature Evaluation Scale:

- 6 = Accurate
- 5 = +/- 0.1°C to 2°C
- 4 = +/- 2.1°C to 4°C
- 3 = +/- 4.1°C to 6°C
- 2 = +/- 6.1°C to 8°C
- 1 = +/- 8.1°C to 10°C
- 0 = More than +/- 10.1°C

8.3. Color Evaluation Scale

The roast color of each roast will be measured by technical officials during the production roasting time and scored. In order to earn a score of extraordinary the roast color will be described within 2 points of variance on the scale. 1 point will be deducted for every 1 point of variance. A roast color variance exceeding +/- 7.1 points is unacceptable and will result in 0 points.

Color Evaluation Scale:

- 6 = +/- 0 to 2
- 5 = +/- 2.1 to 3
- 4 = +/- 3.1 to 4
- 3 = +/- 4.1 to 5
- 2 = +/- 5.1 to 6
- 1 = +/- 6.1 to 7
- 0 = More than +/- 7.1

8.4. Green Evaluation Procedure

- a. Each competitor will be given a 350g sample of Single Origin green coffee for the Green Evaluation, along with a blank Green Evaluation Scoresheet to complete.
- b. Competitors are expected to demonstrate good knowledge of green coffee, its defects, and an ability to use the equipment supplied to evaluate the coffee properties.
- c. Green coffee evaluation will be done according to Standards and Definitions as defined in the Standards and Definitions section below and following the usage guidelines explained during the Lab Practice time.
- d. Defect Count should be determined based on the guidelines detailed by the SCA Green Arabica Coffee Classification and the SCA Defect Handbook that is based on a 350g sample. No handbook will be allowed during the Green Evaluation time.
- e. Competitors will have 30 minutes of Green Evaluation time to complete their Green Evaluation Scoresheet for the Single Origin green coffee issued by the official. A competition official will keep time of each competitor. No extra time will be given except in case of a technical problem, but this will be at the discretion of the head judge or stage manager and the technical problem must be raised by the competitor before the completion of competition time.
- f. Once a competitor has finished Green Evaluation, they must submit their Green Evaluation scoresheet with the defects, separated into a bag/container provided, to be checked by the head judge or a certified Q grader.
- g. If the competitor has not finished their submission during the allotted time period, they will be allowed to proceed until the submission is completed. One-quarter (.25) point will be deducted from the competitor's total score for every second over the allotted time, up to a maximum penalty of 15 points (1 minute). Any competitor whose Green Evaluation time exceeds 31 minutes will have their Green Evaluation Scoresheet disqualified.
- h. Competitors will evaluate moisture using the moisture-measuring device provided by the Competition Body. Competitors must show that they have the ability to measure the water content of green coffee.
- i. Competitors will evaluate density, using the equipment supplied by the Competition Body. Competitors must show that they have the ability to measure the density of green coffee.
- j. Screen size will be determined using only screens supplied by the Competition Body. Competitors should demonstrate the ability to use the supplied screens to evaluate the screen size of the coffee. Competitors will shake 350g of green coffee through sizing screens and record the weight in grams for the 3 screens that retain the greatest number of beans.
- k. Competitors are expected to return the green grading materials to the condition in which they received them.

Failure to do so will result in a 1 point deduction from the Green Grading score.

9. Production Roast Evaluation

- a. Competitors and judges will participate in cuppings, featuring all of the roasted coffees submitted. The cupping tables for competitors and judges will be separated and may be scheduled for different times.
- b. The Production Roast Evaluation by judges may be scheduled on different days depending on the overall event schedule.
- c. All Production Roast Evaluations will be double blind. An official will mark each competitor's submitted coffee with a code and keep an answer key to decode the coffees. A second official will create a new code from the first official's set of codes, mix the order, and keep a separate answer key.
- d. 3 cupping judges and 1 non-scoring head judge who have overseen the previous day's competitions will cup together. Judges may not physically touch or lift the cups at any time, and judges will 'break crusts' (stirring the cups to collapse the coffee grounds) as arranged by the head judge. Only cupping judge scores will count towards the total scores.
- e. 3 to 5 cups of each coffee will be prepared to common industry cupping standards and practices, and the cupping will proceed according to the direction and protocol established by the head judge. All cupping judges and competitors should listen carefully to directions from the head judge and follow all directions and protocols.
- f. Judges and competitors will be expected to follow standard SCA cupping protocols and may not physically touch or move cups at any time.
- g. The head judge(s) will be designated by USCC (based on judging and professional experience) to oversee the competition and lead the calibration, deliberation, and debrief during the competition.

9.1. Production Roast Evaluation Preparation

- a. All samples will have been rested for a minimum of 8 hours.
- b. Sample should be ground immediately prior to cupping, no more than 15 minutes before infusion with water.
- c. Samples should be weighed out as whole beans to the ratio of 8.25g per 150mL of water.
- d. Grind particle size will be slightly coarser than typically used for paper filter drip brewing. The grinder setting used for the Production Roast Evaluation will be announced on site during the Lab Practice time at the discretion of the head judge. 3 to 5 cups from each sample should be prepared to evaluate sample uniformity.
- e. Prior to the first cup of each coffee, the grinder will be purged by grinding a cleansing quantity of the sample. Then the grinding of each cup will commence, individually into the cupping glasses or bowls, ensuring that the whole and consistent quantity of sample gets deposited into each cup. A lid will be placed on each cup immediately after grinding.
- f. Water used for cupping should be clean and odor free, but not distilled or softened. Ideal Total Dissolved Solids are 125-175 ppm but should not be less than 50 ppm or more than 200 ppm. The water should be freshly drawn and brought to approximately 200° F (93°C) at the time it is poured onto the ground coffee.
- g. Once the judges finish dry fragrance evaluation, the hot water should be poured directly onto the measured grounds to the rim of the cup, making sure to wet all of the grounds. The grounds will be left to steep undisturbed for a period of 4 minutes before evaluation begins.

9.2. 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 will be evaluated by lifting the lid and sniffing the dry grounds.
- c. After infusing with water, judges will evaluate the aroma of the crust and leave it unbroken for at least 4 minutes. Judges will again evaluate the aroma while the crust is broken 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 coffee 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.
- 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 coffee 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.

9.3. Production Roast Evaluation Scoresheet

- a. Scoring is based on the Production Evaluation Scoresheet. Each scoresheet will be scored out of 100. The Production Roast Evaluation scale will be based on a standard cupping scale.

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 score is based on the accuracy of taste description provided by competitors.

c. Each cupping 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 used as a reference tool for the cupping judges to create a common language for competitor feedback.

f. **Fragrance/Aroma:** 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 three 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 preference of all three aspects of a sample’s Fragrance/Aroma evaluation.

g. **Flavor:** Flavor represents the coffee's principal character, the "mid-range" notes, in between the first impressions 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.

h. **Aftertaste:** 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 is short or unpleasant, a lower score would be given, and vice versa.

i. **Acidity:** 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.

j. **Body:** 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 a Sumatra 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.

k. Sweetness: 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.

l. Balance: 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.

m. Cup-To-Profile Accuracy: Competitors will be describing details regarding the expected sensory experience of their roasted coffee. Judges should take the taste descriptions and intensity mark on the submitted Roast Plan into consideration after the cupping evaluation. 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.

n. Defects: 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 zero to five 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.

o. Underdevelopment: 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.

p. Overdevelopment: 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 associated with Roasted references on the SCA Flavor Wheel.

q. Baking: 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.

r. Scorching: Scorching relates to the application of excessively high heat in roasting. It may taste like ashy or burnt notes in the SCA Flavor Wheel.

The roasting defects listed above found by cupping judges and agreed upon by the head judge will be part of the cupping score evaluation.

10. Scorekeeping

10.1. USRC Official Scorekeeping

The USCC official scorekeepers are responsible for adding all scores and for keeping all scores confidential.

10.2. Competitor’s Total Score

The competitors total score will be calculated by adding the Green Evaluation & Roast Plan scoresheets total to the Production Roast Evaluation scores from each sensory judge, and then by subtracting any penalties.

10.3. Tie Scores

- a. If there is a tie between 2 or more competitors, the competitor with the higher total Production Roast Evaluation score will be ranked higher.
- b. If there is still a tie, the competitor with the higher Roast Plan Scoresheet will be ranked higher.
- c. If there is still a tie, the competitor with the higher Green Evaluation Scoresheet will be ranked higher.

10.4. Debriefing

a. Following the competition, competitors will have an opportunity to review their scoresheets with the judges by the schedule announced by the event organizer, this may be in person or online.

b. Digital copies are available to competitors upon request starting 30 days after the conclusion of the USRC by emailing the Competitions Coordinator at uscompetitions@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 their head judge during the competitor debriefing to explain their protest. The head judge and/or one or more representatives of the U.S. Competitions Committee along with the National Competitions Coordinator and the WCE Representative will discuss the competitor's protest on-site with the judges who judged the competitor. They will make a decision on site and a representative of the U.S. Competitions Committee or the Competitions Coordinator will inform the competitor of the decision.

10.5. Overtime Penalty

If a competitor has not finished their roasting or submission during their allotted time period, they are allowed to proceed until the submission is completed. One-quarter (.25) point will be deducted for every 1 second over the allotted time from the competitor's total score, up to a maximum penalty of 15 points (1 minute). Any coffee submitted 1 minute after the conclusion of the competition time will be disqualified (i.e., the evaluation of the coffee submission will not be added to the other evaluations of the competitor).

11. Judging Preparation and Protocol

11.1. Judges Table Supply List

- Pencils
- Clipboard (one per judge)
- Cupping spoons
- Spittoons/cups

11.2. Cupping Spoons and Spittoons

- a. Judges will use cupping spoons to slurp the coffees.
- b. Similarly, judges have the option to spit the coffees from their mouths, or to consume them.
- c. It is recommended (but not required) that judges try to be consistent with their spitting or swallowing through the entire competition.

11.3. Scoresheet Setup

- a. 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 sample and experiential understanding of quality.
- b. 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.
- c. After evaluation, the numeric score should be notated in each box marked Total. Scorekeepers will calculate the sum of the component scores to determine the Total Score.

12. Technical Issues

- a. During the competition, if the competitor believes there is a technical problem with any of the USRC-provided equipment, they should contact the head judge or USRC Stage Manager immediately.
- b. If the head judge agrees there is a technical problem that can be easily resolved, they will decide the appropriate amount of time for the competitor to be credited. Once the technician has fixed the problem, the competitor's time will resume.
- c. If the technical problem cannot be solved in a timely manner, the head judge will make the decision whether or not the competitor should wait to continue their competition or stop and start again at a reallocated time.
- d. If a competitor must stop their competition time, the competitor, along with the head judge and Stage Manager will reschedule the competitor to compete in full again at a later time.
- e. If it is determined that the technical issue is due to competitor error, the head judge may determine that no additional time will be given to the competitor, and the preparation or competition time will resume without time being credited.

13. Competitor Protest and Appeals

All problems should be attempted to be resolved as soon as possible. On site solutions are the most effective and appropriate. Appeals made after the competition's end are more difficult to effectively arbitrate.

13.1. 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 needs to address it to the National Competitions Coordinator and WCE Representative. The National Competitions Coordinator, WCE Representative, and U.S. Competitions Committee 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 Competitions Coordinator decides that the issue can be resolved on site at the competition, the National Competitions Coordinator 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 Competitions Coordinator, 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 Coordinator, WCE Representative, and U.S. Competitions Committee.

13.2. Appeal Letter

a. If any protest described above cannot be resolved on site or the competitor wishes to appeal a decision made on site, the competitor needs to submit their appeal in writing via email to uscompetitions@sca.coffee.

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 uscompetitions@sca.coffee within 24 hours of the incident.

13.3. Appeal Decision

The National Competitions Coordinator and U.S. Competitions Committee will review written appeals within 30 days of receipt and contact the competitor in writing via email with the final decision.