FBA CONTEST RULES

These rules are in effect for all FBA sanctioned contests on or after **May 01, 2025**

1. CONTESTANT. A contestant is any individual, group, restaurant, etc., hereinafter referred to as a team, that will prepare and cook an entry or entries for the purpose of being judged according to FBA rules at an FBA sanctioned contest. Each team will be composed of a head cook and as many assistants as required. Each head cook is required to be a member in good standing of The Florida BBQ Association. The contest organizer of an FBA sanctioned contest may not cook in any category in that contest. No team shall enter more than one turn-in box per meat category in a contest. Neither a family member of a competing cook team, nor any cook team member of that cook team, may enter the judging area at any time during the contest. These rules apply to both Professional Division and Backyard Teams.

All contestants must have at least one representative of their team present at the Cook Teams' Meeting held on the evening prior to the contest. In the event this is not possible, the team shall contact the FBA Lead Rep at that contest and inform him/her of their absence. Only the Lead Rep, and no one else, can grant the request for absence. Cook teams absent from the meeting accept all responsibility for understanding these rules and any changes to them that may have occurred.

Turn-in boxes will be distributed to the teams at the meeting. Failure to pick up the turn-in boxes will deem the team ineligible to compete in the event unless prior arrangements have been made with only the Lead Rep.

Violation of these rules may result in disqualification from this contest.

2. INTERPRETATION OF RULES. The interpretation of the FBA rules and regulations are those of the FBA Lead Representative at the contest and his or her decisions are final. The FBA Lead Representative may not deviate from nor change any FBA rule for any contest for any reason.

3. EQUIPMENT. Each team will supply all of the equipment necessary for the preparation and cooking of their entry including a cooker, wood, charcoal, or wood pellets. No team may share a cooker or grill with any other team.

4. MEAT INSPECTION. All meats must be USDA inspected and passed. No pre-seasoning, injecting, marinating or cooking of any entry is permitted until after inspection by the FBA Representative or their designee. Pre-trimming is allowed. The head cook or his representative shall sign a form stating the meat is USDA approved. Meat inspection begins at noon on the day prior to the contest. All teams must have their meats inspected prior to the start of the Cook Teams' Meeting or they will be deemed ineligible to compete in the event. Any team arriving late must contact the Lead Rep prior to the Cook Teams' Meeting and request an alternate meat inspection. Only the Lead Rep, and no one else, can grant the request. All meat must be maintained at a maximum temperature of 40 degrees F prior to inspection. Prior to cooking, all meat that is resting in preparation for cooking must be covered at all times. All meats must

be cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 145 degrees F. After cooking, all meat must be maintained at a minimum temperature of 140 degrees Fahrenheit in a covered container until turned in for judging. If holding/carrying containers are heated, they only can be heated with the approved cooking media, no electrical or chemical heat source is allowed. All contest meat, once inspected, may not leave the cook team's site until turn in.

5. COOKING FUELS. The only approved cooking media are wood, charcoal, or wood pellets. Gas of any kind, or any electrical heating element, may be used only to start the initial fire or to start burn barrels, charcoal chimneys, etc. A gas starter, gas flame, or electrical heating element may not be used in the cooker after the meat has entered the cooker or during the cooking process. Gas bottles must be disconnected from the cooker once the fire has started and must be removed from the immediate cooking area. A gas flame, electrical heating element or chemical reaction may not be used in the cooker or holding/carrying device during any part of the cooking or holding process. Sauce, broth and or water can be heated with any heat source as long as it does not contain any of the meat categories during the heating process.

6. APPROVED COOKERS. Any wood, charcoal, or wood pellet fired cookers, homemade or commercially manufactured, will be allowed to be used in FBA contests. Electric or manual operated rotisseries or rotating shelves are permitted during the cooking process. Electric or manual operated wood, charcoal, or wood pellet augers are permitted during the cooking process. Electric or manually operated power draft devices are permitted during the cooking process. No electric, gas, wood, charcoal or wood pellet fryers are permitted during the cooking process. Frying with any form of fat, butter, or any type of oil is prohibited.

7. CONTESTANT'S SITE. Each team will be assigned a cook site. All equipment including cooker, canopy, trailer, etc. must be contained within this space. If additional space is required, the team should contact the Contest Organizer and make satisfactory arrangements.

8. BEHAVIOR. Every team, including members and guests, are expected and required to exhibit proper and courteous behavior at all times. A quiet time will be in effect from 11:00 pm on the night prior to the contest judging, remaining in effect until sunrise on the following day. No alcoholic beverages will be distributed to the general public. Teams will be informed of all local laws and will adhere to same. Failure to abide by these rules of behavior may result in expulsion from the contest and repeat offenders will be barred from competing in FBA sanctioned contests.

9. CLEANLINESS AND SANITATION. All teams are expected to maintain their cook sites in an orderly and clean manner and to use good sanitary practices during the preparation, cooking, and judging process. The use of sanitary gloves is required at all times while handling food. Failure to use sanitary gloves may result in disqualification. Teams are responsible for cleanup of their site once the competition has ended. All federal, state and local food safety rules and regulations must be adhered to at all times.

10. MEAT CATEGORIES. The following categories are sanctioned by the FBA:

a. Chicken: The team may cook chicken whole, halved, or individual pieces.

b. Pork Ribs: Loin back (baby back) or spare ribs only, meat on the bone. No country style ribs and no chopped, pulled, or sliced rib meat loose in the box.

c. Pork: Any part of the Whole Shoulder, Boston Butt or Picnic.

d. Beef Brisket: Packer trimmed, flats or points. Corned Beef and Pastrami are not allowed

11. TABLE COUNT. The amount of Judges and Tables needed is 7 Judges (1 Table) for every 6 Teams. If the number of teams is not divisible by 6 then the Team count will be rounded up to the next closest number that is divisible by 6. For example, if you had 45 Teams you would need to round up to 48 and then divide by 6 to get a total of 8 Tables of 6 Judges and 1 Table Captain. The amount of tables is determined by the total number of teams signed up by the Saturday **before** the contest with a maximum of six containers per table. The Lead Rep will not drop a table because of cook teams withdrawing from the contest during the week of the event. This is to be fair to the judges as many have made travel arrangements (time-off, lodging, child care, etc.)

12. JUDGING. FBA sanctioning allows for blind judging only. Entries will be submitted in an approved container with NO garnish or decorating of any kind. Only the entry to be judged is allowed in the container. Marking of any kind will disqualify the entry. Each entry will be judged on PRESENTATION, TASTE, and TENDERNESS. Meat may be sauced or un-sauced. A minimum of 8 portions must be submitted.

13. SCORING. Each entry will be scored by six (6) FBA certified judges in the areas of PRESENTATION, TASTE, and TENDERNESS. Scoring ranges from a low of 5.0 to a high of 10.0 in increments of .5 points for each category. Using a weighted average, the maximum score for a category is 200 points. In the event that a Judge enters a score of “5-Inedible” on their scorecard, the following procedure will be followed:

Multiple Low Scores:

- The Table Captain will speak with the Judges scoring “5-Inedible” and determine the reasons for their low scores.
- A contest Rep will be immediately notified concerning the low scores and the Judges’ reasons for the scores and no further action will be taken.

One Single Low Score:

- If this is a single sample with a score of “5-Inedible’, a contest Rep will be immediately notified concerning the low score and the Judge’s reason for the score.
- The Table Captain or Rep, at their discretion, may taste the low scoring sample for verification of the low score.
- If the entry is determined to indeed be inedible and deserving of a score of 5, the Lead Rep will be immediately summoned and apprised of the situation.
- The Lead Rep will ask the Judge to take another sample from the appropriate turn-in box for taste. This will help to determine if their sample was a single isolated sample that could have been contaminated from the time of turn-in to the time of sampling, or if there are other inedible samples in the box.

- If the new sample is deemed to rate a higher score, the Lead Rep will authorize the Judge to change their score. If the new sample is again scored inedible, the original score will stand and no further action will be taken.

- The Lead Rep will instruct that the original sample and any subsequent inedible samples be bagged and retained by the Lead Rep until after the situation has been resolved.

Any entry that is disqualified for being turned in after the designated time or not turned in shall receive a score of zero (0) for all three categories: appearance, taste, and tenderness. Any entry that is disqualified for any other reason shall receive a score of two (2) for all three categories from all six judges at that table.

14. DISQUALIFICATION. An entry can be disqualified by the FBA Lead Representative only. An entry can be disqualified for any of the following reasons:

a) There is evidence of marking or sculpting. Marking is defined as any handwritten or mechanically made mark inside or outside the turn-in box that identifies the submitting team to any judge. Sculpting is defined as the carving, decorating, forming, or shaping of a meat entry contained in a turn-in box that identifies the submitting team to any judge.

b) There is anything in the box besides the meat.

c) There is not a minimum of eight (8) portions.

d) There is evidence of blood such that the meat is uncooked.

e) The entry is turned in after the officially designated time.

f) Gloves are not used while handling food products.

g) Not cooking pork as a single piece of meat.

h) Not cooking the meat that was inspected.

i) All competition entry boxes must be placed on the turn in table with label up. Any box loaded upside down by the team may be submitted for judging. Teams are not permitted to modify the box in any way from its original configuration as provided by the contest Reps including moving the label. Upon inspection by the Reps, if the label has been moved to the opposite side (bottom)of the box, the team will be DQ'd for modifying the box and the Judges will be instructed to score a (2) in each category for that entry. If the label is on the correct lid and the box must be turned over to have the label showing, the only score affected will be presentation.

j) Posting pictures, videos, or description of a team's turn in boxes to social media or to a judge that is judging the contest before the awards ceremony.

15. JUDGING PROCEDURE. The table captain brings all the boxes to the table. He or she announces the number of the box to be judged, opens that box and checks for rules violations such as marking, insufficient number of samples, etc. All judges score this box for presentation. Each judge then takes a sample and scores this box for taste and tenderness. Forks may be used to remove the sample from the box to prevent contamination of the entry. The use of eating utensils to eat the sample is not allowed. The table captain makes sure that all scores for that box are recorded before moving on

to the next box. This procedure is repeated for boxes 2 through 6. After all the boxes have been scored, the table captain will return the boxes to a designated area. The table captain will then collect the judging slips and turn them over to the FBA representative.

16. WINNERS. The winners in each meat category will be determined by adding all the scores together and the team with the most points will be 1st place, the team with the next highest total will be 2nd place, etc. The Grand Champion will be the team with the most total points, and the Reserve Champion will be the team with the second highest total points. To qualify for either Grand Champion or Reserve Champion, a team must submit entries in all four sanctioned categories. Ties in any meat category, Grand or Reserve Champion are allowed. In the event of a tie in a meat category, the next lowest rank will be omitted and the tied teams will be awarded the same rank. In the event of tie for Grand Champion, the tied teams will be declared Grand Champions and there will be no Reserve Champion. In the event of a tie for Reserve Champion, the tied teams will be declared Reserve Champions. Any prize money for the tied rank and the next lowest rank will be combined and distributed evenly amongst the tied teams. For example, a two-way tie for 1st place in brisket with a $500 prize for 1st place and $400 prize for 2nd place would result in the two teams sharing 1st place and $900. There would be no 2nd place award. The results of an FBA sanctioned contest are considered to be certified at midnight local time after the completion of the contest.

17. TURN-IN TIMES. Each meat category turn in time will allow for a 10-minute window, that is 5 minutes before and 5 minutes after the time as suggested below:

a. Chicken: 11:00AM

b. Pork Ribs: 12:00PM

c. Pork: 1:00PM

d. Brisket: 2:00PM

18. HEAD COOKS. A cook team may designate, with the Secretary of the FBA, two different individuals to be “head cooks”. Such designation must be made prior to the beginning of a new cook season, which shall be designated as the first sanctioned contest following the first day of January in the given year. Once two cooks have been designated as “head cooks” for that team, they may not be named “head cooks” for any other team.

19. MULTIPLE TEAMS. No team shall be permitted to cook at the same contest as two separate teams using the same team’s name. Teams will be able to cook at different contests on the same date under the same name.

However, the team must designate in advance, to the FBA Secretary, the contest for which they will receive TOTY points, and if applicable, designations to the American Royal, Jack Daniels Invitational, etc.