ETHICS IN BEER JUDGING

DON BLAKE & SANDY COCKERHAM
OVERVIEW

- Ethics
- Who are we?
- BJCP Purpose
- Fundamental ethics / competitions
- New concerns with technology
- Exams
- Scenarios / Open discussion
- Wrap Up
ETHICS – BIG PICTURE

• Code of conduct (right vs wrong)
• Specific to group of people
• Based on values
WHO ARE WE?

- Enthusiastic beer, mead and cider aficionados
- Mostly active homebrewers
- Developed our palates
- Learned new ways to describe things
WHO ARE WE?

• Demonstrated abilities
• Dedicated to furthering knowledge
  • Styles
  • Technical
  • Descriptive
• While volunteers, we’re “professionals”
PURPOSE OF THE BJCP

• Promote beer Literacy
• Promote appreciation of real beer
• Recognize beer tasting and evaluation skills
PURPOSE OF THE BJCP

• Encourage knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of the world's diverse beer, mead, and cider styles

• Promote, recognize, and advance beer, mead, and cider tasting, evaluation, and communication skills

• Develop standardized tools, methods, and processes for the structured evaluation, ranking and feedback of beer, mead, and cider.
PURPOSE OF THE BJCP

- Encourage knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of the world's diverse beer, mead, and cider styles.
- Promote, recognize, and advance beer, mead, and cider tasting, evaluation, and communication skills.
- Develop standardized tools, methods, and processes for the structured evaluation, ranking and feedback of beer, mead, and cider.
BJCP VALUES

• Understanding of beer, mead and cider styles
• Ability to articulate your perceptions and communicate them descriptively
• Honest, thorough evaluations
• Technical understanding of the brewing process
• Humility & Professionalism
FUNDAMENTAL ETHICS IN BEER JUDGING

• Be polite and positive
• Don’t judge / steward a category you have entered
• If you feel you can’t provide an unbiased assessment, ask to be moved
• Write scoresheets that you would want to receive
DURING JUDGING

- Be positive
- Be respectful
- Provide a complete assessment of the beer
- Provide constructive feedback on how to improve the beer
- Enjoy the camaraderie
MINI BEST OF SHOW / BEST OF SHOW JUDGING

• Don’t be a spectator if you think you have an entry on the table
• Avoid championing a beer because it was in your flight
• Wait to share results on social media
COMPETITION RESULTS

• Our job is to judge beer; let the competition organizers announce the results

• Pro-Am selections are rarely finalized on the day of the competition
TECHNOLOGY

• Legacy
  • Email
  • BJCP forum

• Current
  • Facebook
  • Twitter
  • Google+
  • Text messages

Ability to communicate instantly
Reduced traffic recently, but activity continues
No issues with spamming due to nature of access
BJCP FACEBOOK PAGE

- Relatively new venue for BJCP communication
- Growing considerably (600 last year > 2000 now; 3-4 new people/day)
- Excellent way to stay abreast of current happenings
SOCIAL MEDIA

Ground rules

• No Profanity
• Play nice or don’t play at all
• Obliterate any personal information on anything you decide to post
• Posts must in some way be related to the BJCP, events, or judging – please don’t spam the group
SOCIAL MEDIA

Competition specific

• Don’t post information about what you might be judging

• Don’t comment about a beer that you’re judging, especially if it’s not a good one

• Don’t announce category / competition winners until the organizers have done so
SOCIAL MEDIA

Exam Specific

• “Protect the exam”
• Don’t publicize exam beers
• Graders – don’t let people know what exam you’re grading (until results are published)
• Examinees – have patience with the exam grading process
SCENARIOS

Ivan Abeer

Judging Spice Herb & Veg at the homebrew competition tomorrow

Sweet! Look out for the cucumber gose, it's tasty
Enduring the worst American Brown I've ever tasted

SCENARIOS
WRAP-UP

• Be professional
• Provide thorough, descriptive feedback when judging
• Be courteous and thoughtful when communicating via social media