
2026 WORLD CUP TASTERS CHAMPIONSHIP

Official Rules and Regulations



**WORLD
CUP TASTERS**
CHAMPIONSHIP™



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1. Conditions of Participation

1.1 Organization

The World Cup Tasters Championship (WCTC) is a program of World Coffee Events, LTD (WCE). WCE is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Specialty Coffee Association (SCA).

1.2 Rights

All intellectual property related to the World Cup Tasters Championship, including these Official Rules and Regulations and the format of the competition, are the property of World Coffee Events, LTD. No part of this document may be used or reproduced without the expressed permission of World Coffee Events, LTD.

1.3 Conditions of Participation

1.3.1 Competition Body Qualifications

The World Cup Tasters Championship (WCTC) is a competition open to qualified Competition Body Champions of a World Coffee Events (WCE) sanctioned competition event. Sanctioned events are put on by WCE Licensed Competition Bodies. Every competition year, 1 competitor from each WCE Licensed Competition Body may participate. To learn more about how to become a WCE Licensed Competition Body please see: <https://wcc.coffee/competition-bodies>.

In any given year, coordinators or individuals who are involved in the management of their Competition Body Competition should not compete. A year is considered to begin from the time the Competition Body starts planning their event.

1.3.2 Competition Body Champions and Substitutions

- A. A Competition Body Champion is defined as the competitor who wins their Competition Body Championship. This competitor has won the right to compete in that year's World Championship, or to defer candidacy to the following year. A competitor may defer candidacy to the following year, only if they have an eligible reason for doing so (see Deferred Candidacy (DC) Policy found here: <https://wcc.coffee/rules-regulations#deferred-candidacy>).
- B. If a Competition Body Champion successfully applies for Deferred Candidacy, they retain their title as Competition Body Champion and may compete in the World Championships the following year. Once the Competition Body Champion has deferred their candidacy, the licensed Competition Body may designate an alternate competitor from its competition in descending order of succession, beginning with its second-place finisher. In this case, the competitor who goes to the World Championships will hold the title of Competition Body

Competitor. Competition Body Competitors are not eligible for Deferred Candidacy, and do not hold the title of Competition Body Champion. However, all Competition Body Competitors will be eligible to represent their coffee community by participating in the World Coffee Championships, including being eligible to win the title of World Coffee Champion.

- C. If a Competition Body Champion is not eligible for deferral, and elects not to go to the World Championships, the Competition Body may send a substitute competitor.
- D. With the exception of Deferred Candidacy applicants, all Competition Body Champions who do not compete in the worlds, for any reason, are required to give the WCC team notice themselves, via info@wcc.coffee to ensure clarity. Deferred Candidacy applicants are welcome to notify the WCC team of their intent to defer, without sharing any relevant details, as it can help ensure a substitute Competition Body Competitor with enough time to participate, but it is not required. Requests for any substitutions (Competition Body Representative Competitor) must be also received in writing from the Competition Body at info@wcc.coffee and approved by its Managing Director prior to competition.

1.3.3 Age requirement

Competitors must be at least 18 years of age at the time of competing in any World Coffee Events (WCE) sanctioned event.

1.3.4 Nationality

- A. Competitors must hold a valid passport from the place they represent or documentation substantiating 24 months of residency, employment or scholastic enrolment, some portion of which must have been within 12 months preceding the qualifying Competition Body competition.
- B. Competitors may only participate for one sanctioned Competition Body per WCE Competition year. A competition year is relative to the World Championships for which an event is qualifying a competitor to compete (e.g., if the competitor is competing in any CB event that would qualify them for a 2020 World Championship, they must compete for that CB exclusively in any event that is a qualifier for any 2020 World Coffee Championship).

1.3.5 Multiple Passports

In case of multiple passports, the contestant must choose 1 Competition Body and qualify through this respective sanctioned Competition Body championship.

1.3.6 Expenses

Licensed Competition Bodies are required to pay their Competition Body Champion's reasonable travel and accommodations expenses to, from, and for the duration of the WCTC. All other expenses not explicitly listed above are the sole responsibility of the competitor. WCE shall not be liable for any competitor expenses under any circumstance.



1.4 Conflicts of Interest

Any potential conflicts of interest are to be declared at the soonest opportunity, certainly prior to the commencement of any competition by competitor, judge and/or event organizer.

Failure to declare a potential conflict in advance of a sanctioned event could result in disqualification from events for an individual, or WCE removing endorsement for an event and its results that do not follow these guidelines. Questions regarding conflicts of interest, or clarification of the above policy should be directed to info@wcc.coffee.

1.5 Enforcement of Rules and Regulations

The WCTC will employ these Rules & Regulations throughout the competition. If a competitor violates one or more of these Rules & Regulations, they may be automatically disqualified from the competition, except when the Rules designate a specific enforcement or consequence. 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 “Appeals at the World Cup Tasters Championship” or “Appeals at a Competition Body Event” sections.

1.5.1 Health & Safety Clause

All Rules and Regulations are subject to change based on local and venue health and safety requirements or guidelines. World Coffee Events 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 Form

Competitors must complete the WCTC Competitor Registration Form which will be sent to Competition Body Champions directly via email no less than 6 weeks prior to the WCTC Event. This form includes a space to upload a scanned copy of the required valid passport or other accepted credentials (as described in the “Nationality” section). Approved Competition Body Champions will receive confirmation by email in approximately 2 weeks after receipt of all required registration documentation. [For any queries about competitor registration, these can be submitted to info@wcc.coffee](#)



1.6.2 Late Competition Body Championship Registration

Competition Body Champions from competitions conducted less than 6 weeks prior to the WCTC Event must submit all registration materials no more than 5 days after their Competition Body event. Failure to meet these criteria may result in denial of participation.

1.6.3 Competitor Questions

All competitors are personally responsible for reading and understanding current WCTC Rules & Regulations and score sheets, without exception. All WCTC documents are available at <https://wcc.coffee/rules-regulations>. Competitors are encouraged to ask questions prior to arriving at the WCTC. If any competitor is unclear as to the intent of any of the rules and regulations it is their responsibility to clarify that position with the Rules and Regulations Committee prior to the WCTC by contacting compinfo@wcc.coffee. Competitors will also have the opportunity to ask questions during the official Competitors Meeting held prior to the start of the competition.

1.6.4 Terms & Conditions

Competitors and the World Cup Tasters Champion are visible spokespeople of the World Cup Tasters Championship event and role models of the specialty coffee industry, and as such must:

- A. Permit World Coffee Events Ltd., its stakeholders, agents, and representatives to use the competitor's name, image or likeness in any format without charge for any business purpose, including but not limited to marketing promotion.
- B. Read and abide by the Competitor Code of Conduct document found on the [WCC website](#).
- C. Read and abide by the Champion Code of Conduct document found on the [WCC website](#).

2. Competition Summary

- A. The competition is organized as 8 triangular tests. In each triangular test, three cups of coffee are set up, two of which are identical, and one is unique. The aim of the competition is for the participants to use their gustatory and olfactory sense to identify the odd cup out of the three. Note that the competitors are tested on their ability to distinguish different coffees, not to identify their quality, process, origin, etc.
- B. During the competition, 8 triangular tests are placed before each competitor. The coffees selected for all 8 tests will be the same for all cuppers.
- C. Each competitor will be given 8 minutes to assess the 8 triangulations.
- D. The winner of each round is the competitor who correctly identifies the highest number of odd cups. In the event of a tie (i.e., 2 or more competitors share the highest number of correctly identified triangulations), the competitor who completed the triangulations in the shortest amount of time will be declared the winner.

- E. The competition will consist of 3 competition rounds: round one, semi-finals (8 competitors), and finals (4 competitors), with the top scoring competitors continuing to the following round. A quarter finals round may be included between round one and the semi-finals round at the discretion of the event organizers.

3. Competition Procedure

- A. Each competitor should stand clear of the table prior to the start of competing.
- B. 8 sets of triangulations will be placed in front of each competitor at the same time. The sets must be identical across all competitors, but the position of the cups within each set will be randomized for each competitor.
- C. The timekeeper and/or Master of Ceremonies will signal when competitors may begin triangulating. All competitors within each set will begin at the same time. The round is over when all competitors have stepped back from the table and signaled that they are finished by raising their hand and calling "time" or after a maximum of 8 minutes, whichever occurs first.
- D. Competitors must taste at least 2 of the 3 cups to determine the odd one out.
- E. Competitors must identify the odd cup by pushing it over the line into a separate box from the other cups in the triangulation so that it is completely clear of its previous position.
- F. When cups are selected, they should be pushed across the table. If competitors lift a cup off the table, it is determined to be their final selection and must be moved across the line into the separate box. Once the cup has been pushed over the line, the cup must not be moved again.
- G. Only the competitor's water container may rest on the competition table.
- H. Competitors spit cup must be held by competitors. There will be a bucket beneath the table should the competitor need to dump the contents of their spit cup.
- I. The WCTC reserves the right to schedule more than 1 competition round in a single day (e.g., quarter finals, semi-finals and finals may be held all on the same day).
- J. The competitor's scores from each round will not carry over to the next round.
- K. The emcee will direct the competitors to lift their selected cups. No other cups can be lifted on stage apart from the ones selected.
- L. Running order for the competition will be drawn randomly for each round.
- M. At the conclusion of the semi-finals round there will be a ceremony where finalists are announced, and all competitors will be acknowledged. All competitors are required to attend this ceremony.
- N. After the final round there will be a brief awards ceremony where finalists will receive their awards.

3.1 Competition Area

- A. The WCTC stations will be built to these approximate specifications: Length 2.0m, Width 0.8m, Height 1.0m.
- B. The competition space will consist of a stage with 4 competition tables numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4.
- C. At no time is a competitor permitted to access the back of the stage or coffee preparation space. Any competitor found breaching this rule can be disqualified at the discretion of the event organizers.

3.2 Competition Coffee Details

- A. All coffees should be roasted no longer than 14 days prior to the date of the competition. Coffees should be medium to light roasted to the same degree and ground identically.
- B. Coffee will be prepared in a drip filter batch brewer machine of a quality appropriate for the needs of the competition. The brewing temperature will be between 92-96 degrees Celsius (197.6-204.8 degrees Fahrenheit). The brewing cycle should be around 4-6 minutes, and the temperature of the finished brew will be between 80-85 degrees Celsius (176.0-185.0 degrees Fahrenheit) and stored in a suitable container. The coffee will be prepared with a coffee to water ratio of around 50-60 grams per liter. The drip brewer shall use standard tap water, provided it is of good quality without any detectable taints. The WCTC event organizer will decide if it is necessary to use filter or purified water instead of tap water.
- C. Cups used for the triangulations must be between 125-250ml (4.25-8.5 fl. oz.). The volume of coffee in each cup must be between 75-150ml (2.5-5.0 fl. oz.).

3.3 Competition Supplies

- A. Competitors must use the sponsored supplies provided. Sponsor supplies can include, but are not limited to, spit cup and/or water container.
- B. Competitors must bring their own spoon for tasting the coffees. Competitors are allowed to bring their own water container and/or spit cup (1 container each, no larger size than 1L), if no sponsored supplies are provided by WCTC.
- C. If competitors bring their own spit cups and water containers that contain logos, they must be approved by WCTC in advance of competition.

4. Competitor Instructions Prior to Competition Time

4.1 Competitors Orientation Meeting

Prior to the start of the WCTC a competitor's orientation meeting will take place. This meeting is mandatory for all competitors. During this meeting, the WCTC stage manager will make announcements, explain the

competition flow, and discuss the competition schedule. This will be an opportunity for competitors to ask questions to the WCTC event manager.

4.2 Be on Time

Competitors should be in the stage area a minimum of 30 minutes before their competition round. Any competitor who is not onsite at the start of their competition round may be disqualified.

5. Competition Time

5.1 Introduction by the Master of Ceremonies

Before the 8-minute competition time has started and the cups are ready, the Master of Ceremonies will introduce the competitor.

5.2 Interpreter

Competitors may bring their own interpreter. When speaking to the competitor the interpreter is only allowed to translate what the emcee has said. When a competitor speaks, the interpreter is only allowed to translate exactly what the competitor has said. It is the competitor and coach's responsibility to read the Interpreters Best Practice document that is available from worldcuptasters.org.

5.3 Prior to Competition Time

All competitors must stand a minimum of 1 meter behind the competition table and not approach the table until their time has started.

5.4 Begin Competition Time

The master of ceremonies will ask the competitors if the competitors are ready to begin. The designated competition timekeeper will begin a stopwatch the moment the master of ceremonies calls to start. Tracking time elapsed during the 8-minute competition time is the responsibility of the competitor, though they may ask for a time check at any point. The competition timekeeper will give the competitor a 4-minute, 3-minute, 2-minute, 1-minute, and 30-second warnings during the 8 minutes of competition time. The timekeeper is required to give these warnings as they occur.

5.5 End Competition Time

Competition time will be stopped when the competitor raises their hand and says "time". It is the competitor responsibility to call "time" clearly to allow the time to be recorded accurately. Only the time recorded by the official timekeeper and/or head judge will be used for scoring purposes. The maximum timeframe for the competition is 8 minutes.

5.6 Coaching

Instructions or 'coaching' may not be provided to a competitor during any time on stage under penalty of disqualification. WCC encourages audience participation and enthusiastic fan support that does not interfere with the competition. Coaches, supporters, friends, or family members are not allowed on stage or to interfere with the competition while it is in progress, otherwise the competitor is subject to disqualification by the stage manager or presiding head judge.

6. Scorekeeping

6.1 WCTC Official Scorekeeping

The WCTC official scorekeepers are responsible for keeping all scores. Scores are also recorded on a whiteboard on stage or on a live screen.

6.2 Tied Scores

If the tied competitors have the same number of correct triangulations, the competitor who completed their triangulations in the shortest time will be declared the winner. In the case where 2 or more competitors have achieved a tied score in the same amount of time, they will be ranked in the same position.

6.3 Scorecard

Recorded scores for WCTC may be tracked on a whiteboard or on a live screen on stage.

7. Appeals at the World Cup Tasters Championship

This section applies to WCC only, see the section "Appeals at Competition Body Events" below for information on the appeal process at Competition Body events.

7.1 Issues at the World Coffee Championships

If a competitor has an issue regarding the WCTC during the competition (e.g. scheduling, logistics, etc.), the competitor should contact the WCC staff onsite. The WCC staff will make every effort to resolve the issue on-site at the WCTC. The WCC staff will contact all involved parties. The competitor's issue will be discussed, and a decision will be made jointly, on-site by the WCC staff team and WCC JOL. The WCC staff will inform the competitor of the decision.

7.2 Appeals at the World Coffee Championships

If a person does not agree with a decision, they may appeal the decision in writing. All persons must submit their written complaint or appeal through the complaint form available on the website at

<https://wcc.coffee/rules-regulations> within 24 hours of the incident. The complaint will be received by the WCC team and will be evaluated.

The appeal letter must include the following:

- Name
- Date
- A clear and concise statement of the complaint
- Date and time references (if applicable)
- Comments and suggested solution
- Party/Parties involved
- Contact information

Any written protests/appeals omitting this information will not be considered. Active competition appeals that are discussed in public commentary before a final decision is made will be dismissed.

7.3 Appeals Reviewed by the Competition Strategic Committee at the World Coffee Championships

The WCC Staff will review written complaints or appeals and endeavor to respond as soon as possible. Please note that the final resolution will be delivered within 30 days of receipt. The person will be contacted in writing via email with conclusive decisions. All appeal decisions are final.

8. Competition Body Events

8.1 Highlighting Rule Variations for Competition Bodies

Competition Bodies may alter the following parts of their competition:

- Compliance with Local Laws/Regulations:** Competition Bodies may adjust their national rules when required to comply with local laws and/or regulations. Any proposed changes must be sent to info@wcc.coffee for approval in advance of the event.
- **Rules and Regulations Translation:** Competition Bodies may offer a translation of this document. However, to resolve any disputes, the official World Brewers Cup Rules and Regulations will be used. Competition Bodies cannot modify rules related to judging and evaluation.
- **Rounds/Competition Procedure:** Competition Bodies may vary the number of rounds within the Championship. The number of rounds and the number of competitors per round can vary (e.g., a Competition Body can eliminate semi-finals or hold only one round of competition, depending on competitor numbers and event logistics.)
- **Competitor Minimum:** Competition Bodies Championships must have a minimum of 6 competitors for their final and WCE Sanctioned event. If the minimum of 6 competitors is not reached,



Competition Bodies must contact their Regional Community Director at least 2 weeks before the scheduled competition.

- **Qualifying Rounds:** Competition Bodies may hold qualifying or preliminary competitions ahead of their Championship. The structure of qualifying competitions is up to the Competition Body and may have slight format variations. Structure cannot be modified for the Championship but may only be modified for qualifying or preliminary competitions which lead up to the Championship event. WCC Reps are not required for Qualifying/Preliminary Events nor for the Championship event, as long as the Competition Bodies are actively involved in the preparation of the event per rules and regulations.
- **Provided Equipment:** Competition Bodies are not required to use the same sponsored equipment. If an equipment sponsor is acquired by a Competition Body, the Competition Body may independently specify their equipment requirements. In a national championship the use of disposable cups is acceptable.
- **Competitor Orientation:** All competitors should get the same information in advance of the competition. All competitors should be informed of what equipment will be used, the competition schedule, etc.

8.2 Appeals at Competition Body Events

If a competitor has an issue or protest to make regarding their CB Championship during the event, the first step should be to contact the event organizer and/or WCC Representative on site. 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.

If the event organizer decides the issue and/or protest can be solved on-site, the event organizer will contact the involved party/parties to ensure fair representation. The competitor's issue and/or protest will be discussed, and a decision will be made jointly, on-site by the event organizer and the designated onsite WCC Representative. The CB event organizer and/or WCC Rep will inform the competitor of the decision.

If the competitor wishes to appeal the decision, they should utilize the complaint form available on the website at <https://wcc.coffee/rules-regulations> within 24 hours of the incident. The complaint will be sent directly to the CB and the WCC Rep indicated in the submission. If the appeal is logistics-related, the CB is fully responsible for the investigation and any arbitration, if applicable. The WCC Rep must participate in this process by consulting on the appeal. If the appeal is judge or rules related, the WCC Rep will investigate the issue and provide a suggested arbitration to the CB. The CB is always responsible for responding to the complaint in written form and is considered the primary contact for complaints at CB events.

The CB and WCC Rep must report all written appeals to the WCC staff within 24 hours of receipt. However, WCC staff does not directly certify or manage Competition Body judges or volunteers and so cannot

arbitrate their actions. Appeals from CB events may take additional time to address; the person submitting the appeal should expect to see a resolution within 30 days.