



# VPSI Culinary Judge Orientation

2026

# Today's Goals

- Align scoring across all judges
- Ensure consistency and fairness
- Review expectations, penalties, and procedures

*You are evaluating **students demonstrating professional culinary competencies** — not restaurant service.*

# Your Role as a Judge

You are here to:

- ✓ Observe
- ✓ Evaluate based on the score sheet
- ✓ Provide constructive written feedback
- ✓ Identify rule violations

You are **not**:

- ✗ Coaching
- ✗ Teaching during competition
- ✗ Adjusting scores for other judges
- ✗ Collaborating on scores
- ✗ Applying penalty math

*All scoring decisions are final.*

# Competition Structure Overview

Culinary teams are scored in **8 areas**:

- Product Check-In (5)
- Work Skills & Organization (15)
- Team Presentation & Knife Skills (10)
- Safety & Sanitation (15)
- Starter – Taste & Appearance (15)
- Entrée – Taste & Appearance (20)
- Dessert – Taste & Appearance (15)
- Menu & Recipe Presentation (5)

**Total: 100 points**



# CATEGORY SLIDES

Assignments noted



**VIRGINIA**  
**ProStart**  
National Restaurant Association  
Educational Foundation



# Team Ambassadors

You are the **official timekeeper and escort** for one team.  
Your accuracy directly affects scoring.

## Your Core Responsibilities (Before Competition)

- Meet team **15 minutes before report time**
- Record **actual arrival time**
- Start timing at **official report time** (even if they're late)
- Keep team together and move them quickly
- Ensure they pick up:
  - Speed rack
  - Buckets (red & green solutions)
- Keep team **in prep area** while waiting
- Teams may organize equipment **ONLY** — no prep



# Team Ambassadors

## Competition Time Segments You Control

Segment	Time
Team & Menu Intro	5 min
Mise en Place	20 min
Production	60 min
Critiques & Clean-up	55 min
Dishwashing	15 min

## You Must:

- Announce start & end of segments
- Track all times to **the second**
- Record early or late finishes
- Confirm official end time with Lead Judge
- You will set up tray jackets (10 minutes before cooking segment ends)

Ambassadors: Badgley, Conway, McCarthy, Reichert,  
Moir, Ivey, Messer, Long

**\*\*one per station\*\***



# Team Ambassadors

## Production Time Calls

- Give time updates:
- Every **10 min** (first 40 min)
- Every **5 min** (next 10 min)
- Every **1 min** (next 9 min)
- Every **10 sec** (final minute)
- Whenever team requests
- A team is done when:
  - ✓ Plates are on trays
  - ✓ All hands are raised
- **Record actual end time** — do NOT stop clock if they go over.



# Team Ambassadors

## Movement & Supervision

You escort teams:

- To BOH hallway (water/produce washing during MEP)
- To tasting room (plate presentation)
- Back to station for clean-up
- To dishwashing (2 students only)
- Sanitation Critique (at station)
- Menu Critique
- Tasting Critique
- To dismissal
- Teams **may not speak** to anyone outside their team during competition time.

# Product Check-In:

## *What you are Evaluating*

### **Product Check-In is about:**

- Food safety at the moment of arrival
- Proper storage and temperature control
- Correct ingredients, quantities, and labeling
- Compliance with competition rules
- Professionalism in check-in process

*Judges are assessing **readiness and rule adherence**, not culinary skill yet.*

# What “Excellent” Looks Like

A top-scoring team:

- All proteins at **safe temps** ( $\leq 41^{\circ}\text{F}$  cold,  $\geq 135^{\circ}\text{F}$  hot)
- Properly stored: raw below ready-to-eat
- Clearly labeled, organized, and easy to inspect
- No prohibited ingredients
- Students confidently explain products when asked

Thursday Judges: Chefs Shimanek, Brinson, Yanisko

Friday Judges: Chefs Long, Minton, Yanisko



# Work Skills & Organization

## *What you are Evaluating*

### **WSO is about:**

- Teamwork, communication, professionalism
- Proper Mise en Place, time management, even workload
- Workstation organization
- Flow of production
- Proper cooking procedures: 2 cooking techniques, proper amount of product for recipes, proper pans/tools
- Degree of difficulty- prep of items used (versus commercial products), creativity, complicated techniques

*This is about **kitchen professionalism**. Score based on **efficiency, teamwork, and control**.*

# What “Excellent” Looks Like

A top-scoring team:

- Clearly defined roles
- Minimal verbal chaos — calm communication
- Logical workflow (no traffic jams)
- Tools returned to place
- No wasted motion

Reminder- loudness does not equate leadership

Judges: Chefs Brown, McClean, Kostka, Fox



# Team Presentation & Knife Skills

## *What you are Evaluating*

**TPKS is about:**

- Professional appearance (uniform compliance)
- Knife technique and safety
- Proper cuts and consistency
- Confidence and control

# What “Excellent” Looks Like

A top-scoring team:

- Proper grip and guiding hand
- Uniform knife cuts for the application
- Stable cutting boards
- Clean, controlled movements
- Proper chef attire throughout
- Knife cut selections included on presentation menu and displayed correctly

This is not about speed — it’s about:

- ✓ Technique
- ✓ Safety
- ✓ Precision

Sloppy cuts = score impact.




Judges: Chefs Fickes, Schuler, Price, Estrada



# Safety & Sanitation

## *What you are Evaluating*

### **S&S is about:**

- Handwashing
  - Glove use
  - Avoiding cross-contamination
  - Proper food handling
  - Surface sanitation
- If you see:
    -  Cross contamination
    -  Unsafe handling
    -  Poor hygiene
  - Scores **must** reflect that. Safety is non-negotiable.

*This is one of the **most critical categories***



# What “Excellent” Looks Like

A top-scoring team:

- Washes hands without prompting
- Changes gloves appropriately
- Sanitizer buckets in use correctly
- Thermometers used properly
- No bare-hand contact with RTE foods

Judges (ONE PER STATION): Neal, Miller,  
Shimanek, Fickes, Denny, Dallinger,  
McLaren, Lawrence



# Product Taste & Appearance

## *What you are Evaluating*

### **Taste**

- Flavor balance
- Proper seasoning
- Texture
- Correct doneness

### **Appearance**

- Plate composition
- Color contrast
- Portion consistency
- Clean plating

# What “Excellent” Looks Like

## Top dishes:

- Balanced seasoning (not just salty)
- Proper cooking temperatures
- Sauce consistency appropriate
- Intentional plating
- Visual appeal that matches concept

Judges: Chefs Yanisko, Minton, Brinson, Ghio, Edwards, Siebold, Wood

## Judge Bias Check

- Do not score based on:
  - ✗ Personal food preferences
  - ✗ Cuisine familiarity
  - ✗ “I don’t like mushrooms”

Score based on **execution**, not preference.

# Menu & Recipe Presentation

## *What you are Evaluating*

### **MRP is about:**

- Professional formatting
- Accuracy of recipes
- Culinary terminology
- Organization
- Alignment with plated food

Content > aesthetics.

# What “Excellent” Looks Like

- Typed, clean, professional
- Proper culinary language
- Logical recipe flow
- Measurements correct
- Menu descriptions accurate
- Recipe costing (correct math), within cost guidelines
- Sources listed properly

Judges: Chefs Groah, Shiflet, Hume,  
Fitzgerald



# Penalties – Judge Responsibility

- Mark violations on score sheet
- Event staff apply deductions
- Write factual comments
  - Be factual, not emotional
  - State what happened
  - If it isn't written, it didn't happen

# Objectivity Reminder

- Comments are REQUIRED- explain *why* points were lost.
- Consistency matters: apply the same standards to every team.

*This is educational AND competitive*



# Thank You Judges

Your expertise supports student growth  
Fair judging ensures competition  
integrity

