

For the 2026 season, a Backyard team shall be defined as any team that qualified as a Backyard team prior to 2026 and any new team to KCBS sanctioned events.

Backyard teams, and Backyard teams only, may participate in any KCBS Backyard competition, regardless of past or future participation in Masters Series competitions, Grand Champion or Reserve Champion statuses, or in any number of Masters Series competitions entered in the current year. Backyard teams will only earn TOY points in Backyard events and KCBS-approved Open format Master Series events, in accordance with current KCBS Team of the Year rules.

Note: Restrictions on Masters (Pro) teams remain unchanged, and Masters teams must still comply with existing eligibility rules for Master Series competitions. Individuals with extenuating circumstances may appeal to the KCBS Sanctioning Committee or their designee for reconsideration, with requests submitted in writing within 90 days of the competition in question.

### Rules and Regulations

- 1) The decision and interpretations of the KCBS Rules and Regulations are at the discretion of the KCBS Contest Representatives at the contest. Their decisions and interpretations are final to the extent consistent with the rules.
- 2) A chief cook and/or an officially registered, current KCBS member assistant chief cook must be present to be awarded Team of the Year points. A team shall not compete in more than one KCBS sanctioned contest under the same team's name, on the same date. Chief cooks and/or assistant cooks may only cook for their designated team at the contest they are attending. The only exception to this rule is participation in one-meat competitions held in conjunction with a Master or Backyard competition.
- 3) Each team will be assigned a cooking space. Pits, cookers, props, trailers, motor homes, vehicles, tents or any other equipment (including generators) shall not exceed the boundaries of the team's assigned cooking space. All seasoning and cooking of product shall be done within the assigned cooking space. Teams shall not share an assigned cooking space or cooking device.
- 4) Contestants shall provide all needed equipment, supplies, and electricity, except as arranged for in advance. Contestants must adhere to all electrical, fire, and other codes.
- 5) It is the responsibility of the contestant to see that the team's assigned cooking space is clean and orderly following the contest. All fires must be put out, pits filled (if allowed by contest organizer), and all equipment removed from site. It is imperative that clean-up be thorough. Any team's assigned cooking space left in disarray or with loose trash, other than at trash

- containers, may disqualify the team from future participation at KCBS sanctioned events.
- 6) Fires shall be of wood, wood pellets, or charcoal. Gas and electric heat sources shall not be permitted for cooking or holding. Propane or electric is permitted as fire starters, provided that the competition meat is not in/on the cooking device. Electrical accessories such as spits, augers, or forced draft are permitted. No open pits or holes are permitted, except at the election of the contest organizer. Fires shall not be built on the ground.
  - 7) All competition meats shall be inspected by the KCBS-Approved Meat Inspector during the times established by the contest organizer but not prior to the day before judging. Once the competition meat has been inspected, it shall not leave the contest site. Cooking shall not begin until the competition meat has been inspected by the Official Meat Inspector. All competition meat shall start out raw. No pre-seasoned meat is allowed other than manufacturer enhanced or injected products, as shown on label EXCLUDING but not limited to teriyaki, lemon pepper or butter injected. When the contest organizer supplies the meat, the contestant is not required to enter only that meat. Competition meat not meeting these qualifications shall be disqualified, not allowed to be turned in, and not judged, and receives no score.
  - 8) Barbeque for the purposes of the KCBS Rules is cooking the two KCBS Meat Categories 10) below on a device defined in 6) above. Parboiling, Sous-vide, and/or deep-frying competition meat is not allowed. If any of the banned processes are discovered before the team turns in, the team will receive zeros. If discovered after turn-in, the team will receive (1) ones in all criteria for that entry.
  - 9) Meat shall not be sculptured, branded or presented in a way to make it identifiable. Rosettes of meat slices are not allowed. Violations of this rule will be scored a one (1) on all criteria by all six judges.
  - 10) The Two KCBS Meat Categories:  
CHICKEN: Chicken includes Cornish Game Hen and Kosher Chicken. PORK RIBS: Ribs shall include the bone. Country style ribs are prohibited.  
An Overall Backyard competition Champion and Reserve Champion shall be acknowledged at each competition. Additional categories are allowed but do not count towards Reserve Grand Champion or Grand Champion.
  - 11) Judging typically starts at Noon on Saturday. The two (2) KCBS categories will be judged in the following order:  
CHICKEN: NOON PORK RIBS: 12:30 pm  
Any modified time or change in category order must be published in the cooks' packet 30 days in advance of the contest and be confirmed at the cooks meeting. Turn-in times must be 30 minutes apart. If the order the categories that will be judged is changed or the 30-minute period between categories is different, it must be approved by the KCBS office in advance. An entry will be judged only at the time established by the contest organizer. The allowable turn-in time will be five (5)

- minutes before to five (5) minutes after the posted time with no tolerance. A late turn-in will not be accepted by a Rep and will receive a 0 (zero) in all criteria.
- 12) Garnish is optional, if used, once determined to be legal, garnish plays no further role in the appearance score. When used, garnish is limited to chopped, sliced, shredded or whole leaves of fresh green lettuce, curly parsley, flat leaf parsley, curly green kale and/or cilantro. PROHIBITED GARNISHES ARE lettuce cores, stems separated from leaves, and other vegetation, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO: endive, red tipped lettuce. "PROHIBITED" garnish shall receive a penalty score of one (1) on Appearance.
  - 13) Sauce is optional. If used, it shall be applied directly to the meat and not be pooled or puddled in the container. No side sauce containers will be permitted in the turn-in container. Chunky sauce will be allowed. Chunks are to be no larger than a fine dice, approximately 1/8 inch cubed. Sauce violations shall receive a penalty score of one (1) on Appearance.
  - 14) Entries will be submitted in an approved KCBS numbered container, provided by the contest organizer. The number must be on top of the *container at turn-in*.
  - 15) The container shall not be marked in any way to make the container unique or identifiable. ONLY the acceptable meat for the category being judged and legal garnish may be in the turn-in box. Aluminum foil, toothpicks, skewers, foreign material, and/or stuffing are prohibited in the container. A hair or brush bristle is not considered a foreign item as it is impossible to determine where this was introduced. A bone may be part of the Pork entry if it has not been altered in any way and is from the approved cut of meat inspected for the category. Marked entries or containers with the above listed material will receive a one (1) in all criteria from all Judges and disqualified.
- Exception to this rule are small items that are NOT seen at the time of appearance scoring and are inside, underneath, or attached to one judge's sample.** When a foreign object, that is not of the nature that it clearly reveals the team box (e.g., flag, team number or name on an object, etc.), is found AFTER the Appearance scores have been recorded, the following guidelines are to be used.
- a. If the object is attached to a sample that is removed, only the judge receiving that sample scores the penalty for foreign object. This can be applied to multiple judges' scores if objects are found on multiple samples.
  - b. If the object is noticed after sample(s) are removed and remains in the box after the sample is removed, only the judges removing samples while/after the object(s) is noticed shall levy the penalty. For example, if while removing a sample judge #3 sees an object and this object remains in the box, judges 3,4,5 and 6 will score a one in all categories while judges 1 and 2 score as though

there is no infraction to the foreign object rule.

- c. If the object(s) are determined by the Reps to help designate a particular team name or number, all judges will give a one in all categories.

**Once the sixth judge has taken his or her samples and the box is closed and is released for the leftover table, nothing inside or on the box can be used to determine a marked box, illegal garnish, or foreign item in box.**

- 16) Each contestant must submit at least six (6) portions of meat in an approved container. Chicken may be submitted chopped, pulled, sliced, or diced as the cook sees fit, as long as there is enough for six (6) judges. Ribs shall be turned in bone-in. Judges may not cut, slice, or shake apart to separate pieces. If there is not enough meat for each judge to sample, the shorted judge(s) will score a one (1) on all criteria, and the judges having samples will change the Appearance score to one (1) as a penalty.
- 17) The following cleanliness and safety rules will apply:
- No use of any tobacco products while handling meat.
  - Cleanliness of the cook, assistant cooks, cooking device(s) and the team's assigned cooking space is required.
  - Shirt and shoes are required to be worn.
  - Sanitizing of work area should be implemented with the use of a bleach/water rinse (one cap/gallon of water). Each contestant will provide a separate container for washing, rinsing and sanitizing of utensils.
  - First aid is not required to be provided by the contest, except at the election of the contest organizer.
  - Prior to cooking, meat must be maintained at 40° F or less.
  - After cooking, all meat:  
Must be held at 140° F or above *OR*  
Cooked meat shall be cooled as follows: Within 2 hours from 140° F to 70° F and Within 4 hours from 70° F to 41° F or less
  - Meat that is cooked, properly cooled, and later reheated for hot holding and serving shall be reheated so that all parts of the food reach a temperature of at least 165° F for a minimum of 15 seconds.
  - A fire extinguisher shall be near all cooking devices.**
- 18) There will be no refund of entry fees for any reason, except at the election of the contest organizer.

**CAUSES FOR DISQUALIFICATION & EVICTION** of a team, its members and/or guests. **The Eviction will be done at the discretion of the contest Rep as promptly as safety allows.** A cook team is responsible jointly and severally for its head cook, its team members and its guests.

- Excessive use of alcoholic beverages or public intoxication with a disturbance.
- Serving alcoholic beverages to the general public.
- Use of illegal controlled substances.
- Foul, abusive, or unacceptable language or any language causing a disturbance.
- Excessive noise, including but not limited to that generated from speakers, such as radios, CD players, TVs, public address systems or amplifying equipment, will not be allowed during quiet time, designated to start at 11:00 p.m. on contest nights and will last until 7:00 a.m. unless otherwise determined by the event.
- Fighting and/or disorderly conduct.
- Theft, dishonesty, cheating, use of prohibited meats, or any act involving moral turpitude.
- Use of gas or other auxiliary heat sources inside the cooking device.
- Violation of any of the KCBS Rules 2 through 7 **in whole or in part shall result in Disqualification and Eviction from the contest.**

Excessive or continued complaints from teams on any of the above rule infractions shall be considered grounds for immediate disqualification from the contest by KCBS Representatives, Organizers and/or Security. In addition, any violation of the above rules shall be reported to the KCBS Board of Directors who may in addition to the above disqualification impose additional penalties upon the team, the head cook, and its members including but not limited to disqualification from competing in KCBS events for a period of time not to exceed five years. All complaints of disturbance or violation of quiet time shall be reported to the Board of Directors.

**CLARIFICATION:** If team does not turn in a product or is disqualified and not allowed to turn in or is late for turn in, that team's category is not accepted and not judged and receives no score. If a product is turned in and then **penalized or** disqualified for any reason, such as no bone in ribs, etc., it will be judged and will receive a one (1) or ones (1s) in all criteria depending on the rule violation.



**KANSAS CITY  
BARBEQUE  
★ SOCIETY ★**

**2026**

**Official Rules and Regulations**

## **BACKYARD CONTESTS**

The following rules, regulations and judging procedures will be used at all KCBS Sanctioned Contests effective November 10, 2025

*The Kansas City Barbeque Society  
402 E. Bannister Road, Suite E  
Kansas City, MO 64131  
Phone: 816-765-5891 or 1-800-963-KCBS  
E-Mail: [info@kcbs.us](mailto:info@kcbs.us)  
[www.kcbs.us](http://www.kcbs.us)*

### **CREED**

Rules are designed to be fair and equal to all cooks. Integrity of the Contestants, Judges, KCBS Contest Representatives and Organizers is essential.

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KCBS Version 20289

*For all contests starting  
11/10/2025 through 12/31/2026*