

# AMERICAN CHUCK WAGON ASSOCIATION

## SANTIONING RULES

(Updated 01-30-18)

An American Chuck Wagon Association (also known as ACWA) sanctioned cook off is an event where the current ACWA's rules and score sheets are used. Chuck wagon cook offs cannot use the ACWA name, logo, scoring sheets, or trademarked, copyrighted or patented materials unless they have been officially sanctioned by the ACWA. It is understood that sanctioning by the ACWA will help the sanctioned events attract sponsors, wagon teams (competitors), and visitors/tourists.

### A. General Sanctioning Rules

1. Sanctioning is on a calendar year basis.
2. The sanctioning fee shall be \$150 per year per scheduled event.
3. The sanctioning fee makes the cook off a member of ACWA, gives them one vote, and entitles them to have their event invitation, up to 3 pages, e-mailed to all members who have e-mail and mailed to all members without e-mail. Also it will be listed on the ACWA Website, on the ACWA Facebook page, the monthly ACWA Update, and in the Newsletter as a sanctioned event so competitors can better choose in which events they would like to participate.
4. This fee is subject to change on a yearly basis depending on the ACWA's operating/administrative expenses.
5. It is desirable that an event apply for sanctioning preferably by March 31<sup>st</sup> of the event year, but must apply at least three months prior to the event to be sanctioned.
6. Advertising, promotional material, and invitations shall prominently display that the event is an ACWA Sanctioned Cook Off
7. This requirement does NOT permit the use of the ACWA registered trade mark on products or advertising of products that are to be sold commercially.
8. A cook off shall provide a place for the reasonable display of ACWA banners and/or flags during the competition. The cook off shall also provide space for display should the association wish to have a manned booth.
9. ***ACWA MEMBERSHIP IS NOT A REQUIREMENT FOR COOKING IN ANY SANCTIONED COMPETITION OR TO RECEIVE THAT EVENTS AWARDS.*** It is only a requirement should a wagon place in the overall top three places and wishes to participate in the ACWA Championship Cook Off. To qualify for the ACWA Championship Cook Off a wagon owner or head cook must be a current ACWA member no later than the end of the cooks meeting for the qualifying event.
10. Any time an event or anyone associated with the event refers to the ACWA Championship Cook Off to the media it can only be referred to as the ACWA Championship Cook Off.
11. For wagons to qualify for the ACWA Championship, the Sanctioned event must have a minimum of five wagons competing.
12. ACWA requires that all sanctioned cook offs use the ACWA Sanctioned Cook Off paperwork. This paperwork will have "2018 ACWA Sanctioned Event" at the top of the document and a revision date at the bottom.

13. The ACWA recommends a minimum of three places be paid prize money. Events are encouraged to pay more places in the food and wagon categories. ACWA only requires that one place be paid in overall. The food and the wagon are of equally weighted in determining the Overall scores. The overall winner of the event will be determined by adding the total score for taste and the averaged score for the wagon. The overall ranking for all wagons must be determined, not just the top two or three.
14. ***ABSOLUTELY NO TIES WILL BE ALLOWED IN EITHER THE FOOD JUDGING OR THE WAGON JUDGING!*** The methods for breaking ties are discussed in the Food Judging and Wagon Judging sections. For a tie in the **overall category** use the high overall wagon score to break the tie. If a tie still exists, the event can come up with a way to break the second tie, such as flipping a coin.
15. Within ten (10) days of the end of the event, the below listed forms must be submitted to the ACWA office either by scanning, sent via e-mail or sent by postal service. Only accurate and readable copies will be accepted.
  - a. Event Participation Sheet
  - b. Wagon Judges Information and Signature Forms
  - c. Individual Wagon Score Sheets
  - d. Master Wagon Score Sheets
  - e. Food Score sheets
  - f. Food Category Score Sheets
  - g. Master Food Score Sheet
  - h. Overall Score Sheet
  - i. Category Ranking sheet
  - j. Excel Summary Spreadsheet (if used)
16. The local cook off shall be responsible for all contracts and expenses associated with producing a sanctioned cook off.
17. At any time should the ACWA become aware of any sanctioning rule violation(s), the local promoter will be contacted so that the event may take corrective action(s). If the event does not make necessary changes to prevent future occurrences the event may be placed on sanctioning probation and/or suspended for a period of time to be determined by the ACWA Board of Directors.
18. ACWA and/or its Board of Directors, or its sponsors are not responsible for accidents or damage incurred before, during, or after the event!
19. The ACWA realizes these rules and this process will require revision and adjustments in the future. The ACWA Board of Directors will review the event sanctioning rules and process as necessary. Changes that are deemed to be in the best interest of ACWA, Sanctioned Events and Competing Teams will be made and approved by the Board of Director and implemented during the following year unless the change is deemed critical to be implemented immediately. Any changes will be distributed to all sanctioned events and published on the ACWA website, monthly Update and the Newsletter.

## **B. ACWA Rules for Wagon Judging**

“Trail Wagons and Ranch Wagons” may compete in any sanctioned event, but the ACWA Rules for Wagon Judging will be based on a “Trail Wagon.” Everything in the camp must fit into the wagon.

### **Wagon Judging Rules:**

1. Each wagon and camp must be judged by no less than two qualified wagon judges, but not more than three judges. All wagon judges must be members of ACWA. A wagon judging video has been made to train prospective judges locally. One will be provided to all sanctioned events and the current version is required to be viewed by the wagon judges. There also is a 2018 ACWA Sanction Cook Off Wagon Judging Guidelines and Tips document which is also required to be read by each judge prior to judging. The Judges must complete the ACWA Sanction Cook Off Wagon and Camp Judges Sign Off Sheet prior to judging. ***NO MEMBER OF A COOKING TEAM MAY BE A JUDGE AT AN EVENT IN WHICH THEY ARE COMPETING.***
2. The final score for the wagons is determined by totaling the scores of the judges and then dividing by the number of judges.
3. The same wagon judges should not be used in consecutive years.
4. Wagon judges cannot go together to judge. The judges must be given adequate time to judge each wagon completely.
5. When individual wagon judges are scoring a wagon, they should keep in mind that they can use decimal points (9.5) instead of just whole numbers (10) giving the judges more options in scoring.
6. **THERE CAN BE NO FINAL SCORE TIES FOR THE WAGONS!** The wagon judges should tally their own scores separately from the other judge(s), but be double-checked by the event. If a tie occurs, the wagon judging coordinator should first go to the wagon score sheet and determine which wagon scored higher in Wheels, spokes, nuts, tires, hubs and wheel wrench. If that does not break the tie, go to Running gear, axles, bolsters and reach. If the tie is still not broken, appearance of camp is next.
7. Everything that is in camp on wagon judging day must fit in the wagon. On cooking day the other things, like what is required by the health department, may be out, but not on wagon judging day. If there is inclement weather on cooking day, a large fly and side curtains may be used if the event chooses to allow it.
8. **All judging decisions are final.**

### **C. ACWA Rules for Food Preparation and Judging**

ACWA Rules for Food Preparation and Judging were created to interpret and preserve the heritage of life on the trail and the skills used to prepare food over an open fire. Preparation of meals should be done in a manner consistent with the trail drive time frame using cast iron, pots and utensils that pay homage to the trail drive cook.

#### **Food Preparation and Judging Rules**

1. Wood is the only type of fuel allowed for cooking the Sanctioned cook off meals. No coal, lump charcoal, charcoal briquettes or propane will be allowed. Propane can be used to heat water for washing dishes and to light the fires.
2. All food must be prepared over an open ground pit fire, no fire box or stoves allowed. Event may have to require fire boxes for safety or as a requirement of the local fire marshal and should be clearly stated in the registration information. If weather or the location prohibits fire pits, fire boxes may be used if absolutely necessary, but no stoves. If it has been determined that fire boxes are to be used, they must be used by all wagons.

- a. A fire box is defined as a metal box with four sides, open on the bottom and top. Should the event require that fires be up and off the ground, steel tables may be used under the fire box and Dutch ovens.
3. The team size is left up to the event to determine the number on the cooking team.
4. No wagon team should be asked to cook for more than 50 ticket holders since they may have brought limited equipment and/or ingredients to cook the additional meals. In the case a wagon fails to show up for the event, the event can ask they wagons who can prepare extra meal to make up the deficiency, with no repercussions against wagons that deny to cook the additional meal.
5. The Blind Judging System must be used to determine winners. Monitors/Runners must be utilized to observe each sample of the five food categories being collected directly from the cooking vessels at the wagon and expedite delivery of the samples to the judges. This should eliminate preparing dishes just for the judges.
  - a. Blind judging is where the wagon has a public designation such as the wagon's name, a letter or a number that is displayed at the wagon. The wagons would be given a different designation for the cook off to be printed on the sample containers, which are only known to the people that are running the cook off and not the judges.
  - b. No gravy is to be turned in with the food samples being delivered to the judges.
6. All food items will be picked up at the designated time. Any food item not ready at the designated time will not be scored.
7. The wagon teams must prepare five food categories: meat, beans, potatoes, bread and dessert. Additional local categories may be added at the discretion of the event promoter but will not be considered in the participants' overall score.
8. Each food category must have three judges.
9. Judges must not be allowed to:
  - Visit wagons or be in the cooking area prior to judging
  - Judge more than one food item
  - Be related or connected to any of the competing teams
  - To judge the same food category as a family member
  - Judge the same food category in consecutive years
10. Judges' table(s) should be set up in advance away from the wagons with chairs, judging sheets, pencils and any other necessary materials. Bottles of water, grapes and/or flour tortillas need to be provided to cleanse the palates of the judges between each sample. Unsalted crackers may be used when judging beans.
11. A monitor should open a sample and let all the judges look at it for appearance before it is dipped into for taste.
12. The judges shall be instructed not to make verbal comments, use facial expressions or gestures about the dish and should be told of any specific foods that are not allowed.
13. When individual food judges are scoring a food category, they should keep in mind that they can use decimal points (9.5) instead of just whole numbers (10) giving the judges more options in scoring.
14. The combined taste score will determine the winner in each food category. If there is a tie then the appearance score will be the tie breaker. If there is still a tie, then the food monitor or food judging coordinator will determine how to break the tie. No ties will be accepted. One method that the food monitor could use is to score the taste of the tied

items for themselves. Most likely the appearance has been disturbed by the food category judge. As a last result a flip of a coin could be used.

**15. If a wagon violates the food preparation rules they will be disqualified from the event.**

**16. All judging decisions are final.**

### **Actual Food Preparation**

1. Food must be prepared from scratch only at the wagon on the day of the cook off or the night before at the wagon by the designated team. No substitutions of a higher quality ingredient may be made. Condiments, any leavening and spices available during the trail drive period may be used. The presence of some items like eggs, butter, or milk on the chuck wagon would have been very infrequent, but it may have occurred and thus may be used. Some canned goods were available: the most common being tomatoes, canned milk and fruit. Wagons may use bacon, salt pork, sausage, white or brown sugar, molasses, honey, and buttermilk, all of which were available to the general public during the trail drive era.
2. Commercially prepared and packaged items such as sauces, pie crust, biscuit mix and cake mixes are prohibited.
3. The Head Cook will be responsible for the cleanliness of the camp during and after the event. All local health department regulations must be followed.

### **Adherence to Rules**

1. In keeping with the theme of **Trail Authenticity**, we ask that all crew members be in period dress throughout the cooking and until after the cook off meal is served. Period clothing is not matching or embroidered outfits or with the wagon brand on them. Period clothing is clothing that was available during the trail drive era.
2. It is *recommended* that the event coordinator, or their designees, circulate among wagons to monitor teams during the meal preparation to insure compliance.
3. If a wagon violates the food preparation rules they will be disqualified from the event.
4. Within 10 days of the end of the event, the required paperwork, listed below, must be turned into the ACWA headquarters either by scanned e-mail or postal service. Accurate copies will be accepted.
  - a. Event Participation Sheet
  - b. Wagon Judges Information and Signature Forms
  - c. Individual Wagon Score Sheets
  - d. Master Wagon Score Sheet
  - e. Food Score sheets
  - f. Food Category Score Sheets
  - g. Master Food Score Sheet
  - h. Overall Score Sheet
  - i. Category Ranking sheet
  - j. Excel Summary Spreadsheet (if used)

Signed,  
ACWA Board of Directors 01-30/18

**ACWA Championship Cook Off Qualifying Rules**

The top three ACWA member wagon/head cook will qualify for the 2018 ACWA Championship Cook Off. If any of the top three ACWA member wagons/head cooks have already qualified for the 2018 ACWA Championship Cook Off the next highest ACWA member/head cook will qualify for the 2018 ACWA Championship Cook Off.

This will allow three teams from each sanctioned cook off to qualify for the 2018 ACWA Championship Cook Off in 2019.

The goal is to be as inclusive, not exclusive, in allowing more wagons the opportunity to qualify for the ACWA Championship Cook Off, but also to try and get the best of the best by narrowing the field.