



Homebrew Competitions

Sean O'Toole

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Why enter?

- We've all given beers to mates who say our beer is good.....but is it? One way is to get honest feedback at your homebrew club. Alternatively you can enter a competition.
- Feedback sheets often offer advice on how to improve your beer.
- You might win some goodies.....ingredients, equipment or beer!

There are various competitions around the country throughout the year. Some competitions come and go and others have become annual affairs. You might also want to enter some international competitions.

Some major competitions for 2019 are detailed on page 3. There is also a link on the website and this list is updated from time to time. If you know of any competitions that are not detailed here, please let me have details.

There tends to be two different types of competitions, those that are BJCP sanctioned and those that aren't.

- BJCP sanctioned competitions will give you your score with feedback sheets. Beers are judged by at least 2 judges and the best beers go through to a mini-BOS (best in category) to decide placings in the category. The best placed beer in each category then goes through to Best in Show where beers are tasted against each other by a panel of judges to place the overall winner(s). BJCP comps usually have an entry fee. This is often reduced the more beers you enter.
- Non-BJCP sanctioned competitions vary in their rules.

Hints & Tips:

- Book Your Entry/Entries: Many of the big competitions (eg UKNHC) fill up the entry spaces very quickly. This year's UKNHC opened for entries at 09:00 and all 400 spaces were full by 17:00, so if you want to enter keep abreast of when competitions will open for entries and get in quick.
- Don't forget to pay your entry fees: This might seem obvious, but it does happen. Often, you do not need to pay your fees when you enter. Most competitions set a deadline for payment after which they cancel your entry and often open up for new entries to replace those that have been cancelled.
- Brew a beer: obviously but many brewers enter the competition and then run out of time. This could have been an entry for someone else, so if you are going to go to the trouble of entering, plan your brews accordingly and do not forget.



- When registering for a competition, there is an entry for your brew club. Please enter MCB so that we can all be consistent (not Midlands Craft Brewers, Midland Craft Brewers, or any other variant). There is often a prize for the best Club result so please be sure to enter the name correctly.
- Apart from brewing a good beer, perhaps the most important thing to do is to choose the category of your beer wisely. Did that Golden ale you brewed turn out more bitter or darker than you intended? Well maybe you should read the style guidelines as of 11B Best Bitter and enter it as that. The point is that you might have the very good drinkable beer, but just remember that these competitions judge beers against the style guidelines. The BJCP 2015 Style Guidelines can be found at https://www.bjcp.org/docs/2015_Guidelines_Beer.pdf
- Filling your bottles:
 - Use clean bottles: you would be surprised at the state of some of the bottles entered. If it looks ropery on the outside, what does that say about the state of the contents?
 - Don't under or overfill your bottles. Judges will often look at this before a bottle is opened.
 - Bottles of most types are accepted. Competitions usually specify 330ml or 500 ml bottles. Glass or PET. "Bottles and caps should have all distinguishing marks removed or blanked out. No identifying labels (other than the competition label) should be stuck to the bottle. Bottles with engraved or embossed lettering are acceptable, although should be avoided."
 - BJCP comps have now moved to a simple label which you print from the website (see example below). This should be attached to the bottle with clear tape covering the entire label. This has now replaced the old method of putting the label in a bag and securing it to the bottle with an elastic band.
 - Make sure you send enough bottles. Some competitions require two or three bottles. One for category round and one for Best of show if you are lucky enough, and often one extra in case there is an issue with one bottle while judging the initial round. Check the requirements of each competition.
- Packaging your beers & shipping
 - Pack according to the instructions on the competition website. Less packaging is often more. With several hundred entries, you can imagine the amount of time it takes to unpack many of these beers when overpacked. If any of you subscribe to Beer52 or similar, those boxes are perfect for shipping competition entries.
 - Royal Mail will ship beers domestically and internationally (must be less than 24% ABV !) Instructions can be found at https://personal.help.royalmail.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/96/~/prohibited-and-restricted-items



Alcoholic beverages and liquids containing less than 24% alcohol by volume (ABV) (including beer, lager, wine and champagne)

- UK & International - Allowed in the mail, with restrictions and packaging guidelines below:
 - Volume should not exceed 1 litre per item.
 - Wrap in polythene and seal with tape.
 - Surround with absorbent material such as newspaper and sufficient cushioning material to protect each item from breakage.
 - Mark as 'FRAGILE' when sending glass bottles.
 - The sender's name and return address must be clearly visible on the outer packaging.

Additional **general advice**: Place in a suitable rigid outer container.

- Alternatively, you can often drop off your beer entries in person.
- Get involved: Want to see how a competition is run, sign up to be a steward and help out for the day. You can often get to taste the beers with the judges and see what they think. You will learn a lot and pick up several tips during the day.

2019 Competitions (correct as of Jan 2019)

Date	Competition Name	www 	Status
19/01/19	Scottish Craft Brewers Annual Competition	www.scottishcraftbrewers.org/Competition @ScotCraftBrew	CLOSED
	Limited categories. Congratulations to Matt H who won Silver in IPAs with his Hazy Dayz American IPA.		
16/02/19	UK National Homebrew Competition	www.nationalhomebrewcompetition.org.uk @UKNHC	CLOSED FOR ENTRIES
	Held at Bristol Brewery School / New Bristol Brewery. 400 entries. Comp is still open for Judges and stewards.		
23/02/19	Biela Vrana 2019	http://www.biela-vrana.sk/sutaz/	OPEN FOR ENTRIES UNTIL 16/02/19
	Held in the east of Slovakia. Limited categories (10A, B, C, 12A, 20A, 21B Red IPA, 23C, 28A, 32B). Winner gets to brew their own beer at the brewery and gets 50 bottles to take away.		
09/03/19	Lager Than Life	www.competitions.londonamateurbrewers.co.uk/lagerthanlife @lonbrew	CLOSED FOR ENTRIES
	Organised by London Amateur Brewers in association with Pillars Brewery. 110 entries. Open to all lagers styles made using lager yeasts.		
May (TBC)	London & South East	https://londonandsoutheast.brewcompetition.com/ @lonbrew	NOT CONFIRMED FOR 2019 YET
04/05/19	Wishbone Brewery May The 4 th Be with You	http://www.wishbonebrewery.co.uk/2018/12/01/may-the-4th-brew-with-you/	Contact the brewery at competition@wishbonebrewery.co.uk
	At Wishbone Brewery Keighley. This year it's Stouts & Porters up to 6%. 1 entry per brewer.		
Sept 2019 (TBC)	Welsh National Homebrew Competition		NOT CONFIRMED FOR 2019 YET
	This has been held for the past few years at Tiny Rebel in Newport. Typically around 300 entries.		
Oct 2019 (TBC)	Brew Brighton	http://competition.homebrewrighton.co.uk/ @brewbrighton	NOT CONFIRMED FOR 2019 YET
	Annual event with a different challenge each year		
Nov 2019 (TBC)	Brewcon World Series III	www.brew-conworldseries.com @BREW_CON	NOT OPEN FOR ENTRIES YET
	Held as part of Brewcon London (https://www.brewconlondon.com/). Preliminary rounds are held in the weeks prior to Brewcon with finalists in each category announced prior. Final judging is held the night before Brewcon with the results announced at the end of the Saturday.		