

Queued Judging

Overview and Quick Reference

Queued Judging is a method for speeding up the judging of competition categories that are made up of multiple flights. Organizers create sorted entry lists for each category, then teams of judges take turns judging entries from the list, assessing the entire category in order. It was first used on a large scale during the 2008 American Homebrewers Association National Homebrew Competition, and had excellent results—the second round was judged in one day for the first time ever.

An Analogy

Think of the queued judging process like waiting in line at a bank, with the people in line being the entries and the tellers being the judging teams. When a judging team is available, the next entry is judged, just like a bank teller serves the next person in line. The old method of judging (dividing up entries for each judging team) is like the old method used at banks, grocery stores or post offices – each teller or agent having their own line. It usually works fine, except if you get in a slow line. The queued judging process is really just a simple model of a single queue with multiple servers. It's the fastest way for multiple servers to handle a set of transactions when the service time for each server is random.

The Process at a Glance

Before the competition: The organizer creates a single sorted pull list for each judging category rather than individual pull lists for each flight within the category. The pull list should be sorted in the natural judging order of the entries. Entry information should be pre-printed on labels or directly on scoresheets.

During the competition: Each flight in the judging category will not have pre-assigned entries; the entries for the entire category are considered one pool to be judged by the teams of judges assigned to that category. Each team judging a flight will take the first available entry from the category pull list, marking the entry as taken. When one team is finished, the team will take the next available entry from the category pull list. This process repeats until each team finishes. Then a mini-BOS can be conducted as in a typical competition to determine the medal winners for the competition category.

Implications of Using Queued Judging

1. Slower judges will judge fewer entries. But they won't slow down the entire category, and the judging session will finish in a predictable time.
2. Each flight should finish within one entry of each other. This should allow mini-BOS to happen without key judges wandering off.
3. Each flight gets a chance to judge the full range of the category, which can remove some biases during mini-BOS. Entry selection is essentially randomized.
4. Judging can start faster since judges no longer have to sort entries and divide them between flights.

Tips for Best Results

1. Each judge and steward should have a copy of the pull list in order to keep track of the entries, style-specific information, and to facilitate communication between judges and stewards.
2. Pre-printed labels for entries and judges greatly speeds up the process.