

Chapter 3 - Reps – The Umpire in Chiefs of BBQ events

Back in my younger days, I played softball. A LOT of softball. Weeknights and weekends were filled with attending games. Tournaments in MD, NC, GA, FL to name a few. All one had to do was call and say they were shorthanded and out the door I'd go in a heartbeat. As I got older, I was asked to become an umpire. Later I became the Umpire in Chief.

So, what's softball got to do with BBQ? Surprisingly a lot.

For a BBQ contest we need an Organizer of the event, Reps to enforce the rules, Judges to judge the entries and Teams to cook the meats. For a ball tournament we need a Tournament Director (Organizer), Umpire In Chief (Reps), Umpires (judges) and Ball teams (cook teams). Each of these positions serve in the same capacity. An umpire makes a judgement call where a judge makes a judgement on an entry. A rep makes a ruling as does a UIC when something is protested or questioned. On the site of the event/tournament, the UIC/Rep is responsible for making rulings. In KCBS, Rule 1 covers this –

- 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.**

In a nut shell, the Rep's decision is final.

In KCBS a team of reps is assigned to a contest organizer upon a contest being sanctioned. This team of reps should be working with the organizer from day one. For returning organizers, Reps make sure they are aware of any new changes in the sport of BBQ. For new Organizers helping them make their event one that teams and judges alike will want to return to. In both cases, checking on specifics that the organizer can share at that time as to how things are coming along for them.

Reps are assigned two to a contest to begin with. If said contest will have more than 50 teams attending, additional reps are assigned. With each additional 25 teams an additional rep is assigned. That answers why sometimes you may see more than one rep at a contest.

What makes a rep? A rep is normally nominated by an experienced rep. I was nominated by a rep who was retiring. Not specific to taking his place but there would be a need in the general area for someone to take his contest. Reps also are needed where contests are located. Areas of the country with few contests need fewer reps.

When I became a rep it was required to have been a KCBS Member for minimum of 2 years, have achieved the rank of Master Judge, be a up to date/current member and as mentioned prior, be nominated for such. The Rep Chair of the KCBS Board will then make a decision if

a rep is needed in the area. If so, will provide the documentation for the RAT..... Its pronounced RAT as it stands for Rep At training. I would have gone with RIT as in Rep In Training but who am I to argue tradition. Plus calling a trainee a rat, well it just fits. The documentation requires a RAT to attend 4 contests and work as a student of repping. Each successive contest they attend will increase the level they need to show experience in. Such as conducting a judge meeting, keying scores, checking in boxes, changing box numbers, etc. By the 4th contest they should be able to handle all parts of a KCBS event. Once completed their name is brought to the Board for a final vote.

Reps arrive the day before the contest. Some will help do the meat inspections. Alex Brown and I will do the meat inspections when we are assigned as the reps but other contests it may be the organizer who handles. We will also number and hand out the turn in boxes. For newer teams, we will talk with them longer to make sure they know the important times like cooks meeting and turn ins. We check to make sure they have legal garnish on hand. We want those newer teams not to suffer a disqualification for something we can maybe head off in advance.

Some reps do not. There is not a policy or rule that that they do what we do. We do it as we want it to be a great event for the teams. And if we can help the teams in some small way, we feel it makes them feel wanted, respected and may choose to compete again at this contest or another contest.

How do reps number boxes is a question I am asked occasionally. There is not a rule or policy on how to do so. One could just start at the top of the list of teams an organizer provides the rep with. But some organizers place the teams in alpha order. Some give them to us in order of signing up. In either case, a team could then figure out their alternate box number by knowing this info. For me, I take an added step. I use a number generator program online to assign my box numbers to teams. It's a random sorting. Whoever is listed as team 1 on the list might be box number 8, 24, 2, 19, or could still be 1. It's whatever the program assigns in random order.

Reps also are charged with having a judge meeting where we reinforce and remind the judges of the rules. Occasionally something comes down for the KCBS office we need to make the judges aware of like forks. One of the most talked about, time wasted, policy changed from month to month topics I can ever recall.

We are responsible for accurate box number changes, scoring and auditing, printing results, go over said results with the organizer or their announcer, attending awards to ensure the correct names are called at correct times, and then await teams for up to 30 minutes following awards in case there is a question of a score or they want an audit of

their box alternate number. If teams seem to be leaving and no one is coming, then we are allowed to leave earlier than the 30 minutes.

So, what can one learn from having their box audited and how do you do so? Once awards are completed, the reps are to head back to the judging area and wait for up to 30 minutes. In this time frame a team may come and ask one of two things – Audit their scores and or audit their boxes. To do so a team will come to the reps and ask to see their boxes. We will get a third party to look at the alternate ID sheet, and the team will advise their box number. The third party will then knowing the alternate number be shown the label on the box. We will peel back the label and show the number below, the teams box number. This will confirm that the box is correct to the alternate number and your box was not mislabeled with another team's alternate number. Pretty much same happens with auditing the score card. We show the cards to the 3rd party and then the SCORE program where they can see the scores all match.

We are all human and mistakes can happen. Many reps will use a double set of eyes to check alternate numbers being put onto the boxes. We will always have one person pull the sticker for the box and set it on the side of your box. A second person will then check to make sure the number matches to the alternate number and place the label over the box number. When it comes to keying scores, we do a double audit there as well where a second set of eyes will verify the scores entered. And we do the same with comment cards to team detail sheets. If by chance you have ever had a sheet that had a little orange or red dot beside a score, that's me verifying the comment card matches a score on your detail sheet. Why? Because many times multiple judges may give a same score. I then need to make sure I have multiple such scores on your sheet. Otherwise, if you only have one score of say 989, and yet two judges said they gave a 989 for this box, one of them recorded their score or the box number incorrectly. We then have to decide which card to give you.

We utilize the rules and regulations provided by KCBS. In addition, we have a package of Rep Advisory's that are not covered by the rules but are important helpful answers to what to do when a box is dropped, or if a judge wishes to wear gloves, or how fried chicken can be turned in, etc. Reps also have monthly meetings where we

can discuss changes to the SCORE program or if something occurred at a contest not covered by an advisory or rule and how to handle in the future.

These are but some of the ways Reps help to make the contest run smoothly. Hope this may answer some questions of what exactly we all do.

Seize ya next time.