

## America's Best Espresso Competition | | Rules for Judging

- Espresso's will be judged head to head.
- The winner of each round will move forward to the next round.
- Judge's will have score sheets for their own reference only. Although numbers are pinned to each espresso, they are only meaningful relative to the espresso judged in the same head to head round.
- Judges will verbally declare the espresso they have decided best represents the descriptors on the score sheet.
- The "score" that matters is only whether at least two of three judges choose one espresso over the other. The written notes on the score sheet, even if numerical values are in opposition to verbal declaration of a winner, do not matter to the declaration of a winner of a particular round. It is possible for a judge to have the two coffees score identically on their score sheet. **In this case, the judge must still make a decision as to which espresso they are voting to move on.**
- The score sheet contains three categories
  - Flavor Balance
    - Flavor Balance is referencing how dynamic the flavors are in an espresso, how those flavors correlate to each other, and whether or not this experience is positive. Judges will look for an espresso that offers a wide range of flavors which are harmonious and aligned in a pleasingly balanced experience.
      - This does not mean that a coffee that is more toward the sweet side, or the bright side, or the dense side, etc... is NOT out of balance. This simply means that if the coffee does have a dominant flavor profile toward one direction that there are further flavors present that are assisting in adding complexity and dimension to that dominant profile.
  - Body
    - Body, as this competition shall define it, is the "feel" experience an espresso demonstrates, outside of temperature. A judge will be looking for an espresso that is rich in texture, not overly thick, nor watery. This is not a quantitative category, but as the others are, this shall be judged on quality.
  - Session
    - Session is a term used primarily in the beer world. However, it is pertinent to the experience that a drinker has when imbibing espresso as well. This is another way of looking at how an espresso finishes, along with the experience over all. If the experience leaves a judge wanting more, and offers the feeling that this would be an espresso the judge would want to keep coming back to over and over, that would be what we define as a Session Espresso. If the espresso leaves the judge feeling as though their thirst for espresso is now

quenched, or further, that they are feeling that it would be work to even finish the espresso, this would not be a Session Espresso.

- An espresso may have incredibly complex flavor, but yet not be a Session Espresso. Hypothetically, the judge may be satiated by the complexity.
- The inverse is also possible: an espresso may exhibit a somewhat generic flavor experience, but the judge may, hypothetically, have their appetite whet for more.

○ Choice

- The push and pull of these categories allows the judge the freedom of choice. However, these are gauges that when used well will point to an extraordinary, yet practically approachable espresso experience that Coffee Fest will have the honor of declaring as America's Best Espresso.