

NORTH CAROLINA OYSTER FESTIVAL SHUCKING CHAMPIONSHIP RULES & PROCEDURES

PRIZES

The winner of the North Carolina Oyster Shucking Championship shall receive a trophy, \$250 prize money and \$200 in traveling money to be used to travel to and from the National Oyster Shucking Contest in Leonardtown, Maryland. Food and lodging associated with the participation in the National contest shall be provided compliments of the National contest sponsor; the St. Mary's County Oyster Festival, Karen Stone, Administrator.

Runner up will be award \$100 and a trophy. Third place will be awarded a trophy

Should the winner of the North Carolina Oyster Shucking Championship also won the National contest, he or she will receive an all-expense-paid participation as a representative of the United States in the International Oyster Shucking Contest, held annually in Galway, Ireland.

EQUIPMENT, PERFORMANCE AND JUDGING

- 1) The Judge shall select all oysters for the contest use and shall supervise the placing of 24 oysters each into a numbered container. Shuckers are assigned a container by lottery.
- 2) Each shucking station shall be identified by a conspicuously positioned number.
- 3) The shucker shall remove the oyster from his or her assigned container and arrange them for shucking. The shucker may appeal to the Chief Judge *up to three oysters* that he or she considers to be of improper quality for the contest. At his or her discretion, the Chief Judge may substitute another oyster taken from an additional container previously provided by the judges.
- 4) The shucker may wear finger stalls or gloves, use his or her own knife, and carry an extra knife for the use in case the first knife brakes. **ALL** knives must be approved for use in the contest by the Chief Judge **prior** to the start of the contest.
- 5) Each shucker will be assigned a separate Timekeeper.
- 6) The shucker will poise his or her knife at head height to indicate his or her readiness to begin the contest.
- 7) At the signal given by the Chief Judge, previously demonstrated to contestants by him or her, all Timekeepers shall simultaneously start their watches, and all shuckers shall begin their shucking.
- 8) Each shucker shall place each oyster on an unbroken half shell and shall arrange all neatly on the coded tray provided. Oysters should be whole, uncut and free from the shell.
- 9) When the shucker has completed his or her shucking, and has arranged all of his or her oysters to his or her satisfaction, he or she will raise both hands overhead and step back from the shucking table. The shucker's Timekeeper will then stop her watch immediately. A shucker may not touch his or her tray of oysters after he or she has signaled completion. To do so means disqualification.
- 10) Timekeepers will deliver the coded trays to the judges' table in such a manner that the judges will not be aware of which contestant's tray they are judging.

11)AESTHETIC EMPHASIS: The zenith of an oyster lies in the pleasure of its being eaten. The importance of the presentation is uppermost. An appetizing arrangement of a tray of shucked oysters is rewarded over a sloppy or “butchered” offering, which reflects concern for speed or performance. This critical attention to appearance is one of the basic criteria of the International contest in Ireland where chefs and seafood restaurants are often the winning performers.

b) PENALTIES: Judges will add seconds to each contestant’s shucking time according to the following penalty table:

- 1) Add 3 SECONDS for an oyster not completely severed from its shell
 - 2) Add 1 SECOND for an oyster presented on a broken shell
 - 3) Add 3 SECONDS for any oyster presented with grit, blood, or other foreign substance on the flesh.
 - 4) Add 3 SECONDS for a cut oyster
 - 5) Add 2 SECONDS for an oyster not properly placed on the shell.
 - 6) Add 20 SECONDS for a missing oyster.
- c) BONUS: Judges retain the option to award a bonus reduction of 10 SECONDS as an award for the tray whose presentation is deemed outstanding.

12) Each Timekeeper shall report his contestant’s shucking time (in seconds) to the Head Timekeeper, as shall judges, in turn, all penalty time levied. The Head Timekeeper shall dictate there to the chief clerk, who shall record the information on his or her official score sheet. Total time (shucking time plus penalty or optional reduction award time) for each shucker shall then be computed by the Chief Clerk and the Head Timekeeper, and given to the Committee Chairperson to announce to the gathered public. The winner in each heat is the contestant who has the lowest total seconds and has not been disqualified by the judges.

13) DISQUALIFICATION almost never occurs. However, disqualification may result in the five judges reach a majority decision that a contestant a) Intentionally touched his or hers oysters or tray after having signaled completion; b) Distracted a fellow competitor by vocal or physical interference during the shucking heat; c) Committed a flagrant, unseemly or inexcusable impropriety during the progress of a shucking heat.

14) THE ACT OF PARTICIPATING in the North Carolina Oyster Shucking Championship shall stand as a contestant’s agreement that the Brunswick County Chamber of Commerce may utilize photographs taken of the contest and contestant’s, by its assigned photographers, for publicity purposes in the future, without monetary or other obligation to any contestant inclusive of the winner of the competition. The use of such photographs for publicity purposes shall be approached by the chamber in a quality oriented manner consistent with the chamber’s goal of developing the best shucking championship and oyster festival within the United States.