

NAWB Beer Judging Guidelines

The following guidelines are written to help judges for NAWB based competitions.

English IPA (48) – OG: 1050-1060 ABV:5-6.5%

Full bodied premium bitter with a rich golden to deep copper colour. The bouquet should be hoppy and grainy. The flavour should be full malty and grainy with a predominant hop and clean bitter farewell. There should be a little residual sweetness to balance the hop.

Wheat Beer (49) - OG: 1044-1057 IBU: 8-20 ABV: 4.3-5.6%

German Weissbier can vary from pale straw to golden with thick moussy head. Wheat haze to be expected but this can settle out. Aroma is of moderate esters or phenols of banana and clove which may mask the malty/grainy notes. The banana and clove flavours could be moderate but should be balanced with grainy/malty character.

Belgian Witbier again has a thick moussy head but the colour is lighter, very pale straw to deep yellow with moderate wheat haze. Moderate bready/grainy aroma with citrus/spicy notes. Will have a light bready/grainy flavour and moderate zesty/citrus fruitiness which may include balanced spicy notes from coriander etc.

In all wheat beers the hops are a background element with low to very low bitterness. Medium to medium-light body with smooth palate but well carbonated and effervescent.

Brown Ales (50):

American Brown Ale - OG: 1045-1060 ABV: 4.5-6.5%

Light to dark brown colour. Malty- aroma and flavour with chocolate, caramel, nutty, or toasty character. Medium to medium-dry finish with an aftertaste of both malt and hops. Distinct bitterness with hop flavour that complements the malt.

American Amber Ale - OG: 1045-1060 ABV: 4.5-6%

An amber, hoppy, American craft beer with a malty caramel flavour. Low to moderate hop aroma reflective of American or New World hop varieties. Moderate to high hop and malt flavour with an initial malty sweetness followed by a smooth caramel finish without astringency.

American Porter - OG: 1050-1070 ABV: 5-7%

Medium brown to very dark brown, approaching black in colour. Distinctive roast malt aroma and taste, often with chocolate, coffee or lightly burnt character. Medium to high bitterness, some malt sweetness on the finish with caramel or toffee notes. Resiny, earthy, or floral hop character.

Dry/Irish Stout (51) - OG: 1036-1050 IBU: 25-45 ABV: 3.8-5%

A very dark to black colour with good lasting tan head. Intense roasty aroma with coffee and/or chocolate notes from roasted barley. Hop aroma, low to none. Moderate roasted grain flavour with low hop bitterness leading to drying bitter finish. Coffee and bittersweet chocolate may also be in the flavour profile. Medium to full bodied with low carbonation. Can finish with light astringency from the roasted grains but never harsh.

Foreign Extra/Imperial Stout (52) - OG: 1056-1115 IBU: 50-90 ABV: 6.3-12%

Foreign Extra Stout - OG:1056-1075 IBU:50-70 ABV: 6.3-8%

A very dark, moderately strong, fairly dry, stout with prominent roast flavours. Very deep brown to black with tan to brown head with good retention. Good roasted grain aromas, often with coffee or chocolate. Hop aroma, low to none. Some alcohol may be present on the nose. Good roasted grain and malt flavour with a coffee, dark chocolate character. Moderately dry but full bodied. May have smooth/creamy character and warming alcohol, but never 'hot'. Well carbonated.

Imperial Stout – OG: 1075-1115 IBU:50-90 ABV:8-12%

A high-alcohol, full-bodied, and intensely flavoured dark beer. Very dark brown to black with well formed tan to dark brown head. Rich and complex aroma and flavour from roasted grain, malt, fruity

esters, dried vine fruit, hops, and alcohol (not solventy) which follow into flavour with varying levels of coffee and chocolate character. Hop bitterness should balance the complex malt flavours but should never dominate. Aged versions may have a vinous or port-like quality. Finish should be full-bodied but velvety smooth with a gentle alcohol warmth.

American IPA (53) - OG: 1060-1070, ABV: 6– 7%.

Aroma: from prominent to intense hop aroma featuring characteristics of American or New World hops. Low to medium clean, grainy-malty aroma may present. Colour: medium gold to light reddish-amber Head retention: medium-sized, white to off-white. Flavour: Hop flavour medium to very high; should reflect American or New World hop character. Malt flavour - low to medium low. Dry to medium-dry finish; low to no residual sweetness. Bitterness and hop flavour may linger into aftertaste but should not be harsh.

Porter (incl. Baltic Porter) (54) - OG: 1060-1070 ABV: 5.5-7%

With a colour of dark brown to black, and a predominance of brown and chocolate malts on the bouquet and in the flavour, the flavour should also be full, with some residual sweetness to balance the hop and roast grains.

Baltic Porter OG: 60-70 ABV: 7-8.5%

Baltic Porter is a big, rich, sweetish, low on hop flavours and a more alcoholic beer than other porters. Baltic porters are cold-fermented and cold-lagered, which helps preserve their unique clean and complex flavours which keeps the fruity esters range from low to medium. They are lagers, not ales, and with that comes a smoother and bolder mouthfeel.

Barley Wine (55) – OG: 1090+ ABV: 9%+

Colour ranges from golden to brown. The bouquet should be rich, fruity, hoppy, alcoholic and vinous. The flavour should be full and malty with a smooth and mature blend of sweetness, hop and alcohol. Alcohol content will be 9% or greater. Full-bodied with a warming aftertaste. Hops can be of American, New World or English characteristics.

Belgian Strong (Golden and Tripel) (56)

Belgian Golden Strong Ale: O.G. 70-90, alcohol content of 7 – 9%. Yellow to medium gold strong ale with a blend of moderate fruity/spicy/hoppy character; well attenuated without any cloying sweetness. Good white head and excellent bead desirable. Flavour: complex blend of fruity esters, some spiciness, soft malt character, some mellow warming alcohol. Hop bitterness - smooth and complementary, but not dominant.

Belgian Tripel – OG: 1075-1085 ABV: 8-9.5%

This is a strong, well carbonated pale ale at 8 to 9.5% which is a dry, easy drinking beer, quite aromatic, spicy, fruity and even with clove. It has a pleasant, rounded malt flavour and firm bitterness.

Belgian Dark (Dubbel and Quad) (57):

Belgian Dubbel Ale – OG: 1070-1080. ABV: 7-8%. Dark rich malty strong ale; blend of rich, toasted, caramel, fruity essence, white rocky head; well attenuated without any cloying sweetness. Dark amber-brown in colour; good white head and excellent bead is desirable. Flavour: a complex blend of fruity esters, some spiciness, soft malt character; no roasted malt character; some mellow warming alcohol present. Hop bitterness - smooth and complementary. Medium to full body. Warming mouthfeel from alcohol.

Belgian Quad – OG: 1075-1100 ABV: 8-12%

It is a dark, complex, rich, smooth very strong Belgian ale of 8 to 12% abv with a complex blend of malt richness, dark fruit flavours, and spicy elements.

Pale Ale/Bitter (58) – OG: 1040-1050 ABV: 4-5%

Colour from golden to deep copper. The aroma of English hops in the bouquet should lead to those of malt and grain. The flavour should be full, malty and grainy with a hoppy bitter farewell and perhaps a little sweetness from residual dextrins.

Pale/Light Lager/Pilsner (59) - OG: 1045-1055 IBU: 18-40 ABV: 4-5.5%

A well attenuated light bodied pale lager. Colour ranging from pale straw to deep gold and crystal clear with a creamy long-lasting white head. Aromas can vary from low grainy/malty to moderately flower/spicy but always with a clean fermentation. Initial grainy, malty or bready flavour should give way to a balanced hoppy bitterness that is never harsh. Leading to a dry crisp finish. Light to medium body with good carbonation.

Strong Lager (60) – OG: 1060-1075 ABV: 6.0% to 7.5%

These beers range from 6 – 7.5%. A strong German lager, like a Helles Bock, is characterized by its fully attenuated clean flavour of malty richness and strength, with a smooth, warming alcohol presence. It should exhibit good clarity and a persistent head, with colours ranging from gold to amber. The aroma is dominated by malt, with a subtle toasty character, while hop aroma should be low or absent. In comparison, a Czech style lager, like Budweiser Budvar, tends to be under attenuated (bit sweeter) but carries the other characteristics.

American Pale Ale (61) - OG: 1045-1060 ABV: 4.5-6%.

Pale refreshing beer, moderate to strong aroma from American or new world hops. Taste should be clean with a light to moderate mouth feel and dry finish. Hop flavour and bitterness can linger on aftertaste but should not be harsh or astringent. Late and/or dry hopping will add to hop flavour. Colour: pale to light gold, large white to off white head, fast running bead.

Speciality IPA (62): NEIPA, Black IPA, Double IPA

Speciality IPA: Black IPA - OG: 1050-1085 ABV: 5.5 – 9%. Dark brown to black colour.

Predominantly American hop aroma. Hop flavours distinctive, with some chocolate or coffee notes from the malt. High bitterness and dry finish but dark malt should only add light roast character which should not clash with the hops or add harshness.

Speciality IPA: Hazy IPA – OG: 1060-1085 ABV: 6-9%. Opaque with some haze but not cloudy or murky. Colour ranging from straw to light amber, sometimes with an orange hue. Should have high head retention. Intense hop aroma, with stone fruit, tropical fruit, citrus, or other fruity qualities. High fruity hop flavour with some bitterness masked by full body and soft smooth mouth feel. The hop character in the aftertaste should not be sharp or harsh.

Speciality IPA: Double IPA - OG 1065-1085 ABV: 7.5-10%.

Pale gold to light orange-copper colour. A prominent hop aroma featuring American or New World hop characteristics. Strong and complex hop flavour, and high bitterness, which should not be harsh. Dry finish, with a lingering hoppy, bitter aftertaste. Quite high carbonation. Restrained, smooth alcohol warmth acceptable.

Saison (63) – OG: 1050-1065 ABV: 5.0-7.0%.

Often a distinctive pale orange but may be golden or amber in colour. Fruity aroma, reminiscent of citrus with low to moderate hop, and possibly hints of spice. A refreshing, fruity/spicy ale, highly carbonated, with a dry finish, quenching acidity and moderate hop bitterness.