

First off we need to address what is not a good score sheet.

- It is not a food pairing advice article.
- They are not a statement of brevity; they need more than 2 words.
- They are not supposed to be a how to brew documentary.
- Not your daily diary or bragging center. No one cares if you made one that is better.
- They are not meant to be appeasers; we are judges and need to be able to condemn a beer, in the nicest way possible.

What is a good Master level score sheet? It is a vivid description of the beverage being judged that describes all aspects of the beverage including the sensory profile, fit to style and drinking pleasure. Feedback is also essential, especially what you would recommend stylistically to make the beverage score higher. They look past a flaw and see the beverage as it fits the big picture of adherence to the BJCP style guide. A good judge reviews this guide often while judging, making sure they are judging to the BJCP style guide and not their own interpretation of the style guide.

Descriptions:

1. Easy to understand
2. Terms that people can relate to.
3. Have adjectives to further define basic flavors. Example “hops versus citrus hops.”
4. Intensity of character. Example “hops versus moderate citrus hops.”
5. A lot of descriptors.
6. Always describe the hallmarks of style.
7. Always describe the basic defining element of a beverage. In the case of beer, you describe the malted grain, mead the honey and cider the apple or pear character.
8. Looks past the “flaw” to continue to describe and score the beer.
9. When combined together, the beverage becomes vivid to the reader. They should be able to read the score sheet and taste the beer.

Perceptions:

1. They need to be accurate; practice! At all judging levels, you need to hold tastings with peers to analyze and discuss the beverages.
2. Always portray the hallmarks of style, whether present or not.
3. Learn how flavors interact with each other, especially for areas where you have blind spots. This can help you find them when you cannot sense them.
4. Slickness is not always diacetyl! If you can't taste or smell it, how can you note it and detract from the score? Slickness is a clue to look for diacetyl, not a determination that it is there. Treat all other aspects of the beverage the same way.

Score:

1. Fred Eckhardt once told me “I like to think of scoring a beer by how many points can I give the beer versus how little.”
2. Review the BJCP cover sheet for descriptions of the different score levels. Following is from the BJCP Cover sheet.
3. “Problematic (0-13) – A beer with a major problem (usually contamination) that overwhelms all other flavors and aromas. Often barely palatable.” Style is not a question at this point. It should be so bad that you have trouble forcing yourself to taste it. 13 is the common minimum courtesy score. While you may think that we are making the range

smaller in scoring beer, we are not, it is just a courtesy score as it helps no one to slam an entrant. Good feedback is essential to help the entrant improve.

4. “Fair (14-20) – This beer has its share of problems that may include missing the style parameters, off flavors and aromas, balance problems, contamination, or other major flaws. Scores near the lower end of this range exhibit more major flaws.” Style is still not an issue here; you may not be able to determine the base style of the beverage. A major flaw is one that you can walk by a glass of the beverage and quickly find it. At this level, there are multiple flaws.
5. “Good (21-29) – A satisfactory beer that generally fits the style parameters. Scores near the upper end of this range may have only a few minor flaws or be slightly out of style and also may be lacking in balance or complexity. Scores near the lower end of this range tend to have more flaws and are likely to have stylistic inconsistencies as well.” The beverage should generally fit the BJCP style guide. Flaws are usually easy to find and can be numerous.
6. “Very Good (30-37) – Beers in this range may have a minor flaw (technical or stylistic), or may be lacking in balance or complexity.” Fits the style well with no major flaws. Flaws should be more subtle where the average person may not notice until pointed out. A few very subtle flaws are OK at the bottom end of the score range. Great beers are common to find in this area as they may not fit the style dead on. The top end usually finds balance and complexity issues that detract from the drinking pleasure of the beverage. An example of a beverage that fits this score range is a clean old ale where the alcohol is distinctive and sticks out, but the beer is flawless otherwise. The alcohol should be more entwined with the malt flavor. Don’t count balance and complexity into a flaw count to determine if this is the correct score range.
7. “Excellent (38-44) – Beers in this range may have no flaws but may be missing the intangibles for a world class beer.” Aromas and flavors are well entwined and married. No flaws to be found.
8. “Outstanding (45-50) – A world class example of the style. A beer with great character and no flaws.” No flaws found and well balanced with good complexity. All flavors and aromas fit the style parameters as per the BJCP style guide. You will find your glass empty often as the beverage compels the drinker into the next glass.
9. Make sure the beverage’s score match the stylistic grid’s level you choose.

#### Completeness:

1. If you comment on something in the overall section of the score sheet, it should be described in all other pertinent sections of the score sheet.
2. If you find a flaw in aroma, it should be addressed in flavor and vice versa.
3. Always cover the hallmarks of style.
4. Describe the secondary elements of style.
5. Describe malt, hops, yeast character for all beer in both aroma and flavor.
6. Describe all aspects of appearance.
7. Every aspect of the beverage should be described.
8. Include the intensity of flavor and aroma you find in the beverage.
9. Double check the math: 100% correct is the minimum standard you should set for yourself.
10. Fill out the stylistic grid box at the bottom of the score sheet.

## Feedback:

1. We do not know how the beverage was made - all grain, extract etc. Feedback should be given in that context.
2. How can the beverage fit the style better?
3. How can any flaws found in the beverage be improved upon?
4. How well does the beverage fits the style?
5. What is the drinking pleasure of the beverage?