



JCR Newsletter



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Our intention with this newsletter is to inform the new candidates for the next International competition. This newsletter will also be provided to members of Bailliages that are involved in Regional and National competitions and be posted on the JCR Alumni Facebook page. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Lois Gilbert, International JCR Committee Member at

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Competition Overview

Black Box example

Taiwan 2018



The JCR Competition is unique in that very few culinary competitions still use a Black Box. Mandatory items are kept secret till the day of the competition with the exception of one protein, which is revealed one month in advance.

What is the difference between Mandatory and non-mandatory?

Mandatory items consist of 5 categories that can have 1-4 items in each. In the Taiwan competition, the **Fish** was 2 Blue crab (fresh), the **Meat** was 1 rack of lamb (8-9 bones), the **Vegetables** had 150g Chia seeds, 4 pc tofu, 4 porcini mushrooms (frozen), the **Fruit** was 4 bananas and lastly the **Dairy** was 200g cream cheese.

What this means for the chef is that they **must use 50% of each** of the items listed.

Non-mandatory items are just that. You have the option to use or not use anything on the non-mandatory list.

Don't forget that there is a common table list posted on the JCR competition web site a few months in advance. Get to know these items and start using them in your practice menus and black box practices.

Talk to previous winners from your country for advice.

From National to International – things you should be doing.

Daily: Set yourself a daily time limit to complete tasks at work. Work on your timing.

Weekly: Have your mentor send you a list of mandatory and non-mandatory items and practice writing a menu within 30 min. Remember to make it read like a menu.

Monthly: Practice a Black Box remembering your menu and timing.



How to Maximize Kitchen Points

Many times throughout the history of the JCR Competition, the winner has won by fewer than 10 points.

We have put together a list of Competitor hints that may help you achieve maximum points. Consider using them in your day-to-day work life now so that it will be second nature during the competition.



35% of the overall competition points come from **TASTE**. Salt and Pepper are usually the most forgotten ingredients. Do not put tart or bitter items on your plate if they could unbalance the overall taste and conflict with other items. **Taste before you send!**



Maximise the number of components displaying various cooking methods and preparation techniques on the plate to score higher marks. More difficult preparations and display of skills score higher marks. **Don't try a new technique you are not proficient in on the day of the competition!**



Make sure you use 50% of your mandatory items. Wrap and store the remainder. Make sure you plate all the mandatory items otherwise you will lose 10 points. Also make sure you mention on your written menu the mandatory items explicitly by name. **Before you hand in your menu, use your mandatory list to check that you have all items mentioned in your menu!**



Only the Kitchen judges see the replication of the plating in the kitchen. The tasting judges are not aware of how each plate is replicated so don't stress if each plate is slightly different, just make sure all items are uniform with themselves. **Have a plan B ready in your head if one of your techniques fails. Practice failures during your training sessions!**



The easiest points to acquire in the kitchen are all about **YOU**. How are you dressed? Do you have the right shoes? Are your trousers clean, neat and within the competition rules? Is your scarf tied appropriately? Have you removed all your jewelry? How do you interact with the kitchen judges and other competitors? **You may be stressed during the competitions but always be polite and SMILE!**

Reduce the stress on competition day by:

Come prepared: have you practiced menu writing at least once a week? Have you prepared a timed Black Box at least once a month?

Organize yourself: Take the extra time you may have after writing your menu to write a timed plan that you can post at your station. Check it frequently to keep you on task. You may even have time to draw your plating plan. When you enter the kitchen, organize your station. Remember to keep your refrigerated items in your fridge till you need them. **Store all your items correctly!**

Enjoy yourself: This competition will be one of the most memorable events of your career so take the time to enjoy the experience and the new International friends you will have for your lifetime. **Think positive and have FUN!**

Next month we will discuss preparation planning including plating plan and an example of a prep plan to keep you on task.