

Description of Beer Categories for the 21st Annual USBTC Summer Competition

- Imperial IPA or Imperial Amber/Red Ale: Beers with an IPA or Amber/Red Ale designation but brewed to reach an Imperial level, resulting in intensification of their alcohol and/or hop profile. There is no ABV limit. Please note that American Black Ale is excluded here and is a category in our winter competition.
- IPA: Strongly hop-accented pale ale with higher ABV, historically gold to copper in color. There is no IBU cutoff, but we set an ABV cutoff of 8.0% or less. If ABV>8%, the beer will be placed in Imperial IPA (see above). Please note that American Black Ale is also excluded here.
- Pale Ale: Ales with both malt and hop presence, but interpretations vary widely from malt to hop dominated. IBU must be 55 or less and ABV must be 6.5% or less. If ABV and/or IBU are higher, the beer should be placed in IPA (above).
- Amber/Red Ale: Though some of these beers trace their origins to Irish or Scottish traditions, we acknowledge this is not a true style and categorization here is left primarily to the brewer. There is no IBU cutoff, but we set a limit of ABV≤6.5%. Beers above this limit should be placed in Imperial Amber/Red Ale (above) or, if preferred, Strong Ale (a category in our winter competition).
- Bitter/ESB: Pale ales brewed with some aspect of the English tradition such as English hop or malt varieties (e.g., East Kent Goldings or Fuggles hop, Maris Otter malt) or alteration of water characteristics, etc. ABV must be 6.5% or less. If higher, the beer should be placed in our IPA category (above) or Strong Ale (a category in our winter competition).
- Kolsch/Cream/Gold Ale: Gold-colored ale, potentially undergoing cold maturation like a lager, typically with IBU from 20-35. IBU must be 55 or less and ABV must be 6.5% or less. If either is higher, the beer should be placed in IPA (above).
- Belgian/French Specialty: Ales brewed in traditional Belgian/French styles including saison, biere de garde, farmhouse ale, Belgian pale ale, and Abbey single ale. Excluded from this category are Belgian Wit (included in its own category-below), Belgian Bruin/Red Ale (included in Sour Beer -below), and Abbey/Belgian Strong Ale (a winter category). There is no ABV limit.
- Belgian White/Wit: Ales brewed in the style of Belgian White/Wit, containing a significant amount of wheat added to the barley malt along with spices and/or other flavor additives (excluding fruit-flavored wheat beer). ABV must be 6.5% or lower. If ABV is higher, the beer should be placed in the Belgian/French Specialty category (above) or Abbey/Belgian Strong Ale (a winter category).
- Wheat Beer: Any beer that contains a significant proportion of wheat added to the barley malt. ABV must be 6.5% or less. However, Belgian White/Wit and fruit wheat beer should be placed in their respective categories.
- Bock/Doppelbock: High-ABV lager that can be golden to dark brown in color but with strong malt character. Typically, true bocks are lagered for a significant amount of time. There is no ABV limit.
- Pilsner: Gold-colored lager but distinctly hop-accented, typically with a flowery aroma, dry finish, and IBU from 20-40. ABV must be 6.5% or less or the beer should be placed in our Bock category.
- Dortmunder/Helles: Gold-colored lager, though clearly less hop-accented than pilsners. ABV must be 6.5% or less or the beer should be placed in our Bock category.
- Fruit Beer: Beer of any style that contains a clearly detectable level of fruit flavoring in the taste, including fruit-flavored Belgian-style beers, fruit-flavored wheat beers, etc. There is no ABV limit.
- Sour Beer: A beer that has been brewed to intentionally impart significant sour notes. This can be accomplished through any number of methods, including yeast selection, barrel-aging, and/or addition of fruit flavor. There is no ABV limit.
- Highly-hopped Lager: Strongly-hopped lagers such as India Pale Lagers and Imperial Pilsners. There is no ABV limit.
- Session Beer A beer, ale or lager, with ABV≤4.5%. Beers with >4.5% ABV will not be considered.

Note that a beer can only be entered in one category.