

Description of Beer Categories for the 23rd 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 ale, historically gold to copper in color. We set an ABV limit of 8.0% or less. If ABV>8%, the beer will be placed in Imperial IPA (see above). American Black Ale is excluded here.
- Pale Ale: Ales with both malt and hop presence, but interpretations vary widely from malt to hop dominated. ABV must be 6.5% or less. If ABV is higher, the beer should be placed in IPA (above).
- Amber/Red Ale: This is a brewer's designation, though some of these beers trace their origins to Irish or Scottish styles. There is no IBU cutoff and 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 lower bitterness than pale ales or IPAs. ABV must be 6.5% or less. If higher, the beer should be placed in pale ale or IPA (above) or Strong Ale (in our winter competition).
- 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 Double, Triple, Quadruple and Belgian Strong Ale (which are 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. Note: 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.
- 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.
- 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. Note: This year we are separating lighter fruit beer styles from this category (see below).
- Refreshing Fruit: Beers with detectable fruit flavor that are meant to be refreshing and drinkable options. This category is intended for lighter styles for the base beer (e.g., gold ale/lager, wheat). The ABV must be 6% or less.
- Belgian Trippel: Ales that are straw to copper in color and brewed with a nod to the tradition of Belgian Trippels. There is no ABV limit.

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