



2025 Virginia ProStart Invitational

Procedures and Rules for the Individual Competitions

Students are responsible for understanding and following all the procedures and rules contained in this document; they will not be reviewed at the Virginia ProStart Invitational. Please read this document carefully to maximize your opportunity for success and to avoid receiving penalties during the competition. Refer all questions to Dr. Jai Girard prior to arrival at the Virginia ProStart Invitational.

**2025 Virginia ProStart Invitational Procedures and Rules
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General Competition Overview

Purpose

Students participating at the Virginia ProStart Invitational (VPSI) will demonstrate their knowledge of, passion for, and creativity in the restaurant industry through Culinary, Management, and/or individual competitions. Participation reinforces the skills and knowledge learned from the ProStart program and the “Foundations of Restaurant Management and Culinary Arts” curriculum.

Eligibility

Students

1. High school students currently enrolled in a confirmed ProStart program recognized by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation who have been certified by the NRAEF-recognized ProStart Coordinator for Virginia are eligible to compete.
2. Students may participate at VPSI as a competitor for only two years, which may be non-consecutive. For the purposes of VPSI, competitors are defined as active team members (i.e., cooking or presenting) and/or team managers.
3. Students may compete in one or both the Culinary and Management teams in any year. Competing on two teams at any one VPSI counts as one year of competition. Students competing in individual competitions does not affect the 2-year eligibility of the team competition.

Event Personnel

1. Event Organizers: VRLTAF staff members
2. Volunteers: Assigned and trained by VRLTAF to assist with the event
3. Team Ambassadors: Personnel designated and trained by the VRLTAF, who are charged with keeping the official time for assigned teams during all segments of the competition.
4. Judges: Sourced from post-secondary education and the restaurant and foodservice industry, including two Co-Lead Judges. Lead Judges do not score teams.
 - a. All judges have been carefully selected by the Event Organizers for their related skills, experience, and expertise. Judges have reviewed the rules in advance of the competition and participated in an orientation and in-person training. By participating in the competitions, each team and its participants acknowledge that while every effort will be made to provide fair and impartial judging, some discretion and subjectivity is present in any judged competition. All decisions and scoring by judges are final. Any questions about scoring should be submitted to the Dr. Jai Girard at jai@vrlta.org.
 - b. All judges will be consistent from team to team (ie. culinary or management check-in will be responsible for that category across all teams).

Schedules

Competition schedules will be distributed in advance of the event once all teams and individual competitors have been identified. The schedule will include assigned start and finish times for all competition segments. All schedules are subject to change and will be communicated out with as much advance notice as possible.

General Disqualifications

1. Teams and all associated competitors must be eligible to compete, as defined by the eligibility terms above. Teams found to be ineligible will be disqualified. Additionally, any individual students found to be ineligible will result in complete team disqualification.
2. Competitors must attend the required Opening Ceremony at the time and place designated by the VRLTAF Event Organizers. Competitors must check in by the required time on date of arrival or they will be disqualified. The only exception made will be for travel delays beyond the control of the team with appropriate notice to Event Staff.
3. Competitors must arrive at the appointed time to compete, or they will be disqualified. The only exception made will be for travel delays beyond the control of the team with appropriate notice to Event Staff.
4. Competitors may not receive coaching or any form of communication from anyone, including spectators, educators, mentors, or coaches during the competition from the competitors' report time until after receives feedback from the judges. The determination of what constitutes coaching or communication is solely at the discretion of the VRLTAF and the judges. No warnings will be provided; violations will result in immediate team disqualification.
5. Misconduct including, but not limited to, any nonprescription drug use, alcohol use, unsportsmanlike conduct, or any activity that is illegal under federal, state or local laws at the event, during competition, during unsupervised free time, during supervised competition social activities or in activities or locations related to the event. Should such alleged misconduct come to the VRLTAF's attention, the matter will be investigated as the VRLTAF deems appropriate. Any decision as to appropriate action due to misconduct, up to and including team disqualification, is at the sole discretion of the VRLTAF and is final.
6. By entering the competition, the student accepts all conditions and requirements of the Virginia ProStart Invitational Individual Competition.

General Provisions

Competitors will be using tools that may cause cuts or injury if not used appropriately. Proper safety techniques must be followed by all competitors. No horseplay or unduly hazardous behavior will be allowed or tolerated. The mentors, teachers, chaperones, and families are expected to ensure that the competitors comply with all applicable laws, rules and regulations.

Team members shall comply with all other written as well as verbal instructions or warnings provided by the Event Organizers.

Chicken Fabrication Competition Description

The Chicken Fabrication Competition challenges individual competitors to demonstrate their culinary knowledge, precision, and efficiency by expertly fabricating a whole chicken into standard portions. This competition emphasizes key culinary skills, including knife techniques, portioning accuracy, waste management, and time efficiency. Participants will also answer critical thinking questions to showcase their ability to creatively utilize fabricated chicken and minimize waste.

Competition Highlights:

1. Fabrication Task:

- Each competitor will have 10 minutes to fabricate one whole chicken into the following standard portions:
 - Two boneless, skinless breasts (uniform in size and free of visible fat or cartilage)
 - Two bone-in thighs (skin-on or skin-off, competitor's choice)
 - Two drumsticks (cleanly separated, with skin intact)
 - Two whole wings (separated into drumette, flat, and wingtip)
- Judging will focus on accuracy, proper technique, minimal waste, and time management.
- Participants must bring their own knives (sharp and appropriate for the task), while sanitized workstations and cutting boards will be provided.
- Each workstation will consist of a six-foot table.

2. Critical Thinking Component:

- After the fabrication task, competitors will answer a set of critical thinking questions designed to assess their ability to:
 - Utilize fabricated chicken in various culinary applications.
 - Suggest strategies for minimizing waste and using every part of the chicken.
 - Provide innovative solutions to culinary challenges.

3. Judging Criteria:

- Competitors will be evaluated based on:
 - Accuracy of fabrication and adherence to portioning standards.
 - Efficiency and proper knife skills- cuts must be clean, free of bone fragments, and demonstrate professional-level knife skills.
 - Waste management, with an emphasis on minimizing discarded material.
 - Quality and creativity of answers to critical thinking questions.

Scoring: Chicken Fabrication

A maximum of 100 points can be earned by an individual competitor during the Chicken Fabrication Competition. Points will be awarded in the following categories:

- **Knife Skills and Accuracy:** 30 points
Judged on precision, portioning, and adherence to standard cuts for breasts, thighs, drumsticks, and wings.
- **Safety and Sanitation:** 20 points
Assesses adherence to safety protocols, proper knife handling, and maintenance of a clean workstation.
- **Waste Management:** 20 points
Evaluates the competitor's ability to minimize waste and make the most of all usable parts of the chicken.
- **Time Efficiency:** 20 points
Points are awarded based on the time taken to complete the fabrication.
- **Critical Thinking:** 10 points
Based on responses to post-fabrication questions, focusing on creative use of chicken parts, waste reduction strategies, and adaptability in menu development.

Tie-Breaking Procedure: In the event of a tie, the tying competitors will each participate in a short interview with a panel of judges. Competitors will be asked verbal questions about their methods, techniques, and responses to critical thinking challenges. Judges will then deliberate and determine the final ranking based on the depth and quality of responses.

Cake Decorating Competition Description

The **Cake Decorating Competition** provides a platform for competitors to showcase their technical skills and artistic ability, focusing on precision, adherence to standards, and efficiency. Participants will create a retail-ready cake that reflects professional quality and craftsmanship while adhering to a defined set of guidelines and tools.

Competition Highlights:

1. Decorating Task

- Each competitor will have **25 minutes** to transform a crumb-coated cake into a polished and sellable product.
- Cakes must start at the crumb coat stage, with all decorative elements applied during the competition.
- Designs must include essential techniques, such as:
 - A smooth, clean base layer of white buttercream.
 - A top white shell border.
 - Embellishments (e.g., flowers, leaves) using **2 additional colors** of buttercream.
 - Script lettering with the message: **“Happy Birthday Chef.”**

2. Cake Requirements

- Cakes must adhere to the following size standards:
 - **Base Diameter:** 8 inches.
 - **Height:** 4–6 inches.
- Competitors are limited to **3 lbs of white buttercream icing** for use during the competition.

3. Allowed Tools

- **Piping Bags and Tips:** Limited to **5 tips**, including options for round, star, petal, and leaf designs.
- **Primary Food Colors:** Red, yellow, blue, and black for mixing desired shades.
- **Decorating Comb, Bench Scraper, and/or Offset Spatula**
- **Flower Nail:** For creating buttercream flowers.
- **Small Measuring Cups or Spoons:** For portioning icing or colors.
- **Cake Board or Stand:** A basic board or stand to support the cake during decorating.

4. Judging Criteria:

- Execution and Technique: Competitors will be assessed on the quality of decorating techniques, including clean execution and technical precision.

- Adherence to Standards: Cakes will be judged based on size compliance and alignment with competition guidelines.
- Time Efficiency: Points will be awarded for completing the decorating process within the allotted 25 minutes, with deductions for exceeding the time limit.

Scoring: Cake Decorating

A maximum of 100 points can be earned by an individual competitor during the Cake Decorating Competition. Points will be awarded in the following categories:

- **Design and Creativity:** 35 points
 - Judged on the aesthetic appeal, originality, and coherence of the design.
 - The cake should demonstrate visually engaging elements that enhance its retail appeal.
- **Execution and Technique:** 30 points
Assessed for clean execution of required techniques, such as:
 - Smooth buttercream coating.
 - Precise piping of shell borders, flowers, and lettering.
 - Consistency in embellishments.
- **Adherence to Standards, Food Safety & Sanitation Regulations:** 20 points
Points awarded for compliance with competition guidelines, including:
 - Cake size (8-inch base, 4–6-inch height).
 - Proper use of allowed tools, colors, and icing quantity.
 - Inclusion of all required design elements.
- **Time Efficiency:** 15 points
Points are awarded based on the time taken to complete the cake decoration:
 - **25 minutes or less:** Full 15 points
 - **26–28 minutes:** 10 points
 - **29–31 minutes:** 5 points
 - **Over 32 minutes:** 0 points

Tie-Breaking Procedure: In the event of a tie, competitors will perform a skill-based challenge by creating **two types of buttercream flowers** (e.g., roses, daisies) to demonstrate their technical expertise. Judges will re-evaluate based on the quality of the flower techniques and overall execution.

Napkin Folding Competition Description

The Napkin Folding Competition challenges individual competitors to showcase their creativity, precision, consistency, and speed in executing an intricate napkin fold. This fast-paced competition emphasizes the importance of fine motor skills and attention to detail, key attributes for elevating the dining experience. Competitors will have only 3 minutes to complete their design, making time efficiency a crucial element of the competition.

Competition Highlights:

1. Folding Task:

- Each competitor will receive three napkins and will have 3 minutes to fold their chosen design three times.
- Napkin options will include standard square napkins provided by the event organizers.
- Competitors may use their own folding techniques but are restricted to designs achievable within the given time.
- Prior to the competition- competitors need to submit a photo of their design and fold instructions. Deadline for this submission will be January 31st at NOON.

2. Judging Criteria:

- **Speed:** Competitors must complete their three folds within a 3-minute time limit. Failure to complete three folds in this allotment will result in penalty points.
- **Precision and Neatness:** Judges will evaluate the accuracy of folds, the symmetry of the design, and overall cleanliness of execution.
- **Consistency:** Judges will assess the consistency of the 3 identical folds.
- **Creativity:** Designs will be scored on originality and visual appeal.
- **Stability:** The napkin fold must hold its shape without assistance once completed.

3. Materials and Setup:

- Each competitor will be provided with three napkins at the start of the competition.
- No additional tools or materials are permitted.
- Competitors will work at individual stations, each equipped with a flat surface.

Scoring: Napkin Folding

A maximum of 100 points can be earned by an individual competitor during the Napkin Folding Competition. Points will be awarded in the following categories:

- **Precision and Neatness:** 30 points
Judged on the accuracy of folds, symmetry, and overall tidiness of the final design.
- **Consistency:** 30 points
Judged based on the consistency of the napkin folds.
- **Creativity:** 20 points
Evaluates the uniqueness and aesthetic appeal of the design.
- **Stability:** 20 points
Assesses whether the napkin design holds its shape without additional support.

Tie-Breaking Procedure: In the event of a tie, the tying competitors will participate in a tie-breaking round where they will create a different napkin fold within 60 seconds. Judges will evaluate the designs based on precision, creativity, and stability to determine the final ranking.