



REGULATIONS — AND — COMPETITION HANDBOOK

EXCELLENCE | SAFETY | FAIRNESS | COMMUNITY

WE ALL EAT
TOGETHER



WELCOME FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the British Eating League Regulations and Competition Handbook.

When BEL was founded in 2020, the aim was to bring competitive eaters, venues and supporters together while building something Britain could be proud of. Since then, BEL has grown into an independent governing and sanctioning organisation with live competitions, online events, Certified Challenges, official rankings, championship titles and eaters competing across Britain and Europe.

As BEL grows, clear rules become increasingly important. This handbook establishes the standards expected from eaters, officials, venues and organisers. It explains how our competitions are run, how points and titles are awarded, how decisions are made and how we protect safety, fairness and integrity.

Competitive eating should be exciting, entertaining and full of personality. Rivalries and trash talk will always be part of competition, but respect, honesty and safety must come first.

Our message is simple: We All Eat Together.

BEL welcomes people from every background. Whether someone is entering their first challenge, competing for ranking points or defending a European championship belt, they deserve a fair opportunity and clear rules.

This handbook will continue to develop alongside BEL. We will learn from every event, listen to those involved and update our standards whenever necessary.

Thank you to every eater, official, venue, sponsor, volunteer and supporter helping us build the future of competitive eating.

Every bite. Every point. Every contest counts.

Founder and President
British Eating League

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CONTENTS

Welcome from the President	Page 2
Definitions	Page 4
1. Status, Purpose and Authority	Page 5
2. Constitution and Governance	Page 9
3. Membership and Eater Licences	Page 15
4. Eater Classifications	Page 21
5. Eater Eligibility and Age Requirements	Page 27
6. Event Sanctioning and Venue Requirements	Page 31
7. Medical, Safety and Emergency Procedures	Page 39
8. Standard Live Competition Rules	Page 48
9. Food-Specific and Competition-Format Rules	Page 59
10. Referees, Officials, Timing and Judging	Page 72
11. Online and Upload Competition Rules	Page 86
12. BEL-Certified Restaurant Challenges	Page 99
13. Rankings, Points and the BEL Season	Page 114
14. Records, Championships, Titles and Belts	Page 125
15. Prize Money, Entry Fees and Commercial Terms	Page 141
16. Eater Conduct and Social-Media Standards	Page 157
17. Integrity, Cheating and Competition Manipulation	Page 175
18. Complaints, Protests and Appeals	Page 186
19. Disciplinary Action, Suspensions and Bans	Page 196
20. Safeguarding, Equality and Accessibility	Page 205
21. Data Protection, Media Rights and Legal Terms	Page 217



DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of these regulations:

- BEL means the British Eating League.
- Eater means any person entering, attempting or participating in a BEL competition, event or Certified Challenge, whether licensed or unlicensed.
- Event Lead means the person authorised by BEL to oversee an event and make operational decisions on the day.
- Official means a referee, Event Lead, timekeeper, counter, judge or another person authorised by BEL to perform an official role.
- BEL-sanctioned event means an event formally approved by BEL and conducted under BEL regulations.
- Certified Challenge means a restaurant or venue food challenge formally approved by BEL under Section 12.
- Official result means a result confirmed by BEL after any necessary verification or review.
- Did Not Start or DNS means an accepted entrant who does not begin the competition or attempt.
- Did Not Finish or DNF means an eater who begins but does not complete the required competition or attempt and has not been disqualified.
- Disqualification or DQ means removal of an eater's valid result because of a rules breach.
- Event-specific rules means additional rules published for a particular event, food or competition format.
- President means the Founder and President of BEL or another person formally delegated to exercise the relevant authority.

These definitions help interpretation but do not override more specific wording elsewhere in the handbook.

SECTION 1

STATUS, PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

1.1 Status

The British Eating League, referred to throughout these regulations as BEL, is an independent governing and sanctioning organisation for competitive eating throughout the United Kingdom.

BEL establishes competition rules, licenses competitors, sanctions events, approves officials, maintains rankings and records, and sets minimum standards for safety, conduct and sporting integrity.

BEL operates independently of individual competitors, venues, event organisers, sponsors and commercial partners when applying its competition rules and disciplinary procedures.

1.2 Purpose

BEL's purpose is to develop competitive eating as an organised, safe, fair and credible sporting activity.

BEL aims to:

- Create consistent and transparent competition rules.
- Protect the health, safety and welfare of participants.
- Provide a recognised pathway from amateur to professional competition.
- Maintain fair rankings, results, records and championship titles.
- Establish standards for competitors, officials, venues and organisers.
- Prevent cheating, manipulation and unsafe practices.
- Promote responsible competitive eating.
- Support the long-term development of the sport.
- Provide a clear procedure for complaints, disciplinary decisions and appeals.

1.3 Territorial scope

BEL is the independent governing and sanctioning organisation for competitive eating throughout the United Kingdom, comprising England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

BEL also administers the BEL European Open Championship and its associated European Open Championship belt.

The BEL European Open Championship may be held in any European country, subject to:

- Formal approval and sanctioning by BEL.
- Compliance with BEL competition and safety regulations.
- Compliance with the laws and regulatory requirements of the host country.
- Approval of the venue, organiser, officials and competition format by BEL.
- Completion of any insurance, medical and risk-assessment requirements specified by BEL.

As an open championship, entry is not necessarily restricted to European competitors. Eligibility, qualification requirements and the number of available places will be determined by BEL for each event.

Everyone participating in the BEL European Open Championship agrees to be bound by BEL regulations, regardless of the country in which it is held.

BEL sanctioning does not replace or override the laws, licensing requirements or public-authority regulations of the host country.

1.4 Regulatory authority

BEL has authority over:

- BEL-sanctioned competitions held within the United Kingdom.
- The BEL European Open Championship.
- Contests for the BEL European Open Championship belt.
- Other international events formally organised or sanctioned by BEL.
- BEL online and upload competitions.
- BEL-certified eating challenges.
- BEL rankings, points, records and championship titles.
- BEL competitor and official licences.
- Events operated under the BEL name, rules or branding.
- Individuals and organisations that agree to participate under BEL regulations.

BEL does not claim authority over independent competitions or restaurant challenges that have not been sanctioned or certified by BEL.

1.5 Agreement to follow BEL regulations

By entering, organising, officiating at or hosting a BEL-sanctioned activity, a person or organisation agrees to:

- Follow all applicable BEL regulations.

- Accept the authority of appointed BEL officials.
- Cooperate with reasonable safety and eligibility checks.
- Provide accurate information to BEL.
- Accept BEL's results, disciplinary and appeal procedures.
- Avoid conduct that compromises safety, fairness or the reputation of BEL.

Participation may be refused, suspended or withdrawn when these requirements are not met.

1.6 Hierarchy of rules

BEL regulations will consist of:

1. The BEL Constitution and Governance Regulations.
2. The BEL Membership and Licensing Regulations.
3. The BEL Competition Regulations.
4. The BEL Medical and Safety Regulations.
5. The BEL Ranking and Records Regulations.
6. The BEL Conduct and Disciplinary Regulations.
7. Event-specific and food-specific rules issued for individual competitions.

If two provisions conflict, the document appearing higher in this list will normally take priority. However, an event-specific safety requirement may override a general competition rule when reasonably necessary to protect participants.

1.7 Interpretation and unforeseen circumstances

BEL may issue an official interpretation where a rule is unclear or where circumstances arise that are not expressly covered.

During an event, the appointed Head Referee may make an immediate decision necessary to protect safety or allow the competition to continue fairly. That decision remains subject to BEL's complaints and appeals procedure.

1.8 Amendments

BEL may introduce, remove or amend regulations to improve safety, fairness, governance or the effective operation of competitive eating.

Material amendments will:

- Be approved through BEL's governance process.
- Carry an effective date and version number.
- Be published through an official BEL channel.

- Not normally be applied retrospectively.

Urgent safety amendments may take effect immediately.

1.9 No guarantee of recognition

A BEL licence, ranking, record, title, sanction or certification applies within the BEL regulatory system. It does not represent government approval, medical clearance or formal recognition by Sport England or another public authority unless expressly stated.

SECTION 2

CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNANCE

2.1 Governance of BEL

The British Eating League is governed in accordance with these regulations and any additional policies formally adopted by BEL.

BEL's governance structure consists of:

- The Founder and President.
- Appointed BEL officers.
- Appointed advisers and representatives.
- Disciplinary or appeal panels established when required.
- Any future board or executive committee formally created by BEL.

Everyone exercising authority on behalf of BEL must act honestly, responsibly and in the interests of BEL and competitive eating.

2.2 Founder and President

The Founder and President is the senior executive officer of BEL and is responsible for its overall direction, administration and development.

The Founder and President has authority to:

- Establish BEL's strategy and objectives.
- Approve or amend BEL regulations and policies.
- Appoint or remove BEL officers, advisers and representatives.
- Approve competitor licences and classifications.
- Sanction, refuse or withdraw approval from events and challenges.
- Approve referees and other officials.
- Confirm official rankings, records, results and championship titles.
- Enter into sponsorship, media and commercial agreements on behalf of BEL.
- Take urgent action where safety, integrity or BEL's reputation may be at risk.
- Delegate specified responsibilities to an appropriate BEL officer.

The Founder and President may make a final operational decision where these regulations do not provide a clear answer. Disciplinary and appeal matters must follow the applicable procedures contained within this handbook.

2.3 BEL officers and representatives

BEL may appoint individuals to roles including:

- Competitor liaison.
- Senior adviser.
- Head Referee.
- Event director.
- Medical or safety adviser.
- Safeguarding officer.
- Disciplinary officer.
- Media representative.
- Regional or international representative.
- Other roles reasonably required for BEL's operation.

An appointment may be paid, voluntary, permanent, temporary or limited to a particular event.

Each appointed person must:

- Act within the authority given to them.
- Follow BEL regulations and policies.
- Avoid misrepresenting their position.
- Protect confidential information.
- Declare relevant conflicts of interest.
- Conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their role.

An appointment does not give an individual ownership of BEL or authority beyond the responsibilities formally assigned to them.

2.4 Delegated authority

The Founder and President may delegate a decision or responsibility to another BEL officer.

Delegation must be clear about:

- The responsibility being delegated.
- The limits of the person's authority.
- Whether the delegation applies permanently or temporarily.
- Whether further approval is required before action is taken.

The Founder and President remains responsible for BEL's overall governance but may rely upon suitably experienced officers and advisers.

2.5 Decision-making

BEL decisions must be made using the following principles:

- Participant safety.
- Fair and consistent competition.
- Sporting integrity.
- Reasonable and proportionate action.
- Evidence available at the time.
- Compliance with BEL regulations.
- The long-term interests and reputation of BEL.

Where appropriate, reasons for a significant decision will be recorded and provided to the affected person or organisation.

2.6 Conflicts of interest

A BEL officer, referee, adviser or panel member must declare any personal, financial, family or commercial interest that could reasonably affect their impartiality.

A conflict may include:

- A close personal relationship with a competitor.
- A financial interest in a venue or event.
- A sponsorship or commercial relationship.
- A previous dispute with an affected person.
- Any other circumstance creating reasonable concern about impartiality.

BEL will decide whether the individual may continue, continue with restrictions or withdraw from the decision.

Where the Founder and President has a direct conflict, another suitable BEL officer or independent person should oversee the relevant decision wherever reasonably possible.

2.7 Records and transparency

BEL will maintain appropriate records of:

- Regulations and amendments.

- Licences and classifications.
- Sanctioned events and certified challenges.
- Competition results and official records.
- Disciplinary and appeal decisions.
- Significant governance appointments and decisions.
- Commercial agreements where records are required.

Confidential, personal, medical and commercially sensitive information will not be published unless publication is lawful, necessary and proportionate.

2.8 Financial integrity

Money received or paid on behalf of BEL must be properly recorded.

BEL will take reasonable steps to ensure that:

- Entry fees and licence payments are accurately recorded.
- Advertised prize money is available before an event.
- Competitors are informed of prize terms.
- Sponsorship arrangements are documented.
- BEL funds are used for legitimate organisational purposes.
- No officer uses their position for an undisclosed personal benefit.

2.9 Appointment and removal

BEL may appoint, suspend or remove an officer, adviser, referee or representative when reasonably necessary.

Reasons may include:

- Resignation or expiry of an appointment.
- Failure to perform the role.
- Breach of BEL regulations.
- Unsafe or inappropriate conduct.
- Loss of trust or confidence.
- A serious or undeclared conflict of interest.
- Conduct likely to damage BEL or the sport.

Urgent suspension may be imposed while a matter is investigated.

2.10 Governance development

As BEL grows, it may establish a formal board, executive committee, competitor commission, medical panel or other specialist body.

The creation of such a body must define:

- Its purpose.
- Its membership.
- Its powers and limitations.
- Its decision-making procedure.
- Its reporting responsibilities.
- How members are appointed and removed.
- How conflicts of interest will be handled.

2.11 Continuity and temporary authority

If the Founder and President is temporarily unable to act, authority may be delegated to a named senior BEL officer for a defined period.

The delegated officer may conduct necessary BEL business but may not permanently transfer ownership, dissolve BEL or fundamentally alter its constitution unless expressly authorised.

2.12 Political and organisational independence

BEL will apply its sporting regulations independently of political affiliation, personal popularity, social-media following, sponsorship value or commercial pressure.

No competitor, venue, sponsor or partner is entitled to preferential treatment in rankings, licensing, selection, discipline or competition decisions.

SECTION 3

MEMBERSHIP AND EATER LICENCES

3.1 Purpose

BEL operates a formal membership and Eater Licence system for supporters, eaters and other authorised participants.

The system exists to:

- Identify individuals registered with BEL.
- Confirm an eater's current classification.
- Maintain accurate competition, ranking and disciplinary records.
- Provide a pathway from amateur to professional competitive eating.
- Protect the integrity and credibility of BEL events.
- Allow licences to be verified through BEL's official records.

3.2 Membership and licence categories

BEL may issue the following membership and licence types:

- Official BEL Member – for supporters and followers who wish to become official members but do not compete.
- Amateur Eater Licence – the entry-level registration for individuals beginning or participating in competitive eating.
- Semi-Pro Eater Licence – for experienced eaters who satisfy BEL's assessment and participation requirements.
- Professional Eater Licence – BEL's highest eater classification, awarded only to eaters who meet the required standard.
- Official, media, sponsor, partner or venue identification – issued where required to identify an authorised relationship with BEL.

An Official BEL Membership is not an Eater Licence and does not represent an eater classification.

3.3 Entering BEL events without a licence

An eater does not normally need to hold a BEL Eater Licence to enter a BEL-sanctioned competition.

Unlicensed eaters may participate provided that they:

- Meet the event's eligibility requirements.
- Complete all required entry forms and declarations.
- Follow BEL competition, safety and conduct regulations.
- Satisfy any event-specific experience or qualification requirements.
- Are accepted by BEL and the event organiser.

An unlicensed eater may earn BEL ranking points, have results officially recorded and appear in BEL rankings in the same way as a licensed eater, provided that the event and result otherwise qualify under BEL regulations.

Holding an Eater Licence provides official registration, classification, verification and other benefits published by BEL, but does not automatically give the holder priority over an unlicensed entrant.

BEL may require a particular licence or classification for selected invitation-only, advanced or championship events where experience or qualification is necessary. Any such requirement must be clearly stated before entries open.

3.4 Licence applications

Applicants must provide the information reasonably required by BEL, which may include:

- Full legal name.
- Competition or stage name.
- Current photograph.
- Date of birth.
- Contact details.
- Country or region represented.
- Relevant competition experience.
- Health or eligibility declarations.
- Agreement to follow BEL regulations.
- Consent for necessary personal information to be recorded and processed.

A date of birth may be held privately for identity and eligibility purposes but does not need to appear on the physical licence card or public verification page.

Providing false, misleading or incomplete information may result in refusal, suspension or cancellation.

3.5 Membership and licence fees

Current annual fees are:

- Official BEL Membership: £20.
- Amateur Eater Licence: £30.

Fees for Semi-Pro and Professional Eater Licences, replacements or other categories will be published by BEL.

BEL may review its fees. Any change will apply from the date announced and will not normally affect a valid membership or licence already issued.

Payment of a fee does not guarantee approval, classification, event selection or competition entry.

3.6 Licence approval

BEL may:

- Approve an application.
- Request further information.
- Award an appropriate classification.
- Attach reasonable conditions.
- Refuse an application.
- Defer a decision until an assessment is completed.

BEL is not required to issue a licence merely because an application and payment have been submitted. If an initial application is refused, BEL will normally return the licence fee unless reasonable administrative costs have already been clearly disclosed.

3.7 Licence period and expiry

Each membership or Eater Licence is valid for 12 months from its date of issue and will carry an expiry date.

A licence is valid only while:

- The expiry date has not passed.
- The holder continues to satisfy the relevant conditions.
- It has not been suspended, withdrawn or cancelled.
- The information held by BEL remains materially accurate.

An expired licence no longer provides the benefits or status of a current licence.

Renewal is not automatic and may be subject to updated information, declarations, fees or assessment.

3.8 Physical and digital verification

An Eater Licence may include:

- The holder's photograph.
- Legal or competition name.
- Licence category.
- Unique licence number.
- Expiry date.
- Individual QR code.
- Link to an official BEL verification page.

Each licence number and verification code must be unique. Licence numbers will not be deliberately reassigned to another person.

A physical card is evidence of registration only when it matches BEL's current official records. The digital BEL record takes priority if a card is lost, altered, expired or inconsistent with the current licence status.

3.9 Nature of an Amateur Eater Licence

An Amateur Eater Licence is an entry-level registration. It confirms that the holder is registered with BEL but does not certify their competitive ability or automatically qualify them for every event.

It operates as the starting point of BEL's eater pathway.

An Amateur Eater Licence may be purchased as a gift. The licence will not become valid until the intended holder completes all required registration, eligibility and acceptance procedures.

3.10 Semi-Pro and Professional Eater Licences

Semi-Pro and Professional classifications cannot be obtained solely by paying a fee.

A Semi-Pro Eater Licence requires the applicant to satisfy BEL's assessment, experience and approval requirements.

A Professional Eater Licence is awarded by BEL and cannot be purchased as an automatic entitlement.

The detailed requirements for each classification are contained in Section 4 – Eater Classifications.

3.11 Licence-holder responsibilities

A member or licence holder must:

- Keep their information reasonably up to date.
- Protect their card, licence number and verification details.
- Not lend, transfer, copy or alter a licence.
- Not allow another person to use their identity.
- Notify BEL if a licence is lost, stolen or materially damaged.
- Follow applicable BEL rules and codes of conduct.
- Notify BEL of relevant circumstances affecting eligibility.
- Cooperate with reasonable identity or licence checks.

3.12 Non-transferability

BEL memberships, Eater Licences, classifications, rankings and licence numbers are personal to the holder.

They cannot be sold, transferred, loaned or used by another person.

Competition results and ranking points cannot be transferred between individuals or combined between separate identities.

3.13 Event entry and selection

Holding a valid Eater Licence does not guarantee:

- Entry into a particular competition.
- Selection for a championship.
- Payment of expenses.
- Prize money.
- A place at an event with limited capacity.
- Progression to a higher classification.

Entry may depend upon classification, experience, rankings, qualifying results, available places, conduct, safety considerations and event-specific rules.

3.14 Suspension, withdrawal and cancellation

A membership or Eater Licence may be suspended, withdrawn or cancelled where there is reasonable evidence of:

- A serious or repeated breach of BEL regulations.
- False information or identity misuse.
- Cheating or manipulation.
- Unsafe conduct.
- Non-payment or a reversed payment.
- Conduct that creates a material safeguarding or integrity concern.
- Failure to satisfy the continuing conditions of the licence.

Emergency suspension may be imposed where immediate action is reasonably necessary to protect participants or BEL's integrity. Any disciplinary action must then follow the applicable procedure in this handbook.

Suspension or cancellation of an Eater Licence does not necessarily prevent an individual from entering an event unless BEL separately imposes an event suspension, competition ban or other disciplinary restriction.

3.15 Replacement licences

BEL may charge a reasonable fee to replace a lost, stolen or damaged physical card.

A replacement card does not create a new identity, classification or ranking record. BEL may invalidate the previous card or verification code where necessary.

3.16 No medical or professional guarantee

A BEL membership or Eater Licence:

- Is not medical clearance.
- Is not proof that participation is safe for a particular individual.
- Is not proof of professional employment.
- Does not guarantee sporting ability.
- Does not replace event-specific eligibility or safety checks.
- Does not remove the holder's responsibility to follow medical advice.

3.17 Use of BEL status

An Eater Licence holder may accurately describe themselves using the classification currently recorded by BEL.

No person may:

- Claim a higher classification than they hold.
- Claim that an expired or suspended licence is current.
- Produce an imitation or altered BEL licence.
- Use BEL's name or branding to falsely suggest approval, employment or representation.
- Claim that BEL has sanctioned an event when it has not.

SECTION 4

EATER CLASSIFICATIONS

4.1 Purpose

BEL's Eater Classification system provides a clear pathway through recognised levels of competitive eating.

The classifications are:

1. Unclassified Eater
2. Amateur Eater
3. Semi-Pro Eater
4. Professional Eater

A classification reflects an eater's experience, conduct, safety awareness and demonstrated competitive standard. It is not based solely on the amount of food consumed or the speed of one performance.

4.2 Unclassified Eater

An Unclassified Eater is someone who participates in BEL activities without holding a current BEL Eater Licence.

An Unclassified Eater may:

- Enter BEL events where entries are open.
- Earn BEL ranking points.
- Appear in official results and rankings.
- Set a result or record where all applicable rules are satisfied.
- Apply for an Eater Licence at any time.

Being unclassified does not mean that an eater is inexperienced or ineligible. It means only that they do not currently hold a BEL classification through the Eater Licence system.

4.3 Amateur Eater

Amateur is BEL's entry-level licensed classification.

An applicant does not need previous competitive-eating experience to obtain an Amateur Eater Licence.

An Amateur Eater must:

- Complete the required application and declarations.
- Satisfy BEL's identity and age requirements.
- Agree to follow BEL regulations.
- Pay the applicable licence fee.
- Complete any introductory safety information required by BEL.

An Amateur Eater Licence confirms registration with BEL. It is not proof of competitive ability, medical fitness or guaranteed event entry.

4.4 Semi-Pro Eater

Semi-Pro status recognises an eater who has progressed beyond entry level and demonstrated appropriate experience, safety awareness and reliability.

To be considered for Semi-Pro classification, an eater should normally:

- Hold or qualify for an Amateur Eater Licence.
- Complete the BEL online rules and safety assessment.
- Complete at least three recognised competitive-eating appearances.
- Have participated in at least one live competition.
- Demonstrate an understanding of BEL rules and referee instructions.
- Have a satisfactory safety and conduct record.
- Receive formal approval from BEL.

Recognised appearances may include:

- BEL-sanctioned live competitions.
- Approved BEL online or upload competitions.
- BEL-certified challenges.
- Other competitions accepted by BEL as equivalent evidence.

Meeting the minimum requirements makes an eater eligible for consideration but does not create an automatic entitlement to Semi-Pro status.

4.5 Professional Eater

Professional is BEL's highest Eater Licence classification.

A Professional Eater Licence cannot be purchased as an automatic entitlement. It is awarded by BEL to eaters who have demonstrated a sustained high standard of competition, experience, safety and conduct.

BEL may consider:

- The eater's experience across multiple recognised competitions.
- Performances against established competitors.
- Championship, podium and ranking results.
- Consistency over time.
- Ability to compete safely in advanced events.
- Knowledge of BEL rules.
- Reliability when accepting event places.
- Conduct towards officials, venues, other eaters and the public.
- Contribution to the credibility and development of competitive eating.

A large social-media following, sponsorship arrangement or public profile does not by itself qualify an eater for Professional status.

4.6 Established eater recognition

BEL may award an initial Semi-Pro or Professional classification to an established eater whose previous competition history clearly demonstrates the required standard.

This allows BEL to recognise genuine experience obtained before the licence system was introduced or through reputable competitions outside BEL.

The eater may still be required to:

- Complete the BEL rules and safety assessment.
- Provide evidence of previous results.
- Complete all required declarations.
- Agree to BEL regulations.
- Pay any applicable licence fee.

4.7 Assessment

BEL may use assessments including:

- Online rules and safety questions.
- Review of recorded performances.
- Competition history and results.
- Observation at a live event.

- Referee or event-organiser reports.
- A discussion with the eater.
- Relevant conduct or disciplinary history.

Assessments must relate to the requirements of the classification and should not be used to unfairly favour or disadvantage an applicant.

4.8 Promotion

Promotion is not automatic.

BEL may promote an eater when satisfied that they meet the required standard. BEL may also defer promotion and explain what further experience, assessment or improvement is required.

Ranking position alone does not guarantee promotion. An eater must also demonstrate appropriate safety, conduct and reliability.

A promoted classification takes effect from the date recorded by BEL and will appear on the eater's official verification page.

4.9 Classification review

BEL may review a classification:

- At renewal.
- Following a request from the eater.
- Following significant improvement or achievement.
- After a prolonged period of inactivity.
- Where safety or conduct concerns arise.
- Where the original classification was based on inaccurate information.
- Following a disciplinary decision.

BEL may maintain, promote, condition, suspend or reduce a classification following a review.

4.10 Reduction of classification

A classification may be reduced where an eater:

- No longer demonstrates the expected standard.
- Has been inactive for a substantial period.
- Repeatedly fails to follow safety instructions.
- Commits serious or repeated misconduct.
- Obtained the classification using false or misleading information.

A reduced classification is not intended as public humiliation. It is an administrative and sporting decision designed to maintain credible standards.

Where a reduction forms part of disciplinary action, the eater will have access to the applicable appeal procedure.

4.11 Inactivity

Temporary inactivity does not automatically remove an eater's classification.

BEL may review Semi-Pro or Professional status where an eater has not participated in a recognised competition for a substantial period.

BEL will consider injury, illness, pregnancy, caring responsibilities, military service and other reasonable circumstances before making a decision.

4.12 Classification and competition entry

BEL may restrict a particular advanced event to specified classifications where reasonably necessary because of:

- The quantity or difficulty of the competition.
- Safety considerations.
- Championship qualification.
- Limited places.
- Demonstrated experience requirements.
- Broadcast, insurance or venue conditions.

Any classification restriction must be announced before entries are accepted.

4.13 Classification and rankings

Eater classification and BEL ranking position are separate.

An eater may:

- Hold a high ranking while unclassified or Amateur.
- Hold a Semi-Pro or Professional licence without occupying a high current ranking position.
- Earn ranking points regardless of licence status, provided the qualifying result complies with BEL rules.

Rankings measure competitive results. Classifications recognise overall experience, safety, knowledge, reliability and competitive standard.

4.14 No guaranteed income or employment

The term Professional Eater describes BEL's highest sporting classification.

It does not mean that:

- The eater is employed by BEL.
- BEL guarantees payment, sponsorship or expenses.
- Competitive eating is the person's principal occupation.
- The eater is guaranteed entry into competitions.
- BEL accepts responsibility for the eater's independent activities.

4.15 Classification decisions

Classification decisions are made by BEL or by an authorised assessment panel.

BEL will keep a record of the decision and may provide the eater with a brief explanation.

An eater may request reconsideration where they believe relevant evidence was overlooked or the correct process was not followed.

SECTION 5

EATER ELIGIBILITY AND AGE REQUIREMENTS

5.1 General eligibility

An eater may participate in a BEL-sanctioned activity when they:

- Meet the minimum age requirement.
- Complete the required entry documents and declarations.
- Provide accurate identity and contact information.
- Accept BEL competition, safety and conduct regulations.
- Meet any event-specific qualification requirements.
- Are not subject to a relevant suspension or competition ban.
- Are accepted by BEL and the event organiser.

An Eater Licence is not normally required unless expressly stated in the event conditions.

5.2 Minimum age

The minimum age for participation in a BEL-sanctioned competitive-eating event is 16 years old.

An eater aged 16 or 17 may enter and complete their own BEL entry declaration. BEL does not routinely require written parental or guardian consent.

No person under 16 may participate in:

- A BEL-sanctioned live competition.
- A BEL online or upload competition.
- A BEL-certified challenge undertaken for points or an official result.
- An attempt to establish a BEL record.
- Any other competitive-eating activity conducted under BEL authority.

5.3 Eaters aged 16 or 17

Eaters aged 16 or 17 may participate without a parent or guardian being present unless the published conditions of a particular event state otherwise.

They must:

- Provide accurate identity and age information.

- They may provide an emergency contact voluntarily.
- Complete all required entry and health declarations.
- Follow the same competition and safety instructions as other entrants.
- Inform BEL of any relevant issue affecting their ability to participate safely.

BEL may contact a parent, guardian or emergency contact where a serious health, welfare or safeguarding concern arises.

5.4 Events restricted to adults

BEL may designate any competition or challenge as 18+ because of:

- The quantity, duration or difficulty involved.
- The type of food or drink.
- Medical or safety advice.
- Venue or insurance requirements.
- Championship or professional status.
- Applicable laws or requirements in the host country.
- Any other material risk identified by BEL.

The minimum age must be stated before entries open.

BEL may also raise the minimum age or refuse a 16- or 17-year-old's entry where the particular activity presents an unreasonable risk.

5.5 Proof of identity and age

BEL may request reasonable evidence of an eater's identity or age.

Acceptable evidence may include a passport, driving licence, provisional driving licence or another reliable form of identification.

BEL does not need to retain a full copy where verification can be completed without doing so.

An entry may be refused where identity or age cannot be satisfactorily verified.

5.6 Health declarations

Every eater must disclose information specifically requested by BEL or the organiser that could materially affect safe participation.

An eater must not participate when:

- They have been medically advised not to do so.
- They are acutely unwell.
- They are affected by alcohol or recreational drugs.
- Their judgement or ability to compete safely is materially impaired.
- They cannot comply with the applicable safety instructions.

BEL may request appropriate medical confirmation where a declared condition creates a genuine and proportionate safety concern.

BEL officials are not responsible for diagnosing medical conditions or providing individual medical clearance.

5.7 Medication and medical conditions

A medical condition or prescribed medication does not automatically make an eater ineligible.

BEL will consider whether reasonable adjustments can allow safe participation. However, participation may be refused or restricted where the risk cannot reasonably be managed.

An eater remains responsible for following advice provided by their own qualified healthcare professional.

5.8 Pregnancy

Pregnancy does not automatically result in suspension of BEL membership, rankings or classification.

Because competitive eating may create additional health risks, an eater who is pregnant must not participate without appropriate medical advice. BEL may decline or restrict participation where necessary to protect the eater or unborn child.

Absence connected with pregnancy will be considered appropriately during any classification or inactivity review.

5.9 Nationality and residence

Unless an event's published rules state otherwise, BEL events may accept eligible eaters of any nationality or place of residence.

Nationality, residence or the country represented may be relevant to:

- National championship eligibility.
- International team selection.

- Country-specific records.
- Qualification for a particular title.
- Immigration, travel or host-country requirements.

The BEL European Open Championship is an open competition and is not automatically restricted to European nationals.

5.10 Event-specific qualification

An organiser may apply reasonable eligibility conditions approved by BEL, including:

- Previous competition experience.
- Eater classification.
- Ranking position.
- Qualification through another event.
- Invitation or selection.
- Completion of a safety assessment.
- Venue capacity.
- Insurance requirements.

Conditions must be relevant, published clearly and applied consistently.

5.11 Refusal or withdrawal of entry

BEL or an authorised event official may refuse or withdraw an entry where:

- Eligibility requirements are not satisfied.
- Required information has not been provided.
- Information appears false or misleading.
- Participation would create an unreasonable safety risk.
- The eater is suspended or banned.
- The eater refuses to follow official instructions.
- The event has reached capacity.
- Refusal is otherwise permitted under BEL regulations.

Where reasonably possible, the eater will be informed of the general reason.

5.12 Equality and fair treatment

Eligibility decisions must not be based unlawfully upon a person's race, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, religion, disability or other protected characteristic.

SECTION 6

EVENT SANCTIONING AND VENUE REQUIREMENTS

6.1 BEL-sanctioned events

A BEL-sanctioned event is a competitive-eating event formally approved by BEL.

Sanctioning may allow an event to:

- Use approved BEL branding.
- Award BEL ranking points.
- Produce official BEL results and records.
- Award an approved championship title or belt.
- Use BEL-approved referees and officials.
- Receive promotion through BEL channels.
- Be included in BEL's official event calendar.

An event is not BEL-sanctioned merely because BEL rules are used or BEL eaters are participating.

6.2 Sanctioning application

An organiser seeking BEL sanctioning must provide the information reasonably requested by BEL, including:

- Organiser and venue details.
- Proposed date, time and location.
- Competition name and format.
- Food, quantities and time limit.
- Proposed entry requirements.
- Expected number of eaters and spectators.
- Prize money and other awards.
- Proposed officials and medical provision.
- Risk assessment and emergency arrangements.
- Insurance details where requested.
- Filming, broadcast and media arrangements.
- Relevant licences, permissions or local-authority requirements.
- Any sponsorship or commercial arrangements connected to the event.

BEL may request additional information depending on the event's size, location or level of risk.

6.3 Application timescale

Applications should be submitted as early as reasonably possible.

BEL may set minimum notice periods for particular events, especially championships, major public events and international competitions.

Late applications may be considered, but BEL is not required to approve an event where there is insufficient time to assess its safety, rules, venue or organisation properly.

6.4 Provisional and final approval

BEL may grant:

- Provisional sanctioning, subject to outstanding conditions.
- Final sanctioning, once all material requirements have been satisfied.
- Conditional sanctioning, with specific limitations or additional requirements.

An organiser must not advertise an event as officially BEL-sanctioned until written approval has been issued.

Where approval remains provisional, publicity must not suggest that final sanctioning is guaranteed.

6.5 Organiser's responsibilities

The organiser remains responsible for the lawful and safe delivery of the event.

The organiser must:

- Obtain all necessary permissions and licences.
- Comply with food-safety and allergen requirements.
- Complete a suitable event risk assessment.
- Provide appropriate first-aid or medical arrangements.
- Maintain safe crowd and venue management.
- Ensure that equipment is safe and suitable.
- Follow BEL rules and sanctioning conditions.
- Provide accurate information to eaters and spectators.
- Make advertised prize money and awards available.
- Cooperate with BEL officials.
- Report serious incidents promptly.

BEL sanctioning does not transfer the organiser's legal responsibilities to BEL.

6.6 Venue suitability

The venue must be suitable for the proposed event.

BEL may consider:

- Safe capacity for eaters, officials and spectators.
- Adequate access and emergency exits.
- Stable tables, chairs and competition equipment.
- Safe food preparation, storage and service.
- Access to handwashing and toilet facilities.
- Suitable drinking water.
- Waste and cleaning arrangements.
- Space for first-aid or medical treatment.
- Access for emergency services.
- Lighting, sound and visibility for officials.
- Crowd separation from the competition area.
- Accessibility for disabled participants and spectators.
- Weather protection for outdoor events.

BEL may inspect the venue in person or request photographs, video, plans or other evidence.

6.7 Food provider requirements

Food used in a BEL event must be produced, stored, transported and served in accordance with applicable food-safety requirements.

The organiser or food provider must:

- Identify who prepared and supplied the food.
- Maintain appropriate temperature controls.
- Take reasonable steps to prevent contamination.
- Provide accurate allergen information.
- Ensure portions are reasonably consistent.
- Provide sufficient food to complete the advertised competition.
- Keep preparation and competition waste appropriately contained.
- Cooperate with any relevant local authority or food-safety officer.

BEL may refuse food that appears contaminated, spoiled, incorrectly stored or materially inconsistent.

6.8 Competition area

The competition area must be arranged to allow officials to observe every eater properly.

It should include:

- Clearly allocated eater positions.
- Stable tables and seating where required.
- Adequate separation from spectators.
- Unobstructed access for referees and medical personnel.
- Visible timing equipment where practical.
- Suitable containers for food, drinks and waste.
- Individual sick buckets or suitable equivalent provision.
- An area where a withdrawn or unwell eater can be assessed privately.

Only authorised individuals may enter the competition area while an event is in progress.

6.9 Risk assessment

A written risk assessment must be completed for each sanctioned live event.

It should consider:

- Choking and aspiration.
- Allergic reactions.
- Collapse or loss of consciousness.
- Burns from hot food or liquid.
- Food contamination.
- Slips, trips and crowd hazards.
- Weather and heat exposure.
- Equipment failure.
- Fire and evacuation.
- Aggressive or disruptive behaviour.
- Risks specific to the food, quantity or format.
- Risks affecting 16- and 17-year-old eaters.
- Access for emergency services.

The assessment must identify responsible persons and reasonable control measures.

Detailed medical standards will be contained in Section 7 – Medical, Safety and Emergency Procedures.

6.10 Insurance

The organiser must hold any insurance reasonably required for the event, venue and activities involved.

BEL may require evidence of:

- Public liability insurance.
- Employer's liability insurance where applicable.
- Event insurance.
- Venue insurance.
- Cover specifically suitable for competitive-eating activity.

An organiser must not assume that BEL sanctioning provides insurance cover.

Where suitable insurance cannot be demonstrated, BEL may refuse or withdraw sanctioning.

6.11 Officials

Each sanctioned event must have sufficient competent officials for its size and format.

BEL may require:

- A Head Referee.
- Additional table referees.
- Official timekeepers.
- A counting or scoring official.
- An event director.
- First-aid or medical personnel.
- An announcer or stage manager.
- Independent witnesses for a record attempt.

BEL must approve the Head Referee and may reject an appointment where independence, experience or competence is insufficient.

6.12 Final event confirmation

The organiser should provide final material details to BEL at least 14 days before the event, unless BEL agrees otherwise.

This should include:

- Confirmed venue and schedule.

- Competition food and format.
- Final or expected eater list.
- Officials and medical provision.
- Prize structure.
- Final risk assessment.
- Any changes from the approved application.

Eaters asked to confirm attendance should do so by the stated deadline. Late entries, withdrawals and replacements remain subject to BEL approval.

6.13 Eater arrival

Unless BEL or the event information states otherwise, eaters must arrive at least one hour before the advertised competition start time.

This allows time for:

- Registration and identity checks.
- Rules and safety briefings.
- Medical or welfare checks where required.
- Media and event preparation.
- Allocation of positions.
- Resolution of questions or eligibility issues.

An eater arriving late may lose their place where their participation would delay or disrupt the event.

6.14 Changes after approval

The organiser must notify BEL of any material change, including:

- Venue or date.
- Food or quantity.
- Time limit or competition format.
- Eligibility requirements.
- Prize money.
- Medical provision.
- Officials.
- Sponsorship.
- Expected attendance.
- Filming or broadcast arrangements.

BEL may approve the change, impose further conditions or withdraw sanctioning.

6.15 BEL name and branding

BEL's name, logos, championship titles, belt designs and official terminology may be used only as authorised.

An organiser must not:

- Alter BEL branding without approval.
- Suggest that an unsanctioned event is official.
- Create an unauthorised BEL title, belt or record.
- Use BEL's name after sanctioning has been withdrawn.
- Make misleading claims about BEL's involvement.

BEL may require inaccurate or unauthorised publicity to be corrected or removed.

6.16 Prize money and advertised benefits

Before final sanctioning, the organiser must confirm the prize money, trophies, belts or other benefits being advertised.

BEL may request evidence that prize funds are available.

Any conditions affecting payment must be disclosed before entry. An organiser must not reduce or withhold an advertised prize after the event except where permitted by published rules, such as disqualification or an unresolved eligibility investigation.

6.17 Cancellation and postponement

The organiser must notify BEL and affected eaters promptly if an event is cancelled, postponed or materially changed.

The organiser should clearly explain:

- The reason for the change.
- The new date, if known.
- What happens to entry fees.
- What happens to travel or accommodation arrangements.
- Whether existing entries remain valid.

Responsibility for refunds and expenses will depend upon the published event terms and applicable consumer law.

6.18 Withdrawal of sanctioning

BEL may suspend or withdraw sanctioning where:

- Safety requirements are not satisfied.
- Material information was false or withheld.
- Required insurance, permissions or licences are absent.
- The organiser makes an unauthorised material change.
- Officials or medical arrangements are inadequate.
- Prize commitments are not honoured.
- BEL rules or branding are misused.
- Continuing the event would create an unreasonable risk to participants or BEL.

In an urgent situation, BEL may withdraw approval immediately.

6.19 Event-day authority

The Head Referee or authorised BEL representative may:

- Delay the start.
- Require a hazard to be corrected.
- Modify a non-essential procedure.
- Remove an unauthorised person from the competition area.
- Withdraw an eater on safety grounds.
- Pause or abandon the competition.
- Recommend withdrawal of sanctioning.

Safety decisions may be made immediately and do not need to wait for a formal complaint or disciplinary process.

6.20 Post-event requirements

After the event, the organiser and officials must provide BEL with the information required to verify:

- Final results and times.
- Ranking points.
- Records or championship outcomes.
- Disqualifications and penalties.
- Serious incidents or medical interventions.
- Relevant photographs or video evidence.
- Payment of prizes where confirmation is requested.

SECTION 7

MEDICAL, SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

7.1 Safety as the first priority

The health, safety and welfare of eaters, officials, staff and spectators takes priority over competition results, records, prize money, broadcasting schedules and commercial considerations.

No eater has a right to continue where an authorised official reasonably believes that continuing would create an unacceptable risk.

7.2 Acceptance of risk

Competitive eating involves inherent risks, including:

- Choking or aspiration.
- Vomiting and regurgitation.
- Abdominal pain or injury.
- Allergic reaction.
- Burns.
- Dehydration or overhydration.
- Collapse or loss of consciousness.
- Adverse effects from spicy food.
- Aggravation of an existing medical condition.

Every eater must consider their own health and obtain medical advice where appropriate.

Acknowledging these risks does not remove the legal responsibilities of BEL, the organiser, venue, food provider or another responsible party.

7.3 Event medical plan

Every sanctioned live event must have a medical and emergency plan proportionate to its size and risks.

The plan must identify:

- The person responsible for first aid and medical coordination.

- The level of medical provision available.
- The location of first-aid equipment.
- How emergency services will be contacted.
- The full venue address and emergency access point.
- The nearest suitable emergency department where appropriate.
- Procedures for choking, allergic reaction, collapse and serious illness.
- How the competition will be stopped or paused.
- How incidents will be recorded.

7.4 Minimum medical provision

Every sanctioned live event must have at least one suitably trained and currently qualified first-aid person present throughout the competition.

BEL may require enhanced provision, including a healthcare professional, additional first aiders, specialist equipment or dedicated ambulance cover, depending on:

- Number of eaters and spectators.
- Quantity and type of food.
- Competition duration.
- Spicy or high-risk ingredients.
- Previous incidents.
- Venue location and emergency-service access.
- Advice from insurers or medical professionals.

The person providing medical cover must not also perform a role that prevents them from responding immediately.

7.5 Medical authority

An authorised first aider, healthcare professional, Head Referee or BEL safety representative may require an eater to stop.

Where medical and sporting decisions conflict, the decision protecting health and safety takes priority.

Refusing a reasonable instruction to stop will result in immediate removal and may lead to disciplinary action.

7.6 Eater responsibilities

Each eater must:

- Take reasonable responsibility for their own health.
- Answer required health questions honestly.
- Disclose requested allergies and relevant conditions.
- Follow safety briefings and official instructions.
- Stop immediately when instructed.
- Report concerning symptoms promptly.
- Not compete while acutely unwell.
- Not compete while impaired by alcohol or recreational drugs.
- Avoid medication or substances taken to conceal symptoms or enable unsafe participation.
- Ensure any essential personal medication is accessible.

BEL officials do not provide individual medical clearance.

7.7 Pre-event briefing

Before a competition begins, eaters must receive a briefing covering:

- The competition format and time limit.
- Permitted and prohibited techniques.
- The official stop signal.
- How to summon assistance.
- Location of medical personnel.
- Choking and vomiting procedures.
- Event-specific hazards.
- The right and responsibility to withdraw.
- Any required post-event observation.

An eater who misses the mandatory briefing may be refused permission to compete.

7.8 Food temperature and condition

Food must be served at a temperature and in a condition suitable for safe consumption.

BEL or the Head Referee may delay or refuse food that is:

- Dangerously hot.
- Frozen or excessively hard when not intended to be.
- Spoiled, contaminated or incorrectly stored.
- Inconsistent with the approved competition specification.
- Presented in a form creating an avoidable choking or injury risk.

7.9 Drinking water and permitted liquids

Suitable drinking water must be available unless an approved competition format expressly prohibits drinking during the timed portion.

A no-drinks format must undergo specific risk assessment and must be clearly disclosed before entry.

Water restrictions must never prevent medical personnel from providing fluid when necessary. Receiving medical assistance may end the eater's competitive attempt.

7.10 Choking or breathing difficulty

Any indication of choking or breathing difficulty must be treated as an immediate medical concern.

The competition must be stopped for the affected eater. Trained personnel must respond in accordance with their current first-aid training.

Officials and spectators must not crowd around or interfere with the response.

Emergency services must be contacted immediately where required. The eater will not be permitted to resume that attempt.

7.11 Vomiting and reversal

Vomiting, regurgitation beyond the permitted limits or food leaving the eater's mouth will be handled under the applicable competition rules.

Safety takes priority over whether the incident technically amounts to disqualification.

Each eater must have access to an individual sick bucket or equivalent suitable container. Waste must be screened and handled hygienically.

Repeated vomiting, blood, severe pain, breathing problems, confusion or reduced consciousness requires immediate medical assessment.

7.12 Withdrawal by the eater

An eater may stop at any time and does not need permission or justification.

No official, organiser, sponsor, presenter, spectator or other eater may pressure someone to continue after they have indicated that they wish to stop.

Withdrawal may end the attempt but must not, by itself, result in disciplinary action or public humiliation.

7.13 Mandatory withdrawal

An eater may be withdrawn for signs including:

- Choking or breathing difficulty.
- Collapse, fainting or loss of consciousness.
- Confusion or inability to follow instructions.
- Severe or increasing chest or abdominal pain.
- Repeated or uncontrolled vomiting.
- Serious allergic reaction.
- Loss of physical coordination.
- Dangerous distress.
- Any other symptom creating a reasonable safety concern.

An eater removed on safety grounds cannot overrule the decision by accepting personal responsibility.

7.14 Spicy and extreme-heat competitions

BEL classifies a competition as an extreme-heat event where it involves unusually hot chillies, concentrated capsaicin, chilli extracts, very high-heat sauces or another product carrying a significant risk of adverse reaction.

All extreme-heat events must be restricted to eaters aged 18 or over.

The organiser must provide BEL with:

- Full product and ingredient details.
- Available allergen information.
- Manufacturer safety warnings.
- The proposed quantity per eater.
- Available Scoville rating or other heat information.
- Details of any capsaicin extract or concentrate.
- A specific spicy-food risk assessment.
- Enhanced first-aid or medical arrangements.
- A post-event monitoring plan.

BEL may reduce the quantity, alter the format, require additional medical provision or refuse sanctioning.

7.15 Concentrated capsaicin and extracts

Pure or highly concentrated capsaicin must not be added directly to food by an organiser, venue or eater.

Commercial products containing capsaicin extract may be used only where:

- The complete product is approved by BEL.
- It is lawfully marketed for human consumption.
- Manufacturer instructions and warnings are followed.
- The portion is controlled and recorded.
- The risk assessment specifically addresses the concentration.
- Suitable medical provision is present.

Unlabelled, homemade or inaccurately measured chilli extracts are prohibited.

7.16 Spicy-event entry declarations

Before an extreme-heat event, each eater must confirm that they:

- Understand the event involves extreme spice.
- Have reviewed the available product warnings.
- Have disclosed requested medical information.
- Are not aware of medical advice telling them not to participate.
- Agree to follow all stopping and monitoring instructions.
- Understand that BEL may withdraw them at any time.

A declaration does not prevent BEL or medical personnel from refusing participation.

7.17 Spicy-event monitoring

An eater completing or withdrawing from an extreme-heat competition must remain in the designated monitoring area for the period set by the event risk assessment.

They must not leave immediately without informing the medical or safety lead.

The monitoring period should be increased where symptoms are present or where the event uses concentrated products.

Completion of the competition does not mean that the medical risk has ended.

7.18 Emergency symptoms following spicy food

Urgent medical assistance must be sought where an eater experiences symptoms including:

- Severe, persistent or increasing abdominal pain.
- Chest pain or pressure.
- Difficulty breathing or swallowing.
- Collapse, confusion or loss of consciousness.
- Repeated or uncontrolled vomiting.
- Vomiting blood or passing blood.
- Seizure.
- Signs of a serious allergic reaction.
- Any symptom considered severe or concerning by medical personnel.

BEL personnel must not delay emergency assistance to complete filming, results or presentations.

7.19 Treatment and remedies

BEL, event staff and presenters must not provide unqualified medical treatment or promise that a particular food, drink or home remedy will neutralise capsaicin or treat another medical problem.

First aid must be provided by appropriately trained personnel within the limits of their training.

Where symptoms are serious or uncertain, professional medical advice or emergency assistance must be obtained.

7.20 Allergies

Ingredient and allergen information must be made available before participation wherever reasonably possible.

Eaters must disclose requested allergies and remain responsible for reviewing the information provided.

An organiser must not guarantee that food is allergen-free unless this can be reliably established.

Where an unacceptable allergy risk cannot be controlled, entry may be refused.

7.21 Emergency equipment

The required equipment will depend on the risk assessment but may include:

- Suitable first-aid kits.
- Disposable gloves and protective equipment.
- An automated external defibrillator or confirmed access to one.
- Communication equipment.
- Individual sick buckets.
- Cleaning and clinical-waste materials.
- Screening for privacy.
- Supplies specified by qualified medical personnel.

Equipment must be accessible and checked before the event begins.

7.22 Emergency access

Routes for emergency personnel must remain clear.

The organiser must ensure that responsible staff know:

- The exact venue address.
- The best emergency entrance.
- How to direct an ambulance to the competition area.
- Who will meet emergency personnel.
- How the crowd will be controlled.

7.23 Pausing or abandoning an event

The Head Referee, medical lead or authorised BEL representative may pause or abandon an event where:

- A serious medical incident occurs.
- Medical resources are no longer adequate.
- Emergency access is obstructed.
- Several eaters become unwell.
- Food safety is compromised.
- Conditions materially differ from the risk assessment.
- Continuing would create an unreasonable risk.

7.24 Incident reporting

Any serious medical or safety incident must be reported to BEL as soon as reasonably possible.

A written record should include:

- Date, time and location.

- Name of the affected person.
- Competition and food involved.
- Symptoms observed.
- Action taken and by whom.
- Whether emergency services attended.
- Whether hospital treatment was required.
- Relevant witness, photographic or video evidence.
- Recommended changes before another similar event.

Medical information must be treated confidentially and stored appropriately.

7.25 Return following a serious incident

An eater who has experienced a serious incident may be temporarily prevented from competing.

BEL may request suitable medical confirmation before allowing a return where this is reasonable and proportionate to the risk.

Returning after an incident does not guarantee entry into the same type of event.

7.26 Review after an incident

Following a serious incident, BEL may:

- Suspend similar events.
- Review the food, quantity or time limit.
- Seek medical or specialist advice.
- Increase future medical requirements.
- Prohibit a particular product or ingredient.
- Amend its safety rules.
- Withdraw sanctioning from an unsafe format.

No event format should be repeated unchanged where previous evidence indicates that its controls were inadequate.

7.27 No waiver of responsibility

An entry form, health declaration or acknowledgement of risk does not excuse negligence or remove any responsibility that cannot lawfully be excluded.

BEL safety rules are minimum requirements. Organisers and venues must apply any additional measures required by law, insurance, professional advice or the circumstances of the event.

SECTION 8

STANDARD LIVE COMPETITION RULES

8.1 Application

These rules apply to every BEL-sanctioned live competition unless an approved event-specific rule expressly states otherwise.

Every eater, licensed or unlicensed, is bound by these rules once their entry is accepted.

8.2 Event-specific rules

BEL must publish or communicate the essential rules before the competition, including:

- Food and quantity.
- Competition format.
- Time limit.
- Whether eating is seated or standing.
- Permitted drinks.
- Whether dunking is permitted.
- Permitted utensils.
- Start and finish procedure.
- Chipmunking period, where applicable.
- Penalties specific to the event.
- How the winner will be determined.

The event-specific rules operate alongside these standard regulations.

8.3 Acceptance and confirmation

An eater offered a place must accept or decline by the stated deadline.

Where BEL requests final confirmation 14 days before an event, an eater who fails to respond may lose their place.

Accepting a place represents a genuine intention to attend. Repeatedly accepting places and later withdrawing without reasonable notice may affect future selection.

8.4 Withdrawal

An eater who can no longer attend must inform BEL or the organiser as soon as reasonably possible.

BEL will consider illness, emergency, travel disruption and other genuine circumstances.

Late withdrawal without a reasonable explanation may result in:

- A formal warning.
- Loss of priority for a future event.
- Removal from a future invitation list.
- A one-event suspension for repeated behaviour.
- Recovery of a clearly disclosed non-refundable cost where applicable.

8.5 Arrival time

Unless otherwise stated, eaters must arrive at least one hour before the advertised competition start time.

Arrival means being present at the venue and available for registration, briefing, preparation and media requirements. Arriving at the surrounding festival, car park or another part of the venue does not count as checking in.

8.6 Lateness

An eater who expects to be late must contact BEL or the event organiser immediately and provide an estimated arrival time.

Depending upon the delay and its effect on the event, BEL may impose:

- A verbal or written warning.
- Loss of a preferred position or introduction order.
- An event-specific time, quantity or ranking-point penalty announced before the competition begins.
- Loss of the eater's place in that event.
- Recording the eater as Did Not Start.
- Loss of priority for a future event.
- Suspension from one or more future BEL events for repeated or serious lateness.

Where a time or quantity penalty would not operate fairly in the particular format, BEL should use another suitable sanction.

No event is required to delay its advertised start for a late eater.

8.7 Repeated lateness and non-attendance

Repeated lateness, late withdrawal or failure to attend after confirming a place may be treated as misconduct.

An eater may be suspended from the next event for which they would otherwise have been eligible where:

- They repeatedly arrive late.
- They miss a mandatory briefing.
- They fail to attend without contacting BEL.
- Their conduct causes material disruption or expense.
- They have ignored a previous warning.

BEL may impose a longer suspension where the behaviour is deliberate, dishonest or persistent.

8.8 Exceptional circumstances

Before imposing a future-event suspension, BEL should consider:

- Illness or family emergency.
- Cancelled or severely disrupted transport.
- Road closure or exceptional traffic disruption.
- Incorrect information supplied by BEL or the organiser.
- Whether the eater contacted BEL promptly.
- Previous attendance and conduct.
- Evidence reasonably available.

Ordinary traffic, poor planning, oversleeping or beginning a journey too late will not normally amount to exceptional circumstances.

8.9 Registration

Before competing, an eater must complete all required registration steps, which may include:

- Confirming identity and eligibility.
- Signing entry and health declarations.
- Confirming emergency-contact details.
- Reviewing allergens and event risks.
- Receiving their competition position or number.
- Attending the rules and safety briefing.

Registration closes at the time stated by BEL or the organiser.

8.10 Mandatory briefing

Every eater must attend the pre-competition briefing unless specifically excused by the Head Referee.

The briefing will cover:

- Start and finish commands.
- Food and time limit.
- Permitted techniques.
- Drinking and dunking rules.
- Reversal and disqualification rules.
- Safety and medical procedures.
- Penalties and protests.
- Any event-specific requirements.

Missing the briefing may result in loss of the eater's place.

8.11 Competition position

BEL or the organiser will allocate each eater's position.

An eater must not change position without permission.

Positioning may consider:

- Referee visibility.
- Accessibility requirements.
- Media or production arrangements.
- Rankings or seeding.
- Safety and available space.
- Random allocation.

No position guarantees a sporting or promotional advantage.

8.12 Competition equipment

Eaters may use only food, drinks, containers and utensils permitted by the rules.

Unless expressly allowed, an eater must not bring or use:

- Unapproved food or condiments.

- Personal utensils.
- Modified cups or containers.
- Equipment designed to conceal food.
- Substances intended to alter or break down the competition food.
- Any item creating an unfair advantage or safety risk.

Reasonable disability-related or medical adjustments may be approved in advance.

8.13 Start procedure

The Head Referee or authorised starter controls the start.

A standard countdown may be used, followed by a clear start signal.

No food may be lifted, opened, broken, moved or eaten before the official signal unless the rules expressly permit preparation.

A false start may result in:

- A warning.
- A time or quantity penalty.
- A restart where practical.
- Disqualification for a deliberate or repeated breach.

8.14 Eating position

Competitions will normally be conducted seated unless the approved event rules state otherwise.

Eaters must remain within their allocated area.

An eater must not leave the table or competition position during the timed period unless:

- Directed by an official.
- Withdrawing from the competition.
- Receiving medical assistance.
- An emergency requires evacuation.

Leaving without permission may end the eater's attempt.

8.15 Permitted eating methods

An eater may use their hands unless the event rules require utensils.

Food may be separated, compressed, folded or broken only where the event rules permit it.

An eater must not:

- Conceal or discard food.
- Deliberately drop food.
- Transfer food to another eater.
- Place food in clothing, containers or under the table.
- Receive physical assistance.
- Interfere with another eater's food or equipment.
- Use an unsafe or prohibited technique.

8.16 Drinks and dunking

Drinks are permitted only as stated in the event-specific rules.

Where dunking is allowed:

- Only the approved liquid and container may be used.
- Food may be dipped but must not be dissolved or abandoned in the liquid.
- Excessive food debris remaining in the liquid may be deducted.
- An eater must not deliberately hide food in a drinking vessel.

Where dunking is prohibited, deliberately immersing food in liquid may result in a penalty or disqualification.

8.17 Food leaving the competition area

All competition food must remain visible and within the eater's allocated area.

Food dropped onto the floor will not count and must not be eaten.

Food displaced accidentally onto the table may be recovered only with referee permission.

Deliberately throwing, hiding or disposing of food is cheating and may result in immediate disqualification.

8.18 Quantity competitions

In a fixed-time quantity competition, the winner is the eater who consumes the greatest verified amount within the time limit.

Officials may determine consumption using:

- Completed items.
- Official portion counts.
- Pre-event and post-event weight.
- Measurement of remaining food.
- Another method approved and explained before the start.

Unswallowed food and significant debris will not count.

8.19 Speed competitions

In a fastest-time competition, an eater finishes only when:

- All required food has been consumed.
- Any applicable container-clearance requirement has been satisfied.
- The eater has swallowed.
- The eater presents a clear mouth.
- An official confirms completion.

An eater's own stopwatch, raised hand or verbal claim does not determine the official finishing time.

8.20 End signal

At the end signal, eaters must immediately stop picking up or placing additional food into their mouths.

Food already completely inside the mouth may be swallowed during the approved chipmunking period.

Food still held in the hand, on a utensil or outside the mouth at the end signal will not count.

Continuing to eat after the end signal may result in a deduction or disqualification.

8.21 Chipmunking

A chipmunking period of between 30 seconds and two minutes may be allowed after the end signal. The exact period must be stated in the event-specific rules and confirmed during the pre-event briefing.

The same chipmunking period must apply to every eater in that competition.

If no period has been announced before the start, the default chipmunking period will be 30 seconds.

During chipmunking:

- No additional food may enter the mouth.
- Only food already completely inside the mouth at the end signal may be swallowed.
- The eater must remain visible to their referee.
- Food must not be concealed, discarded or transferred.
- The eater must present a clear mouth when instructed.
- Any reversal remains subject to the normal disqualification rule.

Food not swallowed and cleared within the permitted period will not count and may be deducted from the eater's result.

8.22 Clear-mouth inspection

An eater must cooperate with a reasonable clear-mouth inspection.

The referee may require the eater to:

- Open their mouth.
- Lift their tongue.
- Move food from the cheeks.
- Swallow again.
- Present a clear mouth from another angle.

Refusing or deliberately obstructing inspection may result in the finish being rejected or the eater being disqualified.

8.23 Reversal and vomiting

A reversal occurs where swallowed or partially swallowed food returns from the stomach or throat into the mouth.

If food from a reversal leaves the eater's mouth or is deliberately swallowed again after being brought back up, the eater will normally be disqualified.

Food entering the eater's sick bucket, hands, clothing, table area or floor from the mouth constitutes a reversal and ends that eater's competition.

Safety takes priority. An eater must use the provided sick bucket when necessary and must never attempt to hide vomiting to preserve a result.

8.24 Interference and outside assistance

No person may physically assist an eater during the timed competition unless providing authorised medical help.

Coaching and encouragement from outside the competition area may be permitted, but no person may:

- Touch the eater or their food.
- Pass unauthorised items.
- Distract or obstruct another eater.
- Provide secret timing or rule-breaking instructions.
- Interfere with officials.

Medical assistance will normally end the eater's attempt where continuing would be unsafe or unfair.

8.25 Conduct during competition

Eaters must:

- Follow referee instructions.
- Treat officials and other eaters respectfully.
- Avoid deliberate mess beyond what is unavoidable.
- Not intimidate or obstruct another eater.
- Not damage venue property.
- Not behave aggressively or abusively.
- Cooperate with filming and production arrangements previously agreed.

Serious misconduct may result in immediate removal.

8.26 Standard penalties

Depending upon seriousness, intention and competitive effect, a breach may result in:

- Verbal instruction.
- Formal warning.
- Deduction of food, time or ranking points.
- Adjustment of finishing position.
- Rejection of a finish.
- Recording as Did Not Start or Did Not Finish.
- Disqualification.

- Removal from the competition area.
- Referral for disciplinary action.
- Suspension from a future event.

Where possible, penalties affecting the result should be communicated before final results are announced.

8.27 Disqualification

Grounds for disqualification may include:

- Vomiting or reversal under clause 8.23.
- Concealing or discarding food.
- Receiving prohibited assistance.
- Deliberate interference.
- Using unauthorised food, liquid, substances or equipment.
- Continuing after repeated instructions to stop.
- Serious false start.
- Refusing a safety instruction.
- Abusive or dangerous conduct.
- Deliberate cheating.
- Any event-specific disqualification offence.

A disqualified eater receives no placing or ranking points unless the applicable rules expressly provide otherwise.

8.28 Withdrawal and unfinished attempts

An eater who voluntarily stops will normally be recorded as Did Not Finish, unless the format allows a valid measured result at the point of withdrawal.

An eater who does not start will be recorded as Did Not Start.

A medical withdrawal is not automatically misconduct or a disciplinary offence.

8.29 Ties

Where two or more eaters achieve an equal result, the tie will be resolved using the method announced for the event.

This may include:

- A measured reweigh.

- A short eat-off.
- Previous round performance.
- Joint placing where appropriate.
- Another method approved by BEL.

An eat-off must not proceed where medical or safety personnel consider it unsafe.

8.30 Results

All results announced at the venue are provisional until checked and confirmed by BEL.

BEL may correct a counting, timing, weighing or administrative error after the event.

Final results should record:

- Official placing.
- Time or quantity.
- Penalties.
- Did Not Start or Did Not Finish status.
- Disqualification where applicable.
- Ranking points once confirmed.

8.31 Immediate questions and protests

An eater should raise an immediate rules or scoring concern with the Head Referee promptly and respectfully.

The Head Referee may review available evidence and correct an obvious error.

Formal complaints and appeals will be handled under Section 18 – Complaints, Protests and Appeals.

SECTION 9

FOOD-SPECIFIC AND COMPETITION-FORMAT RULES

9.1 Purpose

Every competition food and format must be approved by BEL before an event receives final sanctioning.

BEL will assess:

- The type and physical characteristics of the food.
- The total proposed quantity.
- Portion size and consistency.
- Competition duration.
- Whether the event is based on speed, quantity or completion.
- Permitted drinks and dunking.
- The experience expected of participating eaters.
- Relevant medical, choking and food-safety risks.
- Previous incidents involving the food or format.

BEL may approve, modify, restrict or refuse any proposed food, quantity, time limit or competition format.

9.2 BEL approval of quantity

BEL must be satisfied that the proposed quantity is reasonable for the particular event.

When assessing quantity, BEL may consider:

- Density and weight.
- Dryness and moisture content.
- Size and shape.
- Choking potential.
- Sugar, salt, fat, caffeine or capsaicin content.
- Whether the food expands after consumption.
- Whether it contains bones, shells, skewers or hard components.
- Whether the food is unusually hot, cold, sticky or difficult to swallow.
- The proposed time limit.
- Whether the event is open to inexperienced eaters.
- Previous BEL results and incidents.

- Medical or specialist advice.
- The overall purpose and presentation of the event.

There is no automatic right to use a quantity merely because it has previously been served as a restaurant challenge or used by another organisation.

9.3 Authority to reduce or refuse quantities

BEL may:

- Reduce the proposed number of items.
- Reduce the total weight.
- Shorten or extend the time limit.
- Change the size of individual portions.
- Require a qualification standard.
- Restrict the event to experienced eaters.
- Make the event 18+.
- Require enhanced medical provision.
- Refuse the format entirely.

Commercial value, publicity or a sponsor's request must not override a genuine safety concern.

9.4 No unauthorised increase

After BEL approves a competition, the organiser must not increase:

- The quantity.
- Individual portion size.
- Heat or spice level.
- Food temperature.
- Competition duration.
- Number of rounds.
- Any other factor materially increasing risk.

A material increase requires fresh BEL approval.

An unauthorised change may result in the event being delayed, modified or losing BEL sanctioning.

9.5 Risk categories

BEL may classify a proposed food contest as:

- Standard risk.
- Elevated risk.
- Extreme or specialist risk.

The classification may affect:

- Minimum age.
- Eater experience requirements.
- Medical provision.
- Maximum quantity.
- Event duration.
- Monitoring requirements.
- Insurance requirements.
- Whether the event can proceed.

A familiar food is not automatically standard risk when consumed competitively or in a large quantity.

9.6 Standardisation of food

Competition portions must be as consistent as reasonably possible.

The organiser should control:

- Weight.
- Size.
- Ingredients.
- Cooking method.
- Temperature.
- Sauces and toppings.
- Bun, pastry or other accompanying components.
- Number of items presented.
- Serving containers.

Small natural variations may be unavoidable. A material difference affecting difficulty or quantity must be corrected before the start.

9.7 Weighing and counting

Where results depend upon weight or quantity:

- Scales must be suitable and reasonably accurate.
- The same scales should be used throughout where practical.

- Containers and plates must be accounted for.
- Starting weights must be recorded where required.
- Remaining food and significant debris may be reweighed.
- Counts must be independently checked.
- The measurement method must be explained before the event.

BEL may require photographic or video evidence of weighing.

9.8 Food preparation and presentation

Food must be prepared and served consistently with its approved description.

Food must not be:

- Deliberately overcooked or undercooked to change difficulty.
- Altered for a particular eater.
- Served at a dangerous temperature.
- Contaminated or incorrectly stored.
- Hidden beneath sauces or packaging in a way that prevents inspection.
- Changed after the briefing without approval.

Food may be cut, separated or prepared before the start only where the event rules allow it.

9.9 Fixed-time quantity competitions

In a fixed-time quantity competition, eaters attempt to consume the greatest verified amount within a stated period.

The event rules must establish:

- Official time limit.
- Unit of measurement.
- Whether partial items count.
- How remaining food will be measured.
- Chipmunking period.
- Treatment of debris and dunking liquid.
- Tie-breaking method.

BEL may use item counts, weight or a combination of both.

9.10 Fastest-time competitions

In a fastest-time competition, every eater must receive the same required quantity and substantially equivalent portions.

The official time ends only after:

- The required food has been consumed.
- The eater has swallowed.
- The plate or container satisfies the clearance rule.
- The eater presents a clear mouth.
- Completion is confirmed by an official.

An event may impose a maximum time limit. An eater who has not completed the food within that time will be recorded as Did Not Finish or given an approved measured result.

9.11 Completion challenges

A completion challenge requires an eater to finish a stated quantity within a maximum time.

The rules must specify:

- Full required meal or food quantity.
- Maximum time.
- Required sides, sauces and drinks.
- Whether toilet breaks or leaving the table are prohibited.
- Clear-mouth and plate-clearance requirements.
- What constitutes successful completion.
- Whether partial results carry ranking points.

9.12 Elimination and round-based formats

In an elimination or multi-round event:

- The qualification requirement for each round must be stated.
- Rest periods must be defined.
- Food and quantities for later rounds must be disclosed.
- Eaters must not be required to continue where medical personnel object.
- Withdrawal must be permitted between rounds.
- Tie-breaking procedures must be established.
- The cumulative quantity across all rounds must be included in the risk assessment.

BEL may stop later rounds where earlier consumption or emerging symptoms create an unreasonable risk.

9.13 Head-to-head competitions

A head-to-head contest must use equivalent portions, rules, timing and judging for both eaters.

Where possible, neither eater should receive a material advantage from:

- Position.
- Food temperature.
- Portion size.
- Equipment.
- Start timing.
- Referee coverage.

9.14 Team and relay events

Team events must specify:

- Number of team members.
- Whether eating is simultaneous or sequential.
- Handover procedure.
- Whether substitutions are permitted.
- How penalties affect the team.
- How an individual medical withdrawal affects the result.
- Whether each member must complete a minimum portion.

No team member may consume another person's portion unless the rules expressly allow it.

9.15 Dry-food competitions

Dry, crumbly or absorbent foods may present increased choking risk.

BEL may require:

- A reduced quantity.
- A shorter timed period.
- Drinking water to be permitted.
- Limits on mouthful size.
- Enhanced referee observation.
- Additional first-aid provision.
- An experienced-eater restriction.

A no-drinks dry-food competition requires specific approval and risk assessment.

9.16 Foods that expand or swell

Extra care must be taken with foods capable of absorbing liquid or expanding significantly during or after consumption.

BEL may prohibit consumption of a food in an uncooked, underprepared or dehydrated state where expansion creates an avoidable risk.

The organiser must not rely solely on the product being legally sold as evidence that competitive consumption is safe.

9.17 Bone-in, shell-on and hard-component foods

Competitions involving bones, shells, stones, skewers or other non-edible components must have clear rules explaining:

- What must be eaten.
- What may be discarded.
- How clean bones or shells will be judged.
- How debris will be contained.
- Whether utensils or protective equipment are required.
- How the risk of cuts, broken teeth or choking will be controlled.

Skewers and sharp items should normally be removed before eating begins unless BEL specifically approves otherwise.

9.18 Chicken wings and similar foods

Wing competitions must specify:

- Number or starting weight.
- Permitted eating technique.
- Required standard for cleaned bones.
- Treatment of cartilage and gristle.
- Whether sauce must be consumed.
- How remaining meat will be assessed.
- Whether results are based on count, weight or time.

Officials must not require an eater to consume bone or another component not intended to be eaten.

9.19 Burgers, sandwiches and hot dogs

The complete competition item must be defined, including:

- Bread or bun.
- Filling.
- Toppings.
- Sauce.
- Packaging or serving paper.
- Whether components may be separated.
- Whether dunking is allowed.

An eater must not discard bread, toppings or other required components.

9.20 Pizza, pies and pastry products

The rules must state:

- Number, diameter, weight or slice count.
- Whether crusts must be consumed.
- Required toppings or fillings.
- Whether pieces may be stacked or folded.
- How loose toppings and pastry debris will be treated.
- Required serving temperature.

Crusts, pastry and required toppings form part of the competition food unless expressly excluded.

9.21 Liquids, soups and semi-liquid foods

Events involving large quantities of liquid or semi-liquid food require specific approval.

BEL will consider:

- Total volume.
- Temperature.
- Salt, sugar, caffeine and other active ingredients.
- Risk of rapid overconsumption.
- Container size.
- Spillage and measurement.
- Whether drinking rather than eating is the primary activity.

BEL may refuse any format involving an unreasonable volume or rate of liquid consumption.

9.22 Hot food and drinks

Food must not be served at a temperature likely to cause burns.

Where hot food is used:

- Temperature must be reasonably consistent.
- Adequate cooling time must be provided.
- Eaters must not be pressured to begin while food remains dangerously hot.
- BEL or the Head Referee may delay the start.
- Artificially cooling one eater's portion differently is prohibited unless required for an approved adjustment.

9.23 Frozen and extremely cold foods

Frozen-food contests must consider:

- Dental injury.
- Cold burns and pain.
- Hardness and choking risk.
- Safe serving temperature.
- Quantity and time limit.

BEL may require food to soften before the start or may refuse an excessively hard or cold format.

9.24 High-sugar, high-salt and high-fat foods

BEL may restrict quantities of foods containing unusually high levels of sugar, salt or fat.

The assessment must consider the total proposed intake rather than only the content of an individual item.

Where ingredients or nutritional information are reasonably available, the organiser must provide them to BEL upon request.

9.25 Caffeine and stimulant products

Competitions involving energy drinks, concentrated caffeine or another stimulant require specific BEL approval.

BEL may:

- Restrict the total quantity.

- Prohibit additional stimulant consumption.
- Require an 18+ age restriction.
- Require enhanced medical provision.
- Refuse the event.

Pure caffeine powder or an inaccurately measured stimulant product is prohibited.

9.26 Alcohol

BEL will not sanction an event whose primary purpose is the rapid or excessive consumption of alcohol.

BEL may approve a food competition or challenge containing a limited amount of alcohol where it forms a genuine part of:

- The meal or food product.
- A traditional event format.
- A cultural or seasonal occasion, such as Oktoberfest.
- A venue's established food challenge.
- Another special event approved by BEL.

Every approved event offering alcohol must also offer a reasonably equivalent alcohol-free alternative.

An eater must not be disadvantaged, refused entry or denied ranking recognition solely because they select the alcohol-free option.

Where alcohol is available:

- Only eaters aged 18 or over may receive the alcoholic version.
- Eaters aged 16 or 17 must receive the alcohol-free alternative.
- The type, strength and total quantity must be approved by BEL.
- The venue must satisfy all applicable alcohol-licensing requirements.
- Alcohol must not be served as shots or in a form encouraging rapid intoxication.
- Spirits or concentrated alcoholic products will not normally be approved.
- Alcohol must not be used as a dunking liquid.
- Additional alcohol must not be consumed during the competition.
- Anyone who appears intoxicated or impaired must not be allowed to compete.
- Suitable non-alcoholic fluids must remain available.
- Eaters must be reminded not to drive after consuming alcohol.

BEL may require the alcoholic and alcohol-free versions to use comparable quantities and serving containers so neither creates a material competitive advantage.

BEL may reduce the quantity, require additional controls or refuse alcohol entirely where its inclusion would create an unreasonable medical, legal, insurance or licensing risk.

9.27 Spicy food and extreme heat

Ordinarily spicy food may be approved following assessment of the ingredients, quantity, heat and event format.

An extreme-heat event involving super-hot chillies, concentrated capsaicin, chilli extracts or similar products is subject to the enhanced requirements in Section 7.

Extreme-heat events are restricted to eaters aged 18 or over.

BEL may refuse a spicy contest because of:

- Uncertain ingredients or heat level.
- Excessive quantity.
- Inadequate medical provision.
- Previous serious incidents.
- Unlabelled or homemade extracts.
- An unsuitable venue or format.

9.28 Allergens and dietary information

The organiser must provide available ingredient and allergen information.

Where alternative portions are allowed, they must be reasonably equivalent in weight, difficulty and competitive effect.

BEL is not required to create an alternative version where doing so would materially change the competition or where allergen risk cannot be safely managed.

9.29 Drinks, condiments and extras

The event-specific rules must state:

- Permitted drinks.
- Maximum drink quantity, if any.
- Whether refills are allowed.
- Whether condiments may be added.
- Whether sides and garnishes must be consumed.
- Whether dunking is allowed.

- Treatment of food debris in liquids.

Anything not expressly permitted may be refused by the Head Referee.

9.30 Testing and previous evidence

Before approving an unfamiliar food or format, BEL may require:

- A sample portion.
- Product photographs.
- Ingredient and nutritional information.
- A preparation demonstration.
- Portion weighing.
- Evidence from a previous event.
- A controlled test by an appropriate person.
- Medical or specialist advice.

A test must not itself involve an unsafe competitive attempt.

9.31 Late changes caused by food supply

Where the approved food becomes unavailable, the organiser must obtain BEL approval before substituting another product.

BEL will consider whether the replacement is equivalent in:

- Weight.
- Size.
- Ingredients.
- Texture.
- Density.
- Difficulty.
- Safety.
- Commercial description.

If it is not reasonably equivalent, BEL may change the format, notify eaters or cancel the competition.

9.32 Event-day safety review

BEL officials may inspect the food before the start.

The Head Referee or safety lead may:

- Reweigh portions.
- Require further cooling.
- Replace inconsistent or damaged items.
- Reduce the quantity.
- Change the time limit.
- Permit additional water.
- Delay or cancel the competition.

An event-day safety decision may be made even where the original format was previously approved.

9.33 Post-event review

BEL may review any food or format after an event, particularly where:

- An eater required medical treatment.
- Several eaters became unwell.
- There was repeated choking or vomiting.
- Quantities proved unreasonable.
- Portions were inconsistent.
- The time limit created unsafe behaviour.
- Officials could not judge the format reliably.

BEL may amend or prohibit the format before it is used again.

9.34 Final authority

BEL has final authority over the acceptability of food, quantity, time limit and competition format at a BEL-sanctioned event.

A venue, organiser or sponsor cannot require BEL officials to approve or continue a format they reasonably consider unsafe, unfair or unsuitable.

SECTION 10

REFEREES, OFFICIALS, TIMING AND JUDGING

10.1 Purpose

Every BEL-sanctioned event must have enough competent officials to administer the competition safely, fairly and accurately.

The number and type of officials will depend upon:

- Number of eaters.
- Competition format.
- Food and quantity.
- Difficulty of counting or weighing.
- Venue layout.
- Record or championship status.
- Medical and safety requirements.
- Filming and broadcast arrangements.

10.2 Official roles

BEL may appoint or approve:

- Head Referee.
- Table or individual referees.
- Official timekeeper.
- Counting and scoring officials.
- Weighing officials.
- Event director.
- Medical or safety lead.
- Video-review official.
- Independent witnesses.
- Other officials required for a particular event.

One person may perform more than one role where BEL considers this practical and fair, provided that it does not interfere with safety or accurate judging.

10.3 Sole referee or Event Lead

For a smaller or straightforward competition, BEL may approve one person to act as the sole referee or Event Lead.

That person may also be:

- The event compere.
- The venue owner or manager.
- The event organiser.
- A BEL representative.
- Another responsible person approved by BEL.

The sole referee or Event Lead may:

- Deliver the rules and safety briefing.
- Conduct the countdown and start the competition.
- Act as timekeeper.
- Observe eaters.
- Count or assess food.
- Issue instructions, warnings and penalties.
- Confirm finishes and clear-mouth checks.
- Stop an eater on safety grounds.
- Record and announce provisional results.

The person must understand the applicable BEL rules and must be able to give sufficient attention to judging and safety. Their other duties must not prevent them from observing the competition properly.

Where the Event Lead is the venue owner, organiser or compere, this does not automatically invalidate their decisions. Any relevant conflict of interest must be disclosed and managed as reasonably as the circumstances allow.

BEL may require additional or independent officials for:

- Major championships.
- Belt contests.
- Official record attempts.
- Large competitions.
- Complicated counting or weighing formats.
- Events where a material conflict of interest exists.
- Events where one person cannot observe every eater adequately.

10.4 Head Referee

The Head Referee has primary authority over the sporting operation of the competition.

The Head Referee is responsible for:

- Confirming the competition rules.
- Delivering or overseeing the eater briefing.
- Checking that the competition area is ready.
- Controlling the official start and finish.
- Supervising other referees and officials.
- Interpreting rules during the event.
- Issuing warnings and penalties.
- Deciding immediate protests.
- Stopping or pausing the event where necessary.
- Confirming provisional results.
- Referring serious matters to BEL.

The Head Referee's event-day decision takes immediate effect but may be reviewed through BEL's formal procedures.

10.5 Appointment and approval

The Head Referee must be appointed or approved by BEL.

BEL may consider:

- Knowledge of BEL regulations.
- Previous officiating experience.
- Ability to remain calm and impartial.
- Understanding of competition safety.
- Ability to observe and communicate clearly.
- Relevant conflicts of interest.
- Reliability and conduct.

BEL may require an official to complete training, assessment or supervised experience.

10.6 Independence and impartiality

Every official must act fairly and must not favour an eater because of:

- Friendship or family relationship.
- Sponsorship or commercial value.
- Social-media following.
- Nationality or regional connection.

- Previous disagreement.
- Personal popularity.
- Venue or organiser pressure.
- Betting or financial interest.

An official must declare any relationship or interest that could reasonably call their impartiality into question.

10.7 Conflicts of interest

A disclosed conflict does not automatically prevent someone from officiating.

BEL may:

- Permit the appointment.
- Change the person's responsibilities.
- Assign additional independent oversight.
- Prevent the person from judging a particular eater.
- Replace the official.

An eater must raise a known conflict before the competition wherever reasonably possible.

A conflict must not be invented or exaggerated simply because an eater disagrees with a decision.

10.8 Competitors acting as officials

An eater should not officiate in a competition in which they are also participating.

Where this is unavoidable, they must not:

- Judge their own performance.
- Control their own time.
- Determine a penalty affecting their result.
- Participate in a decision involving a direct rival where another official is available.

BEL may allow an eater to assist with another event or category where sufficient separation and independent oversight exist.

10.9 Number of referees

BEL will determine the required number of referees.

Where detailed observation is necessary, BEL should aim to provide one referee for each eater or one referee for no more than two eaters.

Additional coverage may be required for:

- Speed competitions.
- Bone-in foods.
- Close quantity counting.
- Record attempts.
- Championship events.
- Events where food can easily be concealed.
- Large or obstructed competition areas.

A smaller or straightforward competition may operate with one approved sole referee or Event Lead where that person can observe the event adequately.

The event must not proceed where insufficient officiating makes safe and fair judging impossible.

10.10 Officials' briefing

Officials must receive a briefing before the event covering:

- Competition format.
- Start and finish procedures.
- Counting or weighing method.
- Chipmunking period.
- Permitted drinks and dunking.
- Reversal rules.
- Food debris and deductions.
- Warnings and penalties.
- Safety and emergency procedures.
- Communication with the Head Referee.
- Recording and reporting requirements.

10.11 Positioning of officials

Officials must be positioned so they can observe:

- The eater's hands and food.
- The eater's mouth where required.
- Plates, containers and drinking vessels.
- Potential dropped or concealed food.

- Completion and clear-mouth checks.
- Signs of distress or reversal.

Spectators, photographers and production staff must not obstruct officials.

10.12 Official time

The time displayed or recorded by the appointed official timing system is the official competition time.

Personal phones, watches, stopwatches or video overlays used by eaters or spectators are not authoritative unless accepted by BEL as supporting evidence.

The timing method and level of precision must be appropriate for the event.

10.13 Timing equipment

Timing equipment must be tested before the competition.

Where practical, an event should have:

- A visible main clock.
- An official backup timer.
- An audible start and finish signal.
- Video recording capable of assisting with close decisions.
- A person specifically responsible for timing.

All official timers should begin from the same start signal.

10.14 Timing failure

If the main timer fails, the Head Referee may use:

- The official backup timer.
- Reliable video footage.
- Another synchronised timing record.
- A reasonable reconstruction supported by officials.

If an accurate result cannot be established, BEL may:

- Order a restart where safe.
- Declare the result provisional.
- Use another fair measurement.

- Declare a tie.
- Void the competition or relevant result.

A restart must not be ordered where cumulative consumption would make it unsafe.

10.15 Start control

Only the Head Referee, sole referee, Event Lead or authorised starter may begin the competition.

The start procedure should include:

- Confirmation that eaters are ready.
- Confirmation that officials are ready.
- Confirmation that medical provision is in position.
- A clear countdown.
- A single identifiable start signal.

Officials must record any false start.

10.16 Fixed-time finish

In a fixed-time competition, the official finish occurs at the end signal.

At that moment:

- Eaters must stop taking additional food.
- Referees must observe what remains in each eater's hands and mouth.
- The approved chipmunking period begins where applicable.
- Counts and remaining food must be secured.
- No plate or container may be removed until authorised.

10.17 Speed-event finish

In a speed competition, the eater must signal that they have finished and present a clear mouth.

The referee will:

- Check that all required food has been consumed.
- Confirm that required containers are sufficiently clear.
- Conduct the clear-mouth inspection.
- Confirm or reject completion.
- Record the official time.

Timing stops according to the procedure announced before the event. An eater's own signal does not guarantee that the finish will be accepted.

10.18 Counting

Counting officials must use the method approved for the event.

Counts should be:

- Recorded clearly.
- Updated consistently.
- Checked against available stock or serving records.
- Reconciled with remaining food.
- Confirmed by more than one official where practical.

An announcer's public count is not automatically the official count unless the announcer is also the approved sole referee or Event Lead.

10.19 Weighing

Where weight determines a result:

- Suitable scales must be used.
- Scales must be checked before the event.
- Containers and plates must be correctly accounted for.
- Starting and remaining weights must be recorded.
- Spillage and debris must be assessed consistently.
- A second official should witness significant measurements where practical.

BEL may require the scales and weight displays to be photographed or filmed.

10.20 Partial, crushed or compressed food

Where the event rules permit food to be broken, crushed, compressed, folded or combined, officials will make their best reasonable assessment of the amount consumed.

The official may use:

- Visual estimation.
- Original item or portion size.
- Remaining-food weight.
- Approved fractions of an item.
- Plates, wrappers and serving records.

- Photographic or video evidence.
- Comparison with untouched portions.

Where an exact count is impossible, the referee's reasonable estimate will be used.

The fact that an eater has lawfully crushed or combined food does not automatically prevent it from counting. However, the eater accepts that doing so may make precise counting more difficult.

If an eater deliberately crushes, mixes or conceals food to prevent fair assessment, officials may:

- Count only the amount clearly shown to have been consumed.
- Apply a reasonable deduction.
- Issue a warning.
- Disqualify the eater where the action amounts to deliberate cheating.

A reasonable judgement made honestly by an official will not be overturned merely because another person would have estimated the remaining food differently. It may be reviewed where clear video, weight or counting evidence shows a material error.

10.21 Warnings

A referee may give an immediate warning for a minor or correctable breach.

A warning should identify:

- The behaviour causing concern.
- What the eater must do.
- The possible consequence of repetition.

An official does not need to give a warning before disqualification where the breach is serious, deliberate, unsafe or expressly carries automatic disqualification.

10.22 Penalties

Table referees may report a suspected offence, but significant penalties should normally be confirmed by the Head Referee or sole Event Lead.

Before deciding, the decision-maker may consider:

- Direct observations.
- Reports from other officials.

- Timing and scoring records.
- Video or photographic evidence.
- The eater's explanation.
- Whether the breach was accidental or deliberate.
- Whether it created a competitive advantage.
- Previous warnings during the event.

10.23 Reversal decisions

A referee observing a possible reversal must immediately alert the Head Referee and medical personnel where required.

The official should record:

- What was observed.
- Whether food left the mouth.
- Where the food went.
- Whether the eater attempted to conceal or reswallow it.
- Any relevant video or witness evidence.

Where there is only one official, that person must prioritise safety and record the incident as accurately as circumstances allow.

Safety assistance must not be delayed while officials debate the sporting decision.

10.24 Clear-mouth judging

A clear-mouth decision must be based upon reasonable visual inspection.

The referee may require the eater to:

- Open their mouth fully.
- Lift their tongue.
- Show both cheek areas.
- Swallow again.
- Repeat the inspection from another angle.

The inspection must be conducted respectfully and only for as long as necessary.

10.25 Video review

BEL may use official or reliable independent video to review:

- Start and finish times.
- False starts.
- Reversals.
- Concealed or discarded food.
- Interference.
- Clear-mouth decisions.
- Counting or scoring errors.
- Other material incidents.

Video review is not guaranteed at every event.

Poor-quality, incomplete or selectively edited footage may be given limited or no weight.

10.26 Immediate review

The Head Referee or Event Lead may correct an obvious error before final provisional results are announced.

Where a decision cannot be resolved immediately, BEL may:

- Mark the result as provisional.
- Retain relevant evidence.
- Complete a review after the event.
- Temporarily withhold a title, prize or record.

10.27 Provisional and final results

Results announced at the venue are provisional until BEL has completed any necessary checks.

A result becomes final when BEL publishes or formally confirms it.

BEL may correct:

- Timing errors.
- Counting errors.
- Incorrect deductions.
- Eater identity errors.
- Ranking-point calculations.
- Administrative mistakes.
- A result affected by newly available evidence.

10.28 Record attempts

A BEL record attempt may require:

- Prior approval.
- A BEL-approved Head Referee or Event Lead.
- Additional independent witnesses.
- Continuous video recording.
- Verified food quantity and specification.
- Verified timing equipment.
- Clear weighing or counting evidence.
- A signed official report.

BEL may refuse record recognition where the evidence is incomplete.

10.29 Championship and belt contests

A championship or belt contest must have enhanced officiating appropriate to its importance.

BEL may require:

- An independent Head Referee.
- Additional table referees.
- Backup timing.
- Continuous video.
- Independent verification of food quantities.
- Written result sheets.
- A formal review before the title is confirmed.

A belt or title must not be awarded where the result remains subject to a material unresolved dispute.

10.30 Official conduct

Officials must:

- Act calmly and professionally.
- Avoid arguments with eaters or spectators.
- Not consume alcohol or use impairing substances while on duty.
- Protect confidential information.
- Avoid inappropriate public comments about unresolved decisions.
- Not accept a bribe, secret payment or improper benefit.
- Report suspected cheating or serious misconduct.
- Follow BEL's safeguarding and equality requirements.

10.31 Betting and financial interests

An official must not bet on a competition they are officiating.

An official must disclose any direct financial interest in an eater's result.

Undisclosed betting, bribery or manipulation may result in removal, suspension and referral for disciplinary action.

10.32 Mistakes by officials

An honest mistake does not automatically amount to misconduct.

BEL will consider:

- Seriousness of the error.
- Whether it could reasonably have been avoided.
- Whether the official reported it honestly.
- Effect on the result or safety.
- Previous performance.
- Need for further training or supervision.

BEL may correct the result, provide training, restrict appointments or remove an official where appropriate.

10.33 Removal of an official

BEL may replace or remove an official where they:

- Cannot perform their role properly.
- Are impaired or unwell.
- Act with bias.
- Have an unmanaged conflict of interest.
- Behave abusively or unprofessionally.
- Ignore safety requirements.
- Manipulate or falsify a result.
- Refuse a reasonable instruction from the Head Referee or BEL.

10.34 Official records

Officials must return required documentation to BEL, including:

- Timing sheets.

- Counts and weights.
- Warnings and penalties.
- Disqualifications.
- Incident reports.
- Provisional results.
- Record-attempt evidence.
- Relevant video references.

Records must not be deliberately altered, destroyed or withheld.

10.35 Respect for officials

Eaters may question or challenge a decision respectfully through the correct procedure.

Abuse, threats, intimidation or deliberate harassment of an official are prohibited.

Public disagreement does not replace the formal complaints and appeals process.

10.36 Final authority

The Head Referee, sole referee or Event Lead has final event-day authority over the immediate application of competition rules.

BEL has final authority to confirm, amend or overturn a provisional decision after reviewing the available evidence and applicable regulations.

SECTION 11

ONLINE AND UPLOAD COMPETITION RULES

11.1 Application

These rules apply to every BEL online competition, upload contest and remotely recorded competitive-eating attempt.

Event-specific rules may add further requirements but must not remove these standard rules unless BEL expressly approves the change.

11.2 Acceptance of the rules

Submitting footage constitutes agreement to:

- Follow BEL's competition rules.
- Accept BEL's judging and verification process.
- Observe the results embargo.
- Grant BEL permission to use the submitted footage.
- Provide further evidence where reasonably requested.
- Accept that non-compliant footage may be rejected.

Licensed and unlicensed eaters may enter where the contest conditions allow.

11.3 Age requirements

The normal minimum age for a BEL online or upload contest is 16.

BEL may make an online contest 18+ because of:

- Quantity.
- Difficulty.
- Extreme spice.
- Alcohol.
- Caffeine or stimulants.
- Another material safety concern.

Extreme-heat contests are automatically restricted to eaters aged 18 or over.

11.4 Official contest information

BEL will publish or provide:

- Required food and quantity.
- Permitted brands or products.
- Competition format.
- Time limit.
- Opening and closing dates.
- Exact submission deadline and time zone.
- Permitted drinks, condiments and dunking.
- Chipmunking period.
- Filming requirements.
- Upload method.
- Prize structure.
- How results will be judged.

Eaters are responsible for reading the complete rules before attempting the contest.

11.5 Correct food and quantity

The eater must use the exact food, brand, size and quantity required by the contest rules.

Where several brands or equivalent products are allowed, the eater must use one of the approved options.

BEL may reject an entry where:

- The product cannot be identified.
- The quantity cannot be verified.
- Packaging is missing where it was required.
- The food has been substituted.
- Portions have been materially altered.
- The required components were not included.

11.6 Packaging and preparation

Where required by the contest rules:

- All packets, boxes or containers must be shown clearly.
- Packaging must be opened on camera.
- Labels, product weights and quantities must be visible.
- Food must be counted or displayed before the start.
- Preparation must take place within the continuous recording.

- No food may be removed or substituted off camera.

BEL may allow food to be prepared before filming where the event rules clearly say so.

11.7 One continuous recording

The complete attempt must be filmed in one continuous, unedited recording.

The video must include:

- Required pre-attempt checks.
- Display and verification of the food.
- Official start procedure.
- Entire eating attempt.
- End signal.
- Full chipmunking period.
- Clear-mouth inspection.
- Display of remaining food, packaging and containers.
- Any post-attempt verification required by BEL.

The camera must not stop recording until all required checks are complete.

11.8 Editing prohibited

Submitted footage must not contain:

- Cuts.
- Pauses.
- Spliced sections.
- Speeding up or slowing down.
- Time manipulation.
- Hidden transitions.
- Filters that obstruct evidence.
- Replaced or removed audio.
- Visual effects that affect verification.
- Any other alteration capable of misleading officials.

BEL may request the original file and metadata.

Adding an introductory title or watermark to a separate social-media copy does not validate an edited competition submission. BEL must receive the original continuous footage.

11.9 Camera position and visibility

The camera must clearly show:

- The eater's face and mouth.
- Both hands.
- All competition food.
- Plates and containers.
- Drinks and dunking vessels.
- The visible stopwatch where required.
- The surrounding table area.
- Any sick bucket required by the rules.

The eater and food must remain visible throughout the timed attempt.

An obstructed, distant, blurred, dark or unstable recording may be rejected where officials cannot judge it reliably.

11.10 Stopwatch and official timing

A stopwatch or timer must remain clearly visible where required by the contest rules.

The timer should:

- Begin from the same identifiable start signal as the eater.
- Run continuously.
- Remain readable.
- Not be paused or reset.
- Continue through any applicable chipmunking period.

BEL may verify or correct the displayed time using the original video.

An eater's stated time is not official until confirmed by BEL.

11.11 Start procedure

Before starting, the eater must demonstrate that:

- The correct food and quantity are present.
- Required packaging has been shown.
- The table and competition area are clear.
- The recording is continuous.
- The timer is ready.
- No food is already in the eater's mouth.

The attempt begins from the clear start signal required by BEL.

11.12 Assistance and witnesses

Another person may:

- Operate the camera.
- Give the countdown.
- Observe the attempt.
- Assist with required pre- and post-attempt filming.

They must not:

- Touch or prepare food during the timed attempt.
- Feed the eater.
- Pass unauthorised items.
- Conceal or remove food.
- Pause or manipulate the timer.
- Obstruct the camera.
- Provide physical assistance unless responding to a medical emergency.

BEL may require an independent witness for particular contests or record attempts.

11.13 Leaving the competition area

Unless expressly allowed, an eater must not leave their chair, table or visible competition area during the timed attempt or chipmunking period.

Leaving the recording area may result in rejection, Did Not Finish status or disqualification.

This rule does not prevent an eater from withdrawing or seeking emergency assistance.

11.14 Drinks, condiments and dunking

Only drinks, condiments and dunking methods expressly permitted by the contest rules may be used.

Where dunking is allowed:

- The liquid and container must remain visible.
- Food must not be hidden or abandoned in the liquid.
- BEL may require the liquid to be shown after the attempt.

- Significant debris may be deducted.

Where the rules state no dunking, immersing food in liquid is prohibited.

11.15 End of the attempt

For a speed attempt, the eater must:

- Finish all required food.
- Swallow.
- Stop the timer in the approved manner where required.
- Present a clear mouth.
- Show cleared plates and containers.

For a fixed-time contest, the eater must stop taking additional food at the end signal.

11.16 Chipmunking

The applicable chipmunking period will be stated in the contest rules and may range from 30 seconds to two minutes.

If no period is announced, the default is 30 seconds.

During chipmunking:

- No additional food may enter the mouth.
- The eater must remain clearly visible.
- Only food already fully inside the mouth at the end signal may be swallowed.
- The eater must present a clear mouth before the period expires.
- A reversal may result in disqualification.

11.17 Clear-mouth verification

The eater must clearly show:

- Their open mouth.
- Beneath the tongue.
- Both cheek areas where requested.
- A final swallow where required.

BEL may reject a finishing time if the mouth-clearance footage is missing, obstructed or inconclusive.

11.18 Reversal and vomiting

A reversal or vomiting during the attempt or applicable chipmunking period will normally result in disqualification.

The eater must not:

- Conceal a reversal.
- Swallow food again after bringing it back up.
- Move off camera to vomit while presenting the attempt as complete.
- Edit or end the footage to hide an incident.

Safety comes first. An eater should withdraw and obtain assistance rather than attempt to preserve a result.

11.19 Safety during remote attempts

An eater must complete the attempt in a suitable and safe environment.

BEL may require:

- Another responsible adult to be present.
- Accessible drinking water.
- A sick bucket.
- A working telephone.
- Emergency-contact arrangements.
- Post-attempt observation.
- Additional safety controls appropriate to the contest.

No result or prize is more important than seeking medical assistance.

11.20 Submission method

Footage must be submitted using the method specified by BEL, which may include WeTransfer or another approved file-transfer service.

The eater must:

- Submit the original or highest-quality available file.
- Use the requested file name.
- Provide their legal and competition name.
- Provide contact details.
- Include their stated result where requested.

- Submit any required forms or declarations.
- Retain the original footage until results are final.

Posting a video on social media does not count as submitting it to BEL.

11.21 Submission deadline

The complete submission must be received by the stated deadline.

Beginning an upload before the deadline is not sufficient if BEL does not receive the file in time.

Late entries will not normally be accepted.

BEL may extend the deadline for every entrant where a widespread technical failure or another exceptional circumstance makes this fair and necessary.

11.22 Technical failures

The eater is responsible for checking:

- Camera storage.
- Battery life.
- Image and sound quality.
- Timer visibility.
- Internet and upload time.
- File accessibility.

A failed recording, corrupted file, expired transfer link or incomplete upload will not normally justify accepting an unverifiable result.

BEL may request that an eater re-upload the same original file. BEL will not normally permit the competitive attempt to be repeated after the deadline.

11.23 Confidentiality before results

An eater must not publish, disclose or allow another person to publish:

- Their finishing time.
- Quantity consumed.
- Final competition footage.
- Clips revealing their result.
- Stopwatch images.
- Rankings or placing claims.

- Hints intended to reveal or strongly suggest the result.

This restriction applies from the time the attempt is recorded until BEL officially announces or publishes the results.

11.24 Posting embargo

Competition footage must not be posted publicly before BEL releases the official results unless BEL gives express permission.

This includes posting on:

- Facebook.
- Instagram.
- TikTok.
- YouTube.
- X or other social platforms.
- Websites, forums and messaging channels.
- Subscription or members-only services.
- Another person's account.

Sending footage privately to BEL through the approved submission method is permitted.

11.25 Breach of the embargo

Publishing or disclosing a time, result or recording before BEL's announcement may result in:

- Removal of the unauthorised post.
- A formal warning.
- Loss of promotional coverage.
- A ranking-point penalty.
- Disqualification from the contest.
- Loss or withholding of prize money.
- Suspension from a future online or live event.
- Disciplinary action for repeated or deliberate breaches.

BEL will consider whether the breach was accidental, how quickly it was corrected and whether it affected the contest or official announcement.

11.26 BEL's right to use footage

By submitting footage, the eater grants BEL a non-exclusive, worldwide, royalty-free licence to:

- Store and review the footage.
- Publish the complete recording or selected clips.
- Edit, crop, subtitle, brand or format the footage.
- Use it on BEL websites and social-media channels.
- Use it in promotional, educational and commercial content.
- Supply it to event partners, sponsors, broadcasters and media organisations.
- Include it in compilations, documentaries, programmes and advertisements.
- Retain it as evidence of results, records or disciplinary matters.

This permission applies to all submitted contest and upload footage and continues after the relevant competition has ended.

11.27 Ownership and fair editing

The eater retains ownership of footage they created, subject to the licence granted to BEL.

BEL must not deliberately edit footage in a way that falsely represents:

- The eater's result.
- A rules breach.
- A medical incident.
- Something the eater said or did.

BEL may add branding, commentary, music, captions, advertising and sponsor material.

11.28 Third-party rights

The person submitting footage must take reasonable steps to ensure that:

- Anyone clearly featured has agreed to be filmed.
- The location permits recording.
- No unauthorised copyrighted music or broadcast content prevents BEL from using the footage.
- No third-party branding or material creates an avoidable legal restriction.
- The submitter has authority to grant BEL the required permission.

BEL may mute, crop or decline footage containing unauthorised third-party material.

11.29 BEL publication schedule

BEL controls when and how official results and submitted footage are released.

BEL may:

- Announce all results together.
- Release positions gradually.
- Hold footage for a scheduled programme or campaign.
- Publish selected entries rather than every submission.
- Delay publication while judging or investigating an issue.

Submitting footage does not guarantee that BEL will publish it.

11.30 Verification and further evidence

BEL may request:

- The original video file.
- File metadata.
- Additional packaging photographs.
- Proof of purchase.
- A closer view of remaining food.
- Witness information.
- Clarification from the eater.
- A repeat demonstration of the filming setup.

Failure to provide reasonably requested evidence may result in the entry remaining unverified.

11.31 Judging

BEL officials may:

- Review footage more than once.
- Use slow motion for judging.
- Compare the timer with video duration.
- Assess remaining food visually.
- Estimate crushed or combined food.
- Apply reasonable deductions.
- Refer uncertain decisions to another official.
- Mark a result provisional while further checks take place.

Where permitted food has been crushed or combined, officials will make their best reasonable assessment using the available visual and measurement evidence.

11.32 Provisional and final results

Every submitted result remains unofficial until confirmed by BEL.

BEL may classify a submission as:

- Valid.
- Valid with a penalty or adjustment.
- Did Not Finish.
- Disqualified.
- Rejected as unverifiable.
- Pending further evidence.

BEL's published result replaces the time or quantity claimed by the eater.

11.33 Cheating and manipulated footage

Deliberately manipulating footage, food, timing or evidence is cheating.

Examples include:

- Hidden edits.
- Altered playback speed.
- Replacing food.
- Concealing discarded food.
- False packaging.
- Timer manipulation.
- Staged or repeated sections presented as continuous.
- Another person completing part of the attempt.
- Submitting old footage as a current entry.
- Providing false witness information.

Cheating may result in disqualification, loss of points or prize money, suspension and wider disciplinary action.

11.34 Prizes

Prize money or awards will not be confirmed until BEL validates the result.

BEL may temporarily withhold a prize while:

- Footage is reviewed.
- Additional evidence is requested.
- A protest is considered.
- Suspected cheating is investigated.
- Eligibility is checked.

A disqualified or invalid entry is not entitled to a prize.

11.35 Data and retention

BEL may retain footage, results, entry information and related evidence for as long as reasonably required for:

- Publication.
- Record verification.
- Rankings.
- Historical archives.
- Legal or insurance purposes.
- Complaints and disciplinary matters.
- Promotion of BEL and competitive eating.

Personal and medical information not intended for publication must be handled appropriately.

11.36 Final authority

BEL has final authority to determine whether footage satisfies the contest rules and provides enough evidence to verify the result.

Popularity, follower numbers, sponsorship or previous results do not entitle an eater to have incomplete or non-compliant footage accepted.

SECTION 12

BEL-CERTIFIED RESTAURANT CHALLENGES

12.1 Definition

A BEL-Certified Challenge is a restaurant, takeaway, food venue or other eating challenge that has been formally reviewed and approved by BEL.

It may also be referred to as a Certified Challenge.

Certification confirms that the challenge has:

- A defined food specification.
- A stated quantity or weight.
- A clear time limit.
- Published completion rules.
- Appropriate safety arrangements.
- A method of verifying attempts and results.
- Agreed to operate within BEL requirements.

12.2 Purpose

The Certified Challenge programme exists to:

- Establish consistent and credible restaurant challenges.
- Allow eaters to earn BEL ranking points.
- Encourage eaters to visit participating venues.
- Protect eaters from unclear or changing rules.
- Help venues operate challenges fairly and safely.
- Create an official record of verified completions.
- Promote high-quality eating challenges across the United Kingdom and elsewhere.

12.3 Certification application

A venue applying for certification must provide information including:

- Venue and responsible-person details.
- Full challenge name and description.
- Food components and ingredients.
- Proposed total weight or quantity.

- Portion and preparation method.
- Time limit.
- Permitted drinks, condiments and utensils.
- Completion and disqualification rules.
- Prize, reward or forfeits.
- Allergen information.
- Age restriction.
- Safety and emergency arrangements.
- Proposed verification method.
- Photographs or video where requested.

BEL may request a sample, test preparation, nutritional information or further evidence.

12.4 BEL assessment

Before certification, BEL may assess:

- Total quantity and weight.
- Food density and difficulty.
- Time limit.
- Choking and medical risks.
- Spice, caffeine, alcohol, sugar and salt content.
- Food temperature.
- Consistency between servings.
- Previous attempts or incidents.
- Suitability for the intended age and experience level.
- Whether the challenge can be judged reliably.
- Whether the advertised prize and rules are clear.

BEL may approve, modify or refuse the proposed challenge.

12.5 Certification status

A challenge is not BEL-certified until BEL issues formal confirmation.

A venue must not use:

- BEL-Certified Challenge.
- Certified by the British Eating League.
- Official BEL Challenge.
- BEL ranking-points challenge.
- BEL logos or certification marks.

unless it has current authorisation from BEL.

12.6 Certification period

Certification will apply for the period stated by BEL.

Renewal may require:

- Confirmation that the challenge remains unchanged.
- Updated photographs, weight or ingredient information.
- Review of attempts and incidents.
- Updated fees where applicable.
- Confirmation of continued compliance.
- A fresh safety assessment.

Certification is not automatically permanent.

12.7 Venue responsibility for quantity and weight

The venue is responsible for ensuring that every Certified Challenge is prepared to the approved specification.

The venue must:

- Use suitable and reasonably accurate scales where weight is relevant.
- Check the quantity before serving.
- Account correctly for plates, containers and non-food items.
- Use consistent portion sizes.
- Include every required component.
- Avoid adding unauthorised food.
- Keep an appropriate record where required.
- Allow reasonable verification by the eater or BEL.

BEL certification does not transfer preparation or weighing responsibility from the venue to BEL.

12.8 Weighing procedure

Where the challenge is defined by weight:

- The approved weighing method must be used.
- The food weight should exclude the plate or serving container unless expressly stated.
- Components may be weighed separately or together as specified.
- Scales should be placed on a stable surface.

- The displayed weight should be recorded where reasonably possible.
- Any permitted tolerance must be approved by BEL.
- The venue must not deliberately exceed the approved amount.

BEL may require a photograph or video showing the weight before an attempt.

12.9 Quantity-based challenges

Where a challenge is defined by item count rather than weight, the venue must ensure that:

- The correct number of items is served.
- Items are reasonably consistent in size.
- Required sides, sauces and drinks are included.
- The serving matches the approved description.
- Substitutions have been approved.

A material increase in item size or accompanying food may be treated as a change to the challenge.

12.10 Venue errors

A venue error may include:

- Incorrect total weight.
- Incorrect number of items.
- Missing components.
- Additional unauthorised components.
- Incorrect food or ingredients.
- Incorrect time limit.
- Starting the timer too early.
- Stopping or pausing the timer incorrectly.
- Giving the eater inaccurate rules.
- Failing to record required evidence.
- Preparing a materially different challenge.

A genuine venue error will not automatically invalidate the eater's performance or result.

12.11 Resolving a venue error

Where a venue error occurs, BEL will review the available evidence and determine the fairest practical outcome.

BEL may:

- Accept the result where the error provided no material advantage.
- Adjust the recorded result.
- Award an equivalent verified completion.
- Award full or partial ranking points.
- Allow a fresh attempt without an additional challenge charge.
- Require the venue to provide the correct challenge on another date.
- Record the attempt separately from the official leaderboard.
- Declare the attempt void where no reliable result can be established.
- Suspend the challenge until the problem is corrected.

BEL will consider:

- Whether the eater acted honestly.
- Whether the eater could reasonably have identified the error.
- The size and effect of the mistake.
- Available photographs, video, weights and receipts.
- Information supplied by the venue.
- Whether the mistake made the challenge easier or harder.
- Safety and fairness to other eaters.

12.12 No automatic punishment of the eater

An eater should not lose a valid result solely because of a venue mistake they did not cause and could not reasonably have known about.

However, an eater must not knowingly exploit, conceal or encourage an error.

Where an eater becomes aware of a material mistake before starting, they should raise it with the venue.

12.13 Correcting future attempts

After a venue error, the restaurant must cooperate with BEL to prevent repetition.

BEL may require:

- Staff retraining.
- Written preparation instructions.
- A weighing checklist.
- Photographic evidence.
- Different scales or equipment.
- Revised rules.

- A change in quantity or format.
- Temporary suspension of certification.

Repeated mistakes may result in certification being withdrawn.

12.14 Changes to a Certified Challenge

A venue must obtain BEL approval before materially changing:

- Food components.
- Total weight or quantity.
- Portion size.
- Time limit.
- Spice or heat level.
- Required drinks, sides or condiments.
- Preparation method.
- Completion rules.
- Prize or reward.
- Age requirement.
- Challenge name or branding.

Minor seasonal or supplier changes may be accepted where they do not materially alter difficulty, safety or quantity.

12.15 Booking and availability

The venue may require an eater to book in advance.

The venue should clearly communicate:

- Available days and times.
- Notice required.
- Challenge price.
- Age requirements.
- Whether identification is required.
- Whether filming is permitted.
- Whether staff qualified to verify the attempt will be present.
- Any deposit or cancellation conditions.

Certification does not require a venue to offer the challenge at all times.

12.16 Eater eligibility

Licensed and unlicensed eaters may attempt a Certified Challenge unless its published conditions state otherwise.

The normal minimum age is 16.

BEL may make a challenge 18+ because of:

- Extreme spice.
- Alcohol.
- Quantity or difficulty.
- Venue or insurance requirements.
- Another material safety concern.

Where an approved challenge includes limited alcohol, an equivalent alcohol-free option must be available.

12.17 Before the attempt

Before starting, the eater should be told:

- Complete food and quantity.
- Official time limit.
- Permitted drinks and condiments.
- Whether food may be separated or squashed.
- Whether leaving the table is prohibited.
- Clear-mouth requirement.
- Reversal rule.
- Prize or reward.
- How the result will be verified.
- Any post-attempt safety requirement.

Any uncertainty should be resolved before the timer begins.

12.18 Start and timing

The timer must not begin until:

- The complete approved challenge has been served.
- Required verification has been completed.
- The eater is ready.
- The venue representative gives a clear start signal.

The time must run continuously unless the published rules expressly allow a pause.

The venue must not delay part of the food until after the timer begins unless that is an approved part of the format.

12.19 During the attempt

The eater must:

- Remain in the designated challenge area.
- Follow the published food and drink rules.
- Keep food visible.
- Not receive assistance.
- Not conceal or discard food.
- Follow reasonable safety instructions.
- Stop if instructed by authorised medical or venue personnel.

Leaving the table will normally end the attempt unless the rules state otherwise or an emergency requires it.

12.20 Completion

A challenge is complete only when:

- All required food has been consumed.
- Required drinks or sides have been completed.
- The eater has swallowed.
- A clear mouth has been presented.
- The venue representative confirms completion.
- The official time limit has not expired.

The eater's own stopwatch or declaration does not by itself verify completion.

12.21 Reversal, vomiting and live broadcasts

Vomiting or a reversal during the timed attempt, chipmunking period or required verification period will result in disqualification.

Where an attempt is being broadcast live on social media or another platform, vomiting at any time while the live broadcast of the attempt remains ongoing will result in disqualification, even where:

- All food had been completed.
- The eater had presented a clear mouth.

- The official timer had stopped.
- The venue had initially confirmed completion.
- The incident happened during the immediate celebration or aftermath.

The result will be recorded as Disqualified, not Did Not Finish.

An eater must not deliberately end, interrupt or move away from a live broadcast to conceal sickness or protect a result. Evidence that this occurred may result in disqualification and further disciplinary action.

Vomiting occurring later, after the live broadcast and required monitoring have genuinely ended, will be treated as a medical incident and reviewed under BEL's safety procedures. BEL may still investigate whether the eater concealed symptoms or whether the challenge format was unsafe.

Medical assistance must never be delayed to preserve a result or keep an incident off camera.

12.22 Verification

A Certified Challenge result may be verified using:

- Continuous video.
- Venue CCTV where suitable and lawfully available.
- Official timing.
- Before-and-after photographs.
- Food and scale photographs.
- A signed venue declaration.
- A BEL-approved witness.
- A receipt or booking record.
- Other reliable evidence accepted by BEL.

BEL may require stronger evidence for records, exceptional times or high-value prizes.

12.23 Venue representative

The venue must identify a responsible person to oversee the attempt.

That person may be:

- The owner.
- A manager.
- A trained member of staff.
- A BEL representative.

- Another approved Event Lead.

The representative must understand the challenge rules and record the result honestly.

12.24 Filming

The venue should permit reasonable filming required for BEL verification, subject to:

- Customer and staff privacy.
- Venue safety.
- Data-protection requirements.
- Reasonable restrictions on equipment or placement.
- Avoiding disruption to normal service.

Where filming is essential for ranking points, this must be explained before booking.

12.25 Submission to BEL

The eater or venue must submit the required result information within the period stated by BEL.

This may include:

- Eater's name and contact details.
- Venue and challenge.
- Date and time of attempt.
- Official finishing time.
- Completion or failure status.
- Photographs or video.
- Verification by the venue representative.
- Details of any dispute, error or medical incident.

A late or incomplete submission may remain unverified.

12.26 Provisional recognition

A venue confirmation may be treated as provisional until BEL reviews the required evidence.

BEL may:

- Confirm the result.
- Correct an obvious error.
- Request further evidence.
- Apply an approved adjustment.

- Reject an unverifiable result.
- Investigate suspected cheating.
- Temporarily withhold points or record recognition.

12.27 Ranking points

A Certified Challenge may award BEL ranking points where stated in the published BEL season rules.

The points available may depend upon:

- Successful completion.
- Finishing time.
- Challenge category.
- Difficulty.
- Number of eligible attempts.
- Compliance with verification requirements.
- Current certification status.

The detailed points system will be contained in Section 13 – Rankings, Points and the BEL Season.

12.28 Leaderboards and records

BEL may maintain:

- Venue challenge leaderboards.
- Fastest verified completion.
- Annual Certified Challenge standings.
- First or notable completions.
- National or regional records.
- A season-long Certified Challenge table.

A venue's informal leaderboard does not automatically override BEL's verified records.

12.29 Attempts and repeat attempts

The number and frequency of points-eligible attempts will be set in the challenge or season rules.

BEL may:

- Limit points to one completion per challenge each season.

- Accept an eater's best verified time.
- Allow repeated attempts without awarding repeated points.
- Impose a waiting period between attempts.
- Restrict a repeat attempt following a medical incident.

12.30 Prize and reward

The venue must clearly state the reward for successful completion.

This may include:

- The meal free of charge.
- Refund of the challenge price.
- Cash prize.
- Clothing or merchandise.
- Photograph on a wall of fame.
- Certificate or trophy.
- Another advertised benefit.

The venue must honour an earned reward unless there is a legitimate unresolved rules or eligibility issue.

12.31 Challenge charges and refunds

The venue must disclose the challenge price and any deposit before booking.

Where an attempt cannot proceed because the venue prepared the wrong challenge, BEL may expect the venue to:

- Correct the challenge.
- Reschedule without an additional charge.
- Refund the challenge payment.
- Agree another fair solution with the eater.

BEL does not directly guarantee refunds owed by an independent venue.

12.32 Food safety and allergens

The venue remains responsible for:

- Lawful food preparation and service.
- Allergen information.
- Temperature control.

- Hygiene.
- Safe equipment.
- Appropriate waste arrangements.
- Compliance with local food-safety requirements.

BEL certification does not replace an official food-hygiene inspection or local-authority approval.

12.33 Medical and emergency arrangements

The venue must have emergency arrangements appropriate to the challenge.

BEL may require enhanced provision for:

- Extreme spice.
- High quantities.
- Foods presenting increased choking risk.
- Caffeine.
- Alcohol.
- Previous medical incidents.
- Remote locations.

A venue must call emergency services where reasonably necessary and must not delay assistance to complete filming or verification.

12.34 Use of BEL branding

A certified venue may use approved BEL branding only:

- During the certification period.
- For the approved challenge.
- In accordance with BEL brand requirements.
- Without implying that the entire business is governed or guaranteed by BEL.

Certification marks must be removed if certification expires, is suspended or is withdrawn.

12.35 Complaints

An eater should first raise a straightforward preparation, timing or service issue with the venue.

A matter may be referred to BEL where it concerns:

- Certification rules.
- Ranking points.

- Result verification.
- Incorrect quantity.
- Repeated venue errors.
- Safety.
- Misuse of BEL branding.
- Failure to honour an advertised challenge reward.

BEL may request evidence from both the eater and venue.

12.36 Suspension or withdrawal of certification

BEL may suspend or withdraw certification where a venue:

- Repeatedly serves incorrect quantities.
- Changes the challenge without approval.
- Provides false results.
- Operates unsafely.
- Fails to provide allergen information.
- Refuses reasonable verification.
- Fails to honour advertised rewards.
- Misuses BEL branding.
- Does not cooperate with a serious incident review.
- Otherwise breaches certification requirements.

Urgent suspension may take effect immediately where safety or integrity is at risk.

12.37 No guarantee by BEL

BEL certification means that the challenge has been reviewed and accepted within BEL's system.

It does not guarantee:

- That every eater can complete it.
- That participation is medically safe for every individual.
- The venue's general food-hygiene standard.
- The venue's financial position.
- Availability on every date.
- That no preparation mistake will occur.
- Payment of an independent venue's debts or prizes.

12.38 Final authority

BEL has final authority over:

- Certification status.
- Ranking-point eligibility.
- Recognition of results.
- Interpretation of Certified Challenge rules.
- Remedies following a venue error.
- Suspension or withdrawal of certification.

BEL will seek the fairest reasonable outcome where a restaurant or venue makes a genuine mistake, taking account of the eater, the venue and the integrity of other results

SECTION 13

RANKINGS, POINTS AND THE BEL SEASON

13.1 Purpose

BEL maintains official rankings to recognise competitive results across sanctioned live events, online and upload competitions, and BEL-Certified Challenges.

The rankings provide:

- A transparent measure of season performance.
- A basis for awards and championship qualification.
- Recognition for consistent participation.
- A record of verified BEL results.
- A pathway for new eaters to progress through the sport.

13.2 The BEL season

Unless BEL announces otherwise, each BEL season runs from 1 January to 31 December.

Ranking points reset at the beginning of each new season.

Historical results, titles and previous final rankings remain part of BEL's permanent records even though their points do not carry into the next season.

13.3 Who may earn points

Licensed and unlicensed eaters may earn BEL ranking points.

An eater must:

- Be correctly identified.
- Meet event eligibility requirements.
- Follow BEL regulations.
- Achieve a valid, verified result.
- Not be disqualified from the relevant competition.
- Complete any required result-submission process.

Holding an Eater Licence does not provide additional ranking points.

13.4 Points-eligible activities

Points may be awarded through:

- BEL-sanctioned live competitions.
- BEL-approved online competitions.
- BEL upload contests.
- BEL-Certified Challenges.
- Championship qualifiers.
- Other activities expressly designated by BEL.

An event or challenge must be points-eligible when it takes place. BEL participation alone does not automatically create ranking points.

13.5 Live competition points

Unless different points are announced in advance, standard BEL live-event points are:

- 1st place — 22 points.
- 2nd place — 16 points.
- 3rd place — 12 points.
- 4th place — 8 points.
- Every other valid participant — 5 points.

Participation points apply to every other eater who starts and records a valid result, including an eater recorded as Did Not Finish.

13.6 Online and upload competition points

Unless different points are announced in advance, standard BEL online and upload points are:

- 1st place — 14 points.
- 2nd place — 10 points.
- 3rd place — 8 points.
- Every other valid participant — 3 points.

Participation points apply to every other eater who submits or completes a valid attempt, including an eater recorded as Did Not Finish.

13.7 Certified Challenge points

For the 2026 BEL season, a successful BEL-Certified Challenge completion earns one ranking point for each full kilogram of the challenge's approved weight.

Partial kilograms are not rounded up.

- Under 1kg — 0 points.
- 1kg to 1.99kg — 1 point.
- 2kg to 2.99kg — 2 points.
- 3kg to 3.99kg — 3 points.
- 4kg to 4.99kg — 4 points.
- 5kg to 5.99kg — 5 points.
- 6kg or more — 6 points.

For example:

- A 1.9kg challenge earns 1 point.
- A 2kg challenge earns 2 points.
- A 4.7kg challenge earns 4 points.

The maximum available for completing one Certified Challenge during the 2026 season is 6 points.

The points calculation will use the challenge weight formally approved and published by BEL. A venue cannot increase the points by serving an unauthorised additional quantity.

Points are awarded only for a successful, verified completion. An unsuccessful attempt does not normally earn points.

An eater may earn points from each different Certified Challenge once during the same season. Repeating the same challenge may improve a venue time or record but does not normally earn the same challenge points again.

BEL may change the points-per-kilogram calculation, maximum points cap or eligible quantities for a future season. Any change must be published before it applies and will not retrospectively alter points already earned.

13.8 Successful completion requirement for Certified Challenges

Certified Challenge points require successful completion unless BEL expressly announces participation points.

The result must satisfy:

- The challenge time limit.
- Completion and clear-mouth requirements.
- Venue verification requirements.
- Applicable filming or evidence rules.
- Current certification status.

13.9 Special and championship points

BEL may assign an enhanced or alternative points structure to:

- The BEL European Open Championship.
- A British Championship.
- A recognised national championship.
- A season final.
- A major invitational event.
- A multi-stage tournament.
- Another event of exceptional importance.

Any enhanced points or multiplier must be announced before entries close.

Championship status does not automatically create double points unless BEL expressly confirms it.

13.10 Points-only events

A BEL event may award ranking points without offering prize money.

The absence of prize money does not reduce the sporting validity of the result.

The event must clearly state before entry whether it offers:

- Ranking points only.
- Prize money only.
- Both points and prize money.
- Neither, such as an exhibition event.

13.11 Exhibition and charity events

An exhibition, demonstration or charity event will not award ranking points unless BEL expressly designates it as points-eligible.

An eater's appearance at a non-points event will not affect their official ranking.

13.12 Final results required

Points are not final until BEL confirms the competition results.

BEL may withhold points while reviewing:

- Video evidence.
- Timing or counting.
- A protest.
- Eligibility.
- Suspected cheating.
- A medical or rules incident.
- A venue preparation error.

Provisional points may appear temporarily but can be corrected.

13.13 Did Not Start, Did Not Finish and disqualification

An eater recorded as Did Not Start receives no points.

An eater recorded as Did Not Finish remains eligible:

- To be placed according to their verified performance.
- To receive the full points attached to that placing.
- To receive participation points if they finish outside the main points-paying positions.

Where more than one eater does not complete the required food, their positions may be determined using:

- Amount consumed.
- Amount remaining.
- Verified weight.
- Completed items or portions.
- Time reached before withdrawal.
- Another method announced in the event rules.

For example, an eater who does not complete the full quantity but achieves the second-best verified result will be placed second and receive:

- 16 points at a live event, or

- 10 points at an online or upload event.

A disqualified eater receives no placing or participation points.

13.14 Tied event results

Where eaters are officially tied, BEL will use the event's published tie-breaking procedure where possible.

If the tie remains:

- The eaters will share the tied position.
- Each will receive the points allocated to that position.
- The next placing will be skipped.

For example, two eaters tied for second would each receive second-place points, and the next eater would be placed fourth.

13.15 Ranking order

Eaters are ranked by their total confirmed points during the current season.

The eater with the highest total occupies first place.

BEL may publish:

- Overall rankings.
- Live-event rankings.
- Online and upload rankings.
- Certified Challenge rankings.
- Regional or national tables.
- Amateur, Semi-Pro or Professional tables.
- Other approved categories.

The official overall ranking is determined by total eligible BEL points.

13.16 Equal season points

Where two or more eaters finish on equal overall points, their position will be determined in this order:

1. Most BEL event victories.

2. Most live-event victories.
3. Most second-place finishes.
4. Most third-place finishes.
5. Higher total points earned at live events.
6. Best head-to-head results between the tied eaters.
7. A playoff or other method approved by BEL where necessary.

BEL may declare a shared position where applying a further tie-break would serve no reasonable sporting purpose.

13.17 Counting results

Unless BEL announces a capped or best-results system, every eligible result during the season counts towards an eater's overall points total.

BEL may introduce a system where only an eater's best number of results count, but this must be announced before the relevant season or competition series begins.

13.18 Event programme

BEL aims to provide a varied season that may include:

- Live in-person competitions.
- Online competitions.
- Upload contests.
- BEL-Certified Challenges.
- Championship and title events.
- Points-only events.

The number and type of events may change because of venues, sponsors, safety, scheduling and other operational circumstances.

A planned event programme is not a guarantee that every proposed event will take place.

13.19 Ranking updates

BEL will update the official rankings at reasonable intervals.

Updates may be delayed while:

- Results are being verified.
- A protest or appeal is outstanding.

- Evidence is incomplete.
- A calculation or identity issue is being resolved.

Unofficial tables produced by eaters, venues or supporters do not replace the rankings published by BEL.

13.20 Corrections

BEL may correct a ranking where there has been:

- A calculation error.
- Incorrect identity.
- Duplicate result.
- Incorrect placing.
- Later disqualification.
- Successful appeal.
- Previously missing verified result.
- Incorrect event points structure.

A correction is not retrospective punishment where it simply places the table into the position it should have been in.

13.21 Penalty deductions

BEL may deduct ranking points as an event or disciplinary penalty.

A points deduction may apply because of:

- A competition-rule breach.
- Publishing an online result before BEL's announcement.
- Repeated lateness or non-attendance.
- Abuse of officials.
- Dishonest or misleading conduct.
- A disciplinary decision.

BEL should state:

- Number of points deducted.
- Reason.
- Season affected.
- Whether an appeal is available.

A deduction may reduce an eater's total below zero where BEL considers this proportionate.

13.22 Cancellation and void events

No points will be awarded where a competition is cancelled before starting.

If an event begins but is later abandoned, BEL will decide whether:

- Results up to that point are valid.
- Partial points should be awarded.
- The competition should be declared void.
- A repeat event is required.

Safety must be considered before ordering a repeat competition.

13.23 Removed or amended results

Where a result is disqualified or removed after points were published:

- The eater's points will be removed.
- Other eaters may be moved into the correct positions.
- Replacement points may be awarded.
- Rankings and records will be corrected.
- Prizes or titles may be reconsidered under the applicable rules.

13.24 Name changes and eater identity

An eater's results remain connected to the same individual if they change:

- Legal name.
- Competition name.
- Social-media name.
- Sponsor.
- Eater Licence status.

An eater must not create a second identity to obtain duplicate points, avoid a penalty or conceal previous results.

13.25 Transfers between classifications

Moving between Unclassified, Amateur, Semi-Pro and Professional status does not reset or duplicate an eater's ranking points.

Points belong to the individual, not to their licence classification.

13.26 Inactivity

An inactive eater retains the points already earned during the current season unless a disciplinary decision removes them.

BEL does not guarantee that an eater will retain the same ranking position while inactive.

Previous-season points do not carry forward merely because an eater was injured, ill or unavailable.

13.27 Season winner

The eater finishing the season in first place after all results, deductions, protests and appeals are resolved will be recognised as the BEL season rankings winner.

This does not automatically make the eater:

- Holder of every BEL championship.
- European Open Champion.
- Holder of a separate competition belt.
- Winner of an event-specific title.

Rankings and championship titles are separate achievements.

13.28 End-of-season awards and prize fund

BEL may provide an end-of-season prize fund, trophies or other awards.

Before the season or award deadline, BEL will publish:

- Total confirmed prize fund.
- Positions receiving payment.
- Distribution of the fund.
- Eligibility conditions.
- Payment arrangements.
- Effect of unresolved disciplinary matters.

A proposed or targeted prize fund is not guaranteed until formally confirmed by BEL.

13.29 Publication

BEL may publish:

- Eater's competition or public name.
- Ranking position.
- Points total.
- Event results.
- Penalties affecting the table.
- Titles and records.
- Relevant historical rankings.

Private contact, medical and identity-verification information will not form part of the public rankings.

13.30 Rankings integrity

No organiser, sponsor, venue, official or eater may manipulate:

- Event status.
- Placings.
- Points.
- Participation records.
- Challenge completions.
- Timing or quantities.
- Eater identity.

Suspected manipulation may lead to removal of results, loss of points, withdrawal of event sanctioning and disciplinary action.

13.31 Final authority

BEL has final authority to:

- Determine whether an event awards points.
- Set the applicable points structure.
- Verify and correct rankings.
- Resolve tied positions.
- Recognise Certified Challenge completions.
- Apply authorised points deductions.
- Confirm the final season standings.

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SECTION 14

RECORDS, CHAMPIONSHIPS, TITLES AND BELTS

14.1 Purpose

BEL may establish and administer official:

- Records.
- Championships.
- Titles.
- Belts.
- Trophies.
- Awards.
- Regional and national honours.
- Food-specific honours.
- Seasonal honours.

These honours exist to recognise verified achievement within BEL competition.

14.2 BEL championship categories

BEL may create championships and titles including:

- BEL European Open Championship.
- Overall BEL Championship.
- British Championship.
- Home-nation championships.
- Regional championships.
- Food-specific championships.
- Meat or food-category championships.
- Venue or event championships.
- Online and upload championships.
- Certified Challenge championships.
- Ultimate Eating Championship.
- Team championships.
- Amateur, Semi-Pro or Professional championships.
- Any other championship formally approved by BEL.

BEL is not required to operate every title during every season.

14.3 Creation of a championship

Only BEL may establish an official BEL championship, title or belt.

Before the first contest, BEL should determine:

- Championship name.
- Eligibility requirements.
- Competition format.
- Whether it is open or restricted.
- Whether it is decided annually or defended.
- Status and ownership of the physical belt.
- Qualification or challenger-selection process.
- Applicable points.
- Rules for vacancies and inactivity.
- Any sponsorship or commercial designation.

14.4 Types of championship belt

A BEL belt may be designated as either:

1. Permanent Award Belt — retained permanently by the winner as the trophy for a particular event or championship; or
2. Defendable Championship Belt — held by the current champion and returned or transferred when the title changes hands.

BEL may create another belt designation where its rules are published before the contest.

14.5 Permanent Award Belt

A Permanent Award Belt becomes the winner's property once the result is final and any presentation conditions have been satisfied.

The winner may retain it permanently in the same way as a trophy.

Winning a Permanent Award Belt records the eater as champion of that particular event, edition or season. It does not necessarily create an ongoing title that must be defended.

BEL may produce a new Permanent Award Belt for a future edition of the same championship.

14.6 Defendable Championship Belt

A Defendable Championship Belt represents a continuing BEL title.

The champion may possess and display the physical belt while holding the title, but the belt remains the property of BEL unless BEL expressly transfers ownership in writing.

The champion must return the belt:

- When they lose the title.
- When the title is vacated.
- When they are stripped of the title.
- When BEL requires it for an authorised defence, presentation, repair or promotional purpose.
- At another reasonable time required under the title conditions.

The outgoing champion retains recognition as a former champion but has no right to retain the active championship belt.

14.7 Published belt designation

BEL must identify whether a belt is permanent or defendable before it is awarded.

Where the designation was not previously stated, BEL will determine the position using:

- The event advertisement.
- Statements made to the eater.
- Previous treatment of the belt.
- The nature of the title.
- Available agreements and evidence.
- Fairness in the circumstances.

14.8 Care of a defendable belt

A champion holding a defendable belt must:

- Take reasonable care of it.
- Store it securely.
- Avoid unauthorised alteration.
- Not sell, pawn or permanently transfer it.
- Not remove or replace plates without approval.
- Inform BEL promptly if it is lost, stolen or damaged.
- Make it available for an authorised defence or presentation.

BEL may seek reasonable repair or replacement costs where loss or damage resulted from deliberate or negligent conduct.

Reasonable wear from approved appearances and celebrations will not normally create liability.

14.9 Replicas and commemorative belts

BEL may provide or authorise:

- A permanent replica for a former champion.
- A miniature belt.
- A commemorative plaque or side plate.
- A championship certificate.
- Another permanent keepsake.

A replica must not be presented publicly as the current active championship belt where this would be misleading.

14.10 Winning a championship

A championship is won only through:

- A BEL-sanctioned championship competition.
- An authorised title defence.
- An approved tournament or final.
- Another formal process published by BEL.

A title cannot be claimed through an independent challenge, social-media performance or unsanctioned event.

14.11 Provisional title results

A championship result announced at an event is provisional until BEL confirms:

- Eligibility.
- Official result.
- Rules compliance.
- Any relevant video review.
- Drug, integrity or disciplinary issue where applicable.
- Resolution of a material protest.

BEL may delay transferring or presenting a defendable belt while a result remains under review.

14.12 Annual championship titles

An annual championship title is awarded to the winner of a specified championship event.

The winner remains recorded permanently as champion for that year or edition.

The next championship may:

- Award a new Permanent Award Belt.
- Require the previous winner to return a defendable belt.
- Allow the previous champion to defend the title.
- Crown a new champion through an open competition.

The applicable system must be published for that title.

14.13 Defended titles

A defended title remains with the champion until they:

- Lose an authorised title contest.
- Voluntarily vacate it.
- Are stripped of it under BEL regulations.
- Retire from the relevant competition.
- Fail to defend within the period required by BEL.
- Become permanently ineligible.
- Die.

A champion cannot lose an active title through an unsanctioned event.

14.14 Title defences

BEL has authority to determine:

- Date and location.
- Challenger or qualification process.
- Competition food.
- Quantity and time limit.
- Format.
- Officials.
- Prize arrangements.
- Medical and safety requirements.
- Whether the defence also awards ranking points.
- Whether the title changes hands in a tie or no-contest situation.

A champion does not have an automatic right to dictate every condition of a defence.

14.15 Challenger selection

A challenger may be selected through:

- BEL rankings.
- A qualifying competition.
- Tournament victory.
- Mandatory-challenger status.
- Previous championship performance.
- Public application.
- BEL selection.
- Another published qualification process.

Social-media following or sponsorship does not automatically entitle an eater to a title opportunity.

14.16 Champion participation

A champion must make reasonable efforts to participate in required title defences.

BEL will consider:

- Injury or illness.
- Pregnancy.
- Family emergency.
- Travel and immigration difficulties.
- Reasonable scheduling conflicts.
- Notice provided.
- Length of inactivity.
- Availability of challengers.
- Whether an extension can fairly be granted.

An inability to defend will not automatically be treated as misconduct.

14.17 Failure or refusal to defend

Where a champion refuses or repeatedly fails to defend without a reasonable explanation, BEL may:

- Set a final defence deadline.
- Require a mandatory defence.
- Create an interim title.
- Declare the title vacant.

- Strip the champion of the title.
- Require return of the physical belt.

BEL should give reasonable notice and an opportunity for the champion to explain before taking permanent action, except where urgent disciplinary action is necessary.

14.18 Interim championships

BEL may create an interim championship where the active champion is temporarily unable to defend.

When the active champion returns, BEL may:

- Arrange a unification contest.
- Restore the active champion without a contest.
- Recognise the interim champion as the mandatory challenger.
- Vacate one version of the title.
- Make another fair decision based on the circumstances.

An interim title must be clearly described as interim.

14.19 Vacant titles

A title may become vacant because of:

- Retirement.
- Voluntary relinquishment.
- Prolonged inactivity.
- Failure to defend.
- Suspension or disqualification.
- Permanent incapacity.
- Creation or restructuring of a championship.
- Another decision made under BEL rules.

BEL may fill a vacancy through:

- A championship event.
- A contest between leading eligible eaters.
- A tournament.
- A qualifying series.
- Another published selection method.

No eater becomes champion merely because they are ranked first unless BEL expressly awards the title through the rankings.

14.20 Voluntary relinquishment

A champion may voluntarily relinquish a defensible title.

Relinquishing a title:

- Does not erase the previous championship achievement.
- Requires return of the active physical belt.
- Does not automatically create a disciplinary offence.
- May allow BEL to arrange a contest for the vacant title.

14.21 Stripping a title

BEL may strip a champion where there is sufficient evidence of:

- Cheating in the title-winning contest.
- Serious competition manipulation.
- A major eligibility breach.
- Refusal to return or defend the belt.
- Serious or repeated misconduct.
- A substantial disciplinary suspension.
- False evidence used to obtain the title.
- Conduct fundamentally incompatible with holding a BEL championship.

Stripping a title must follow an appropriate process and may be appealed unless urgent interim action is required.

14.22 Effect of a stripped title

BEL will decide whether:

- The previous result is removed entirely.
- The title becomes vacant from the date of the decision.
- The title is awarded to the original runner-up.
- A new championship contest is held.
- Historical records show the reign but note that the title was later stripped.

The runner-up does not automatically become champion unless BEL determines that this is the fairest outcome.

14.23 Suspension of a title

BEL may temporarily suspend recognition of a title while investigating:

- Eligibility.
- Cheating.
- Result manipulation.
- A serious rules breach.
- Belt ownership or authenticity.
- Another material issue.

During suspension, the belt must not be defended or represented as fully active without BEL approval.

14.24 Championship ties and no contests

Before a title event, BEL should publish what happens in a tie.

Options may include:

- The existing champion retains.
- An eat-off or additional round.
- A rematch.
- The title remains vacant.
- Joint event recognition without joint possession of the belt.

A no contest may be declared where no valid result can be established because of timing failure, unsafe conditions, major organiser error or another exceptional circumstance.

14.25 Multiple titles

An eater may hold more than one BEL title where eligible.

BEL may require a champion to choose between titles where:

- Defence obligations conflict.
- One title is intended as a pathway to another.
- Holding both would prevent reasonable competition.
- The title rules prohibit simultaneous ownership.

14.26 Unification contests

BEL may sanction a unification contest involving:

- Active and interim champions.
- Champions of merged regions.
- Holders of restructured titles.
- Two recognised versions of a championship.

BEL must state which titles and physical belts are at stake.

14.27 Regional championships

BEL may create titles for:

- England.
- Scotland.
- Wales.
- Northern Ireland.
- English regions.
- Other British or European regions.
- Cities or defined geographic areas.

Eligibility may depend upon residence, birth, nationality, substantial connection or another published rule.

An eater must not claim a regional title for which they were ineligible.

14.28 British and national championships

BEL may operate separate British, United Kingdom or home-nation championships.

The eligibility rules must clearly explain whether the title is:

- Open to all entrants.
- Restricted by nationality.
- Restricted by residence.
- Restricted by qualification.
- Awarded separately from the overall event winner.

14.29 BEL European Open Championship

The BEL European Open Championship is an open championship administered by BEL.

It may be held in any European country and is not automatically restricted to European nationals.

The Championship may use:

- A Permanent Award Belt.
- A Defendable Championship Belt.
- A new belt for each edition.
- Another arrangement published by BEL.

The applicable arrangement must be confirmed for each Championship.

14.30 Food-specific championships

BEL may establish championships involving:

- Hot dogs.
- Burgers.
- Pizza.
- Pies.
- Sausages.
- Chicken.
- Meat categories.
- Desserts.
- Other identified foods.

A food-specific title applies only to its stated category and does not automatically make the holder the overall BEL Champion.

14.31 Ultimate Eating Championship

BEL may revive or reintroduce the Ultimate Eating Championship and its associated belt.

Before its return, BEL will publish:

- Eligibility.
- Format.
- Qualification.
- Whether the belt is permanent or defendable.
- Relationship to the overall BEL rankings.
- Defence, vacancy and title-change rules.

Previous holders and historical results may be recognised without automatically determining the next champion.

14.32 Season rankings and championship titles

The BEL season rankings winner and a championship belt holder are separate honours.

An eater may:

- Finish first in the rankings without holding a particular championship belt.
- Hold a championship belt without finishing first in the rankings.
- Win both in the same season.

Ranking points alone do not transfer ownership of a title unless the rules expressly state that the title is awarded through the final rankings.

14.33 Record categories

BEL may recognise records based on:

- Most items consumed within a fixed time.
- Fastest completion of a fixed quantity.
- Greatest verified weight consumed.
- Event, venue or food-specific performance.
- Nationality or region.
- Online or live format.
- Team performance.
- Another measurable approved achievement.

The record category must be sufficiently clear to allow future comparison.

14.34 Record requirements

A BEL record may require:

- Prior approval.
- Approved food and quantity.
- BEL-sanctioned conditions.
- Verified timing.
- Accurate counting or weighing.
- A BEL-approved referee or Event Lead.
- Independent witnesses where required.
- Continuous video.
- Clear-mouth verification.
- Compliance with safety requirements.
- Complete result documentation.

BEL may refuse a claimed record where evidence is incomplete.

14.35 Comparable conditions

A new performance can replace an existing record only where the conditions are sufficiently comparable.

BEL may consider:

- Product and recipe.
- Item size and weight.
- Cooking method.
- Required components.
- Time limit.
- Permitted drinks and dunking.
- Live or online format.
- Measurement precision.
- Rule changes.

Where conditions differ materially, BEL may create a separate record category rather than replace the existing record.

14.36 Record certification

A result is not an official BEL record until BEL confirms it.

BEL may publish:

- Record holder.
- Public or competition name.
- Date and venue.
- Food and format.
- Official result.
- Evidence or verification method.
- Previous record where relevant.

14.37 Record correction or removal

BEL may correct, suspend or remove a record where:

- Evidence was inaccurate.
- Timing or measurement was wrong.

- The eater was ineligible.
- Cheating occurred.
- The event was not properly sanctioned.
- The record category was incorrectly described.
- Later evidence makes the result unreliable.

Removing a record does not automatically transfer it to another eater unless a verified eligible performance exists.

14.38 Retired and historical records

BEL may preserve a record as historical or retired where:

- The food is no longer available.
- The rules or format materially change.
- The event is discontinued.
- Safety rules prevent another equivalent attempt.
- The category is reorganised.

A retired record remains part of BEL history but is no longer open to challenge under the original conditions.

14.39 Championship lineage

BEL may maintain a history showing:

- Championship holders.
- Date and method of winning.
- Successful defences.
- Vacancies.
- Interim reigns.
- Title changes.
- Stripped or overturned results.
- Retired championships.

BEL may correct historical records when reliable new evidence becomes available.

14.40 Sponsorship and belt branding

BEL controls commercial and sponsorship rights associated with its championships and belts.

BEL may:

- Name a championship sponsor.
- Add sponsor branding to a belt.
- Replace or update side plates.
- Produce promotional replicas.
- Use images of belts commercially.
- Require champions to make the belt reasonably available for agreed promotional use.

A champion must not permanently alter a defendable belt or add unauthorised commercial branding.

14.41 Champion appearances

BEL may reasonably request that a champion:

- Attend an agreed presentation.
- Bring a defendable belt to an authorised event.
- Participate in reasonable photography or promotion.
- Avoid falsely advertising an unauthorised defence.
- Represent their title accurately.

Personal appearances outside an existing agreement are not automatically unpaid obligations.

14.42 Unauthorised championships

No person or venue may:

- Create an unofficial BEL belt.
- Advertise an event as a BEL championship without approval.
- Claim to be a current BEL champion falsely.
- Conduct an unauthorised title defence.
- Sell or reproduce a BEL championship belt without permission.
- Use an expired or former title in a misleading way.

BEL may require misleading publicity to be corrected or removed.

14.43 Former champions

A former champion may accurately describe themselves as:

- Former BEL champion.
- Champion for the relevant year or edition.
- Previous holder of the named title.

They must not present themselves as the current champion after the title has changed hands, been vacated or been stripped.

14.44 Final authority

BEL has final authority to:

- Create, rename, suspend or retire titles.
- Determine belt designation and ownership.
- Approve championship contests and defences.
- Select or approve challengers.
- Declare titles vacant.
- Create interim championships.
- Confirm or overturn title results.
- Recognise, correct or remove records.
- Determine the appropriate outcome following an exceptional circumstance.

SECTION 15

PRIZE MONEY, ENTRY FEES AND COMMERCIAL TERMS

15.1 Purpose

This section governs:

- Competition entry fees.
- Prize money and other prizes.
- Refunds and withdrawals.
- Event cancellation or postponement.
- Travel and accommodation expenses.
- Sponsorship and commercial arrangements.
- Certified Challenge charges.
- Financial responsibilities involving BEL, organisers, venues and eaters.

15.2 Free and paid entry

A BEL event may be:

- Free to enter.
- Subject to an entry fee.
- Invitation-only.
- Restricted to qualifying eaters.
- Included as part of BEL membership or an Eater Licence.
- Funded by a venue, sponsor or commercial partner.

The entry arrangements must be made clear before an eater enters.

15.3 Entry fees

BEL, the organiser or the host venue may charge a reasonable entry fee.

Before accepting payment, the organiser should state:

- The amount payable.
- What the payment covers.
- Whether food and drink are included.
- Whether the fee is refundable.
- The withdrawal deadline.

- Any booking or administration charge.
- Whether places are limited.
- Any eligibility requirements.

An entry is not confirmed until any required payment has been received and the eater has been accepted.

15.4 BEL membership and Eater Licence fees

BEL membership fees and Eater Licence fees are separate from individual competition entry fees unless expressly stated otherwise.

Purchasing BEL membership or an Eater Licence does not automatically include entry into every BEL event.

An eater without an Eater Licence may still enter an event and earn ranking points where the event rules allow this.

15.5 Payment methods

BEL or the organiser may specify the accepted payment methods.

Eaters are responsible for:

- Using the correct payment details.
- Providing an accurate name and reference.
- Paying by the stated deadline.
- Retaining reasonable proof of payment.

BEL is not responsible for a payment sent to incorrect details that were not supplied or authorised by BEL.

15.6 Entry-fee refunds

Refund decisions will be made according to the terms of the individual event and the eater's circumstances.

BEL or the organiser may consider:

- The amount of notice provided.
- The reason for withdrawal.
- Food or resources already purchased.
- Venue and administration costs already incurred.

- Whether the place can reasonably be offered to another eater.
- Any exceptional personal circumstances.
- Fairness to the other entrants and organiser.

An entry fee will normally be refundable where:

- BEL or the organiser cancels the event.
- The eater is rejected because they are ineligible and had not supplied false or misleading information.
- The organiser makes a substantial change that materially affects the eater's entry.
- BEL determines that a refund is fair because of exceptional circumstances.

Any statutory rights held by the eater remain unaffected.

15.7 Eater withdrawal

An eater who withdraws must inform BEL or the organiser as soon as reasonably possible.

Depending upon the individual event and the eater's circumstances, BEL or the organiser may provide:

- A full refund.
- A partial refund.
- Credit towards a future event.
- Transfer to another event.
- No refund where reasonable costs have already been committed.

Where an eater withdraws after a published refund deadline, the entry fee may be retained to cover:

- Food already purchased or prepared.
- Venue costs.
- Administration.
- A place that could no longer reasonably be offered to another eater.
- Other committed event expenses.

15.8 Illness, injury and emergencies

BEL may consider a refund, credit or transfer where an eater withdraws because of:

- Illness or injury.
- Pregnancy.
- Family emergency.

- Bereavement.
- Serious travel disruption.
- Another exceptional circumstance.

Evidence may be requested where reasonable, but BEL is not required to demand private medical information in every case.

Safety must take priority over an eater competing merely to avoid losing an entry fee.

15.9 Failure to attend

An eater who does not attend and does not provide reasonable notice will normally lose their entry fee.

A failure to attend may also be considered under BEL's lateness, conduct or disciplinary rules where:

- The eater had confirmed their attendance.
- Food or resources had been purchased specifically for them.
- Their absence affected the competition.
- There is repeated non-attendance.

15.10 Late arrival

An eater who arrives late is not automatically entitled to:

- Delay the event.
- Receive a refund.
- Enter after the competition has started.
- Receive ranking or participation points.

BEL may still permit entry where this can be done safely and fairly.

Any additional penalty or future disqualification will be handled under the applicable competition and disciplinary rules.

15.11 Transfers and replacement eaters

An entry may not be sold, transferred or given to another person without approval.

BEL or the organiser may allow:

- Transfer to another eligible eater.

- Entry into a future event.
- Replacement from a reserve list.
- A name change before the entry deadline.

The replacement eater must satisfy all applicable eligibility and safety requirements.

15.12 Event cancellation

Where BEL or the organiser cancels an event and no reasonable replacement event is offered, paid entry fees should normally be refunded.

BEL is not automatically responsible for an eater's separate costs, including:

- Travel.
- Hotels.
- Lost earnings.
- Childcare.
- Equipment.
- Food bought independently.

This does not remove any legal responsibility that cannot lawfully be excluded.

15.13 Event postponement

Where an event is postponed, an eater should normally be offered:

- Transfer to the replacement date; or
- A refund where they cannot reasonably attend the new date.

BEL may set a reasonable deadline for the eater to select an option.

Failure to respond by that deadline may result in the entry being transferred automatically or otherwise handled under the published event terms.

15.14 Event changes

BEL may make reasonable changes to an event, including:

- Start time.
- Running order.
- Food brand or supplier.
- Venue within a reasonable distance.
- Competition format.

- Prize presentation arrangements.
- Officials.
- Safety measures.
- Number of heats.

A substantial change that materially alters the competition may give an eater the right to withdraw and request a refund.

Minor operational changes will not normally create an automatic right to a refund.

15.15 Abandoned or interrupted competitions

If a competition is abandoned or interrupted, BEL will determine whether to:

- Confirm the result at the point of interruption.
- Resume the competition.
- Restart the competition.
- Arrange a replacement event.
- Divide or carry forward the prize fund.
- Refund entry fees.
- Declare the competition void.

BEL will consider safety, fairness, food already consumed, elapsed time, available evidence and whether a reliable result can be established.

15.16 Advertising prize money

Prize money must be advertised clearly and accurately.

The published information should state:

- Total prize fund.
- Amount or prize for each placing.
- Whether the prize is guaranteed.
- Whether it depends upon a minimum number of entries.
- Whether it is cash, goods, vouchers or another benefit.
- Any lawful eligibility condition.
- Expected payment or delivery date.

An organiser must not advertise prize money that it has no reasonable ability or intention to provide.

15.17 Guaranteed and conditional prize funds

A prize fund may depend upon a minimum number of entries only where that condition, the required entry number and any possible revised amounts were clearly disclosed before entry.

A prize described as guaranteed must not be reduced merely because:

- Entry numbers are lower than expected.
- Ticket sales are poor.
- A sponsor withdraws.
- The organiser's costs increase.

BEL may refuse to sanction an event where the advertised prize fund is misleading or insufficiently secured.

15.18 Responsibility for prizes

Before sanctioning an event, BEL should identify whether the prize is provided by:

- BEL.
- The host venue.
- An event organiser.
- A sponsor.
- Another named partner.

Unless BEL has expressly accepted responsibility for the prize, BEL is not automatically the debtor for a prize promised independently by a venue, organiser or sponsor.

BEL may nevertheless assist the eater, investigate the matter and take action against an organiser that fails to honour an approved prize.

15.19 Prize eligibility

An eater is entitled to a prize only after:

- The result has been confirmed.
- Eligibility has been verified.
- Any required evidence has been received.
- Any material protest has been resolved.
- The eater has complied with the relevant competition rules.

A provisional result does not create an unconditional right to immediate payment.

15.20 Prize-payment period

Unless a different payment date was published before the event, prize money should normally be paid within 28 days after the result becomes final.

Payment may be delayed where:

- Identity or payment details have not been supplied.
- A result is under formal review.
- A protest or appeal could affect the placing.
- Fraud or cheating is being investigated.
- A sponsor-funded prize is subject to an agreed payment process.
- Another genuine administrative or legal issue exists.

The eater should be informed of a material delay and given a reasonable explanation.

15.21 Payment information

A prize winner must provide accurate payment information within the requested period.

BEL or the prize provider may require:

- Full legal name.
- Bank or payment-account details.
- Postal address for a physical prize.
- Proof of identity where reasonably necessary.
- Confirmation that the eater is legally permitted to receive the prize.

Payment details will be handled in accordance with applicable data-protection requirements.

15.22 Unclaimed prizes

Where a winner does not provide the information required to receive a prize, BEL should make reasonable attempts to contact them.

If the prize remains unclaimed after 90 days, BEL may:

- Continue to hold it for the winner.
- Set a final collection deadline.
- Donate it to charity.
- Return it to the sponsor.
- Carry it forward to another BEL competition.
- Make another fair decision.

An unclaimed prize will not automatically be awarded to the next-placed eater unless BEL decides otherwise.

15.23 Disqualification and prizes

An eater who is disqualified is not entitled to prize money or a prize for the disqualified result.

BEL may:

- Withhold an unpaid prize.
- Require the return of a physical prize.
- Require repayment where money was obtained through cheating, fraud or false information.
- Move the remaining eaters up one position.
- Leave the placing vacant.
- Reallocate or withhold the affected prize.

BEL will determine the fairest result based on the circumstances.

15.24 Prize reallocation

Where a placing is removed, the next eater does not automatically receive the removed prize.

BEL will consider:

- Whether the remaining results were valid.
- Whether every eater competed under the same conditions.
- Whether the disqualification affected the conduct or strategy of the competition.
- Whether the published terms specified reallocation.
- Whether another fair outcome is more appropriate.

15.25 Ties and prize money

Where eaters tie, the event rules may provide for:

- An eat-off.
- A further round.
- A countback.
- Joint placing.
- Equal division of the combined prizes for the tied positions.
- Another published tie-breaking method.

If joint placing is declared and no prior rule applies, BEL may combine and divide the prize money allocated to the affected positions equally.

15.26 Non-cash prizes

A prize may include:

- Trophy or medal.
- Championship belt.
- Voucher.
- Product.
- Equipment.
- Food or restaurant credit.
- Holiday, travel or experience.
- Sponsorship opportunity.
- Entry into another event.

Any important restriction, expiry date or additional cost should be disclosed before entry where known.

A cash alternative is not automatically available unless expressly offered.

15.27 Prize substitutions

BEL or the prize provider may substitute a non-cash prize where the original is unavailable, provided that the replacement is reasonably equivalent in value or quality.

Cash prize money should not be replaced with a non-cash prize without the winner's agreement unless that possibility was clearly stated before entry.

15.28 Tax and financial responsibility

Eaters are responsible for determining whether prize money, sponsorship income, appearance fees or other benefits must be declared for tax or other legal purposes.

BEL does not provide personal tax or financial advice and will not normally deduct tax unless legally required to do so.

15.29 Travel and accommodation

Unless expressly agreed in writing, an eater is responsible for their own:

- Travel.
- Accommodation.
- Meals outside the competition.

- Parking.
- Visas and travel documents.
- Insurance.
- Personal expenses.

Where BEL, a venue or a sponsor agrees to cover expenses, the agreement should state:

- What is covered.
- Any spending limit.
- Whether payment is made in advance or reimbursed.
- Whether receipts are required.
- Any approved travel or accommodation provider.

15.30 Appearance fees

BEL, an organiser, venue or sponsor may agree an appearance fee with an eater.

An appearance fee is separate from:

- Prize money.
- Ranking points.
- Entry fees.
- Travel expenses.
- Sponsorship payments.

The existence of an appearance fee must not influence officiating, judging or competition results.

BEL is not required to offer identical appearance fees to every eater, provided that competition rules and prize opportunities remain fair.

15.31 Eater sponsorship

An eater may have personal sponsors, subject to:

- BEL event rules.
- Venue restrictions.
- Broadcast and media agreements.
- Existing category exclusivity.
- Clothing and equipment requirements.
- Laws and advertising standards.
- Any agreement signed by the eater.

Personal sponsorship does not grant the sponsor control over BEL results, rules, rankings or title decisions.

15.32 BEL and event sponsorship

BEL may enter commercial agreements involving:

- Naming rights.
- Event branding.
- Championship branding.
- Belts and trophies.
- Clothing.
- Broadcasts and livestreams.
- Food and drink supply.
- Online and upload competitions.
- Certified Challenges.
- Programmes and publications.
- Social-media content.

BEL retains authority over competition rules, safety and sporting decisions regardless of sponsorship.

15.33 Sponsor withdrawal

If a sponsor withdraws, BEL may:

- Replace the sponsor.
- Remove or alter branding.
- Substitute a non-cash prize.
- Reschedule a sponsored activity.
- Continue the event without the sponsor.
- Cancel the event where continuation is not reasonably possible.

A guaranteed cash prize must still be honoured by the party that accepted responsibility for it unless the event is lawfully cancelled under its published terms.

15.34 Commercial conflicts

Eaters, officials and organisers must disclose any commercial arrangement that could reasonably create a conflict of interest.

A person must not use sponsorship, payment, gifts or commercial pressure to influence:

- Selection.
- Judging.
- Officiating.
- Ranking points.
- Disciplinary decisions.
- Championship opportunities.
- Competition results.

BEL may replace an official or impose appropriate conditions where a conflict exists.

15.35 Certified Challenge charges

A BEL-Certified Challenge venue may:

- Charge the normal menu price.
- Offer the challenge free if completed.
- Require advance payment or a deposit.
- Offer a refund, prize, certificate or merchandise for successful completion.
- Apply another arrangement approved by BEL.

The venue must state its challenge price, reward and payment conditions clearly.

BEL ranking points do not create an entitlement to a free challenge, refund or venue prize unless the published challenge terms provide for it.

15.36 Food and product purchases

Where an online or upload competition requires eaters to purchase their own food, BEL should state:

- Required product.
- Required quantity.
- Permitted brands or alternatives.
- Whether the purchase cost is reimbursed.
- Whether proof of purchase is required.

Unless expressly stated otherwise, the eater is responsible for the cost of obtaining the required food and equipment.

15.37 Venue and organiser payments to BEL

A venue, promoter or organiser may be required to pay BEL for:

- Event sanctioning.
- Officials.
- Administration.
- Promotion.
- Equipment.
- Championship or belt use.
- Certified Challenge status.
- Media production.
- Commercial rights.

These terms should be agreed separately and do not automatically affect an eater's prize entitlement.

15.38 Financial records and evidence

BEL may require an organiser to provide reasonable evidence of:

- Entry payments received.
- Prize funds secured.
- Prize payments made.
- Refunds issued.
- Sponsor responsibility.
- Agreed event expenditure.

Commercially sensitive information will not normally be published unless disclosure is required by law or necessary to resolve a material dispute.

15.39 Debt to BEL

BEL may refuse or suspend entry, licensing, certification or sanctioning where a person or organisation owes BEL an undisputed overdue amount.

Before imposing a continuing restriction, BEL should:

- Explain the amount claimed.
- Provide a reasonable opportunity to dispute it.
- Allow a reasonable payment period.
- Consider an agreed payment plan where appropriate.

A genuine disputed debt should not be presented publicly as proven misconduct.

15.40 Chargebacks and dishonest payment disputes

A dishonest chargeback or false payment dispute may be treated as misconduct.

This does not prevent an eater from making a genuine complaint, seeking a lawful refund or disputing an unauthorised transaction.

15.41 No financial influence over results

No payment, sponsorship agreement, entry fee, appearance fee or commercial relationship guarantees:

- A placing.
- Ranking points.
- Selection for a title event.
- A favourable decision.
- Protection from discipline.
- Preferential judging.

Competition results must be determined solely under BEL rules.

15.42 Publication of financial terms

Event-specific financial terms may be published through:

- The BEL website.
- Official entry form.
- Event poster.
- Booking page.
- Venue challenge rules.
- Written agreement.
- Official BEL announcement.

Where two published terms conflict, BEL will determine which term was reasonably presented to and accepted by the eater when entering.

15.43 Exceptional circumstances

BEL may make a fair financial decision where an issue is not expressly covered by these regulations.

BEL should consider:

- Published information.
- Payments already made.

- Costs reasonably incurred.
- Responsibility for the problem.
- Safety.
- Fairness between all affected eaters.
- Consumer and contractual rights.
- The long-term integrity of BEL competition.

15.44 Final authority

BEL has final regulatory authority to:

- Approve entry fees.
- Determine event refund arrangements.
- Confirm prize eligibility.
- Withhold prizes while a result is under review.
- Reallocate prizes following disqualification.
- Resolve disputes involving BEL ranking or competition status.
- Approve commercial and sponsorship arrangements connected with BEL.

This authority does not remove any legal rights or contractual remedies held by an eater, organiser, venue or sponsor.

SECTION 16

EATER CONDUCT AND SOCIAL-MEDIA STANDARDS

16.1 Purpose

This section establishes the conduct expected from:

- Eaters.
- BEL members and licence holders.
- Officials and Event Leads.
- Organisers and venue representatives.
- Coaches, assistants and team members.
- Volunteers.
- Anyone acting on behalf of or formally associated with BEL.

The purpose is to protect safety, fairness, individuals, venues, sponsors and the reputation and integrity of competitive eating.

16.2 Scope

This section may apply to conduct:

- At a BEL-sanctioned event.
- Before or after an event.
- At a BEL-Certified Challenge venue.
- During travel or accommodation arranged by BEL.
- At a media, sponsor or promotional appearance.
- On social media.
- In livestreams, videos, podcasts or interviews.
- In BEL-related emails, messages or group chats.
- In another setting where the conduct has a clear and substantial connection to BEL.

BEL will not normally regulate an individual's private life where there is no meaningful connection to BEL, its participants or its legitimate interests.

16.3 General standard of conduct

A person covered by this section must:

- Behave honestly and responsibly.

- Treat others with reasonable respect.
- Follow lawful and reasonable official instructions.
- Avoid conduct that creates an unnecessary safety risk.
- Protect the fairness and integrity of competitions.
- Avoid deliberately bringing BEL or competitive eating into serious disrepute.
- Cooperate with reasonable enquiries and investigations.

Competitive rivalry, humour, celebration and strong opinions are permitted, provided they remain within these standards.

16.4 Event conduct

At a BEL event, an eater must not:

- Disrupt the competition deliberately.
- Interfere with another eater's food, drink, equipment or position.
- Obstruct an official.
- Ignore a safety instruction.
- Enter a restricted competition or medical area without permission.
- Damage the venue or competition equipment.
- Throw food, drink or equipment dangerously.
- Encourage crowd disorder.
- Continue competing after being ordered to stop.
- Behave aggressively towards staff, volunteers, officials, spectators or other eaters.

16.5 Respect towards officials

Eaters may question or challenge a decision through the appropriate procedure.

They must not:

- Threaten an official.
- Intimidate or surround an official.
- Shout abuse directly at an official.
- Attempt to influence an official through gifts, payment or pressure.
- Refuse repeatedly to follow a final event-day instruction.
- Deliberately publish false statements about an official.

A reasonable request for clarification or respectful disagreement will not itself be misconduct.

16.6 Respect towards venues and staff

Eaters and representatives must treat venue owners, employees, food-preparation staff, security personnel and volunteers appropriately.

They must not:

- Abuse or threaten staff.
- Enter staff-only areas without permission.
- Damage property.
- Deliberately leave an unreasonable mess.
- Take food, drink or property without permission.
- Make knowingly false allegations about the venue.
- Refuse a lawful request to leave.

A genuine food-safety, welfare or service concern may still be raised honestly and through an appropriate channel.

16.7 Spectators, guests and supporters

Spectators, guests and supporters attending or engaging with a BEL activity must behave safely, lawfully and respectfully.

They must not:

- Abuse, threaten, harass or discriminate against an eater, official, organiser, venue worker or another person.
- Enter or obstruct the competition area without permission.
- Distract, touch, assist or interfere with an eater during a competition.
- Interfere with timing, counting, judging, filming or official equipment.
- Throw objects, damage property or create an avoidable safety risk.
- Encourage cheating, violence or another serious breach of BEL regulations.
- Ignore a reasonable instruction from BEL, an official, the organiser, venue staff, security or medical personnel.

BEL, the organiser or the venue may refuse admission, remove a person, restrict future attendance or refer serious conduct to the police or another appropriate authority.

Where a spectator, guest or supporter is also an eater, member, licence holder, official, organiser, venue representative or another person subject to BEL authority, their conduct may also result in disciplinary action under these regulations.

16.8 Rivalry, banter and trash talk

BEL permits personality, rivalry, competitive call-outs, reasonable swearing, jokes, boasting and trash talk.

Trash talk will not normally be treated as misconduct merely because it is cheeky, critical, competitive or disliked by another person.

It may become misconduct where it involves:

- Credible threats or intimidation.
- Discriminatory abuse.
- Sustained personal harassment.
- Knowingly false allegations.
- Attacks involving someone's family or private life.
- Publication of private information.
- Encouraging followers or other eaters to target someone.
- Conduct intended to cause serious personal or professional harm.
- Continued disruption after a reasonable official warning.

BEL will consider the tone, context, relationship between those involved and whether the exchange was reasonably understood as mutual competitive banter.

16.9 Discrimination

BEL will not tolerate unlawful discrimination, harassment or abuse based upon:

- Race or colour.
- Nationality or ethnic origin.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.
- Gender reassignment.
- Disability.
- Religion or belief.
- Age.
- Pregnancy or maternity.
- Marriage or civil-partnership status.
- Another characteristic protected by applicable law.

BEL may act against discriminatory conduct even where it occurs away from an event if there is a clear connection to BEL or its participants.

16.10 Violence and threatening behaviour

The following may constitute serious misconduct:

- Physical assault.
- Attempted assault.
- A credible threat of violence.
- Fighting.
- Possession or use of a weapon at an event without lawful and reasonable justification.
- Deliberately placing another person in fear for their safety.
- Encouraging another person to commit violence.

BEL may remove or suspend a person immediately where necessary to protect safety.

16.11 Sexual misconduct

Sexual harassment, unwanted sexual conduct, sexual intimidation and non-consensual sexual contact are prohibited.

This includes:

- Unwanted sexual comments or messages.
- Repeated sexual advances after rejection.
- Sharing intimate material without consent.
- Unwanted touching.
- Using a position within BEL to pressure another person sexually.

BEL may refer serious allegations to the police or another appropriate authority.

16.12 Alcohol and drugs

A person must not participate in a competition while materially impaired by alcohol, illegal drugs or another substance.

At BEL-related activities, a person must not:

- Supply illegal drugs.
- Pressure another person to consume alcohol or drugs.
- Behave dangerously because of intoxication.
- Use alcohol as an excuse for abusive or violent conduct.
- Consume alcohol where prohibited by the venue or event rules.

Responsible alcohol consumption by adults outside competition may be permitted where lawful and appropriate.

16.13 Official UK Eaters group chat

The UK Eaters Facebook Messenger chat created by BEL's Founder and President is an official BEL-administered communication space.

Although members may use the chat informally, conduct within it may be considered under BEL regulations.

This includes:

- Written messages.
- Voice messages.
- Images and videos.
- Reactions.
- Threats or abusive conduct.
- Discriminatory content.
- False allegations.
- Harassment of another member.
- Attempts to undermine competitions or official decisions dishonestly.
- Conduct that creates a serious safeguarding, safety or integrity concern.

BEL may:

- Remind a member of the expected standards.
- Issue an informal or formal warning.
- Delete content where administratively possible.
- Restrict a member's participation.
- Temporarily mute or remove a member.
- Permanently remove a member in a serious or repeated case.
- Preserve relevant messages as evidence.
- Refer the conduct to BEL's disciplinary process.

Removal from the chat does not automatically suspend an eater from BEL competition unless a separate decision is made under the disciplinary rules.

16.14 Authority within BEL communication spaces

The Founder and President is BEL's owner and ultimate executive authority, not merely a general representative attending on BEL's behalf.

A reasonable instruction issued by the Founder and President in that official capacity is a BEL instruction.

Eaters may disagree with, question or respectfully challenge a decision. However, they must not deliberately misrepresent the Founder and President's position, refuse repeated reasonable instructions or use abuse and intimidation in response.

Other authorised administrators and officials may moderate BEL communication spaces within the authority given to them by BEL.

Ordinary cheekiness, disagreement or criticism will not automatically amount to misconduct. BEL will consider the seriousness, context and whether the conduct continued after a clear warning.

16.15 Social-media scope

Social-media conduct includes content posted or shared through:

- Facebook.
- Instagram.
- TikTok.
- YouTube.
- X or similar platforms.
- Livestreaming services.
- Online forums.
- Podcasts.
- Public comments.
- Private messages or group chats where there is a serious BEL-related issue.
- Any future digital platform.

A person may be responsible for content they create, publish, livestream, repost, endorse or knowingly encourage.

16.16 Freedom of expression and fair criticism

BEL recognises that eaters and members may:

- Express opinions.
- Criticise BEL decisions.
- Discuss competition rules.
- Comment upon performances.
- Question how an event was organised.
- Use humour and competitive rivalry.
- Raise legitimate safety, welfare or integrity concerns.

Criticism will not itself amount to misconduct merely because it is inconvenient, negative or embarrassing to BEL.

However, criticism must not involve threats, targeted harassment, discrimination, deliberate falsehoods or the knowing publication of materially misleading information.

16.17 False and misleading statements

A person must not knowingly or recklessly publish a materially false statement concerning:

- A competition result.
- Another eater.
- An official.
- A venue or organiser.
- A sponsor.
- BEL's rules or decisions.
- A safety or medical incident.
- A championship, ranking, record or licence.
- BEL's involvement in an event.

An honest mistake should normally be corrected promptly once reliable information is provided.

16.18 Allegations against others

A person making a public allegation of cheating, abuse, discrimination, criminal conduct or serious wrongdoing should have a reasonable factual basis.

Where appropriate, the concern should first be reported to BEL or another proper authority so it can be assessed fairly.

Nothing in this section prevents a person from:

- Reporting a crime.
- Seeking medical assistance.
- Contacting a regulator or safeguarding authority.
- Obtaining legal advice.
- Making a protected disclosure.
- Raising an urgent safety concern.
- Speaking honestly about their own experience.

16.19 Harassment and targeted campaigns

A person must not organise, encourage or participate in a targeted campaign intended to:

- Abuse or intimidate another person.
- Flood someone with threatening or hostile messages.
- Damage someone's livelihood through knowingly false claims.
- Pressure an official to alter a result improperly.
- Encourage spectators or followers to harass an eater, venue, sponsor or official.

Having a large social-media following may be treated as an aggravating factor where it is deliberately used to cause harm.

16.20 Private information

A person must not publish another individual's private information without a proper lawful reason.

This may include:

- Home address.
- Private telephone number.
- Personal email address.
- Financial details.
- Medical information.
- Private family information.
- Identification documents.
- Live location where disclosure could create a safety risk.

Information already publicly available must still not be used to threaten, intimidate or encourage harassment.

16.21 Images and recordings

A person must not:

- Secretly record in a location where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.
- Publish intimate or highly sensitive footage without consent.
- Edit footage deliberately to create a materially false account of an incident.
- Falsely claim that unofficial footage is an official BEL recording.
- Use BEL footage in a misleading way.

This does not prevent reasonable recording at a public event, the preservation of evidence or lawful reporting.

16.22 Competition-result embargo

Where BEL has instructed eaters not to disclose results before an official announcement, an eater must not publish or reveal:

- Their completion time.
- Their final quantity.
- Their placing.
- The winner.
- The full competition recording.
- Information that clearly reveals the result.

This applies particularly to online and upload competitions.

BEL may authorise promotional clips that do not reveal the result.

16.23 Livestreams

A person livestreaming a BEL-related activity must comply with all applicable competition, safety, venue and media rules.

They must not use a livestream to:

- Reveal an embargoed result.
- Interfere with officiating.
- Enter a medical or welfare area without permission.
- Broadcast private medical treatment.
- Encourage dangerous conduct.
- Misrepresent an unofficial event as BEL-sanctioned.

Any competition-specific livestream requirements remain binding.

16.24 Use of BEL footage

Footage submitted to BEL or recorded at a BEL event may be used by BEL in accordance with the relevant entry terms and media rules.

An eater must not falsely claim ownership of BEL-produced footage or issue an unauthorised copyright complaint against BEL for using footage that BEL is entitled to use.

BEL should respect any genuine third-party copyright or licensing restriction brought to its attention.

16.25 BEL name, logo and branding

A person must not:

- Create an unofficial BEL page that appears official.
- Use the BEL logo to imply unauthorised endorsement.
- Sell unauthorised BEL merchandise.
- Create a false BEL championship, record, licence or certificate.
- Alter BEL branding in a seriously misleading or damaging manner.
- Continue using official branding after permission has been withdrawn.

Reasonable editorial use, news reporting, commentary, fan content and accurate identification of BEL participation are not automatically prohibited.

16.26 Personal accounts and official accounts

An eater may identify themselves accurately as a BEL eater, member, licence holder, champion or former champion.

Unless authorised, they must not:

- Claim to speak officially for BEL.
- Present a personal account as an official BEL account.
- Announce BEL policy or disciplinary decisions.
- Confirm an unapproved event or championship.
- Present a personal opinion as BEL's official position.

Official BEL announcements may be made only by authorised individuals.

16.27 Competition names and titles

An eater must describe their achievements accurately.

They must not falsely claim:

- A competition victory.
- A current championship.
- A BEL record.
- A ranking position.
- Professional status.
- A BEL Eater Licence.
- Selection for an event or team.
- Official BEL approval.

Former titles and historical achievements may be used when described accurately.

16.28 Sponsor and commercial obligations

A person taking part in a sponsored event must comply with reasonable published requirements involving:

- Approved event clothing.
- Sponsor displays.
- Restricted commercial categories.
- Interviews and presentations.
- Use of competition photographs.
- Identification of paid advertising.

BEL will not require an eater to make a false endorsement or personal recommendation.

A personal sponsor must not be represented as an official BEL sponsor without approval.

16.29 Clothing and personal messages

BEL may apply reasonable clothing requirements for safety, identification, broadcasting or sponsorship.

BEL may prohibit clothing, signs or personal messages that contain:

- Discriminatory abuse.
- Threats.
- Explicit sexual content unsuitable for the event.
- Promotion of illegal activity.
- Unauthorised commercial branding.
- Material reasonably likely to cause serious disruption.

Ordinary personal expression will not be restricted without a legitimate reason.

16.30 Media interviews

An eater may give interviews and discuss their own experience.

They should:

- Make clear when expressing a personal opinion.
- Respect any temporary result embargo.
- Avoid revealing confidential disciplinary or medical information.

- Avoid knowingly misrepresenting BEL rules or decisions.
- Direct requests for an official BEL statement to an authorised BEL representative.

BEL may appoint a spokesperson for major incidents or disputes.

16.31 Confidential information

A person must not improperly disclose genuinely confidential information obtained through a BEL role, including:

- Private medical information.
- Personal contact details.
- Unannounced commercial agreements.
- Secure event or ticketing information.
- Confidential complaints or disciplinary evidence.
- Private payment information.
- Information restricted by a lawful agreement.

Information should not be labelled confidential merely to prevent fair criticism or conceal wrongdoing.

16.32 Communications with BEL

Communications to BEL must not contain:

- Threats.
- Discriminatory abuse.
- Repeated or excessive messages intended to harass.
- Knowingly false evidence.
- Impersonation.
- Malicious attachments or links.

Where a person's communications become abusive, threatening, excessive or unmanageable, BEL may require all further contact to be made through:

craig@britisheatingleague.uk

BEL may decline to respond through personal accounts, social-media messages, group chats or other informal channels after this direction has been issued.

This restriction must not prevent the person from submitting a genuine complaint, appeal, safeguarding report or urgent safety concern.

16.33 Deleted or temporary content

Deleting a post, message, livestream or story does not prevent BEL from considering reliable evidence of it.

Evidence may include:

- Screenshots.
- Screen recordings.
- Witness statements.
- Platform records.
- Copies supplied by the original sender or recipient.
- An admission by the person involved.

BEL must consider authenticity, context and whether the material has been edited.

16.34 Artificial, altered and impersonated content

A person must not use manipulated images, edited recordings, artificial intelligence or impersonation to:

- Fabricate misconduct.
- Create a false statement by another person.
- Falsify a competition result.
- Damage another person through deliberate deception.
- Pretend to represent BEL officially.

Satire or entertainment content should be clearly recognisable and must not be used to cause serious and foreseeable harm.

16.35 Duty to report serious conduct

A person should report conduct that may involve:

- Immediate danger.
- Violence or credible threats.
- Sexual misconduct.
- Safeguarding concerns.
- Serious discrimination.
- Competition manipulation.
- Deliberate food tampering.
- Serious medical risk.
- Criminal activity connected to a BEL event.

An emergency should be reported to the emergency services first where necessary.

16.36 Protection against retaliation

A person must not retaliate against someone for making an honest report, assisting an investigation or providing evidence.

Retaliation may include:

- Threats.
- Exclusion used as punishment.
- Harassment.
- Deliberate damage to opportunities or reputation.
- Pressure to withdraw truthful evidence.

A report made maliciously or with knowingly false information may itself be misconduct.

16.37 Requests to correct or remove content

Where BEL reasonably believes that published content seriously breaches these regulations, BEL may formally request that the person:

- Correct inaccurate or misleading information.
- Remove specified abusive, threatening or discriminatory content.
- Remove content that reveals an embargoed result.
- Stop further publication of the material.
- Preserve relevant evidence.
- Publish a reasonable clarification.
- Stop using BEL branding without authority.
- Avoid contacting or targeting a named person temporarily.

BEL should identify the content concerned and provide the general reason for its request.

An urgent removal or correction may be requested where continued publication creates a significant:

- Safety risk.
- Safeguarding concern.
- Risk of harassment.
- Legal risk.
- Integrity concern.
- Reputational risk based upon materially false information.

Failure to comply with a reasonable BEL request may be considered under the disciplinary rules, particularly where the content remains harmful or the person continues publishing similar material.

16.38 Interim action

While a serious conduct matter is being assessed, BEL may temporarily:

- Remove a person from an event.
- Restrict access to BEL groups or platforms.
- Suspend official duties.
- Restrict contact with a named person.
- Withhold an official appointment.
- Pause the use of BEL branding.
- Suspend participation where necessary for safety or integrity.

Interim action is precautionary and does not automatically mean that misconduct has been proven.

16.39 Assessment of conduct

When assessing conduct, BEL may consider:

- The words or actions used.
- Context and intended audience.
- Whether the conduct was deliberate.
- The harm caused or reasonably risked.
- Whether it was public or private.
- The person's role and level of influence.
- Whether children or vulnerable people were affected.
- Whether the conduct was repeated.
- Any provocation.
- Whether an apology or correction was made.
- Previous relevant conduct.
- The need to protect legitimate expression.

A single screenshot or short clip should not automatically be treated as complete proof without considering context and authenticity.

16.40 Possible outcomes

A breach of this section may result in:

- Informal advice.
- A direction to apologise, correct or remove content.
- A formal warning.
- Event removal.
- Loss of an official or representative role.
- Restrictions upon contact or social-media activity connected to BEL.
- Suspension.
- Disqualification.
- Loss of licence or membership.
- Removal from rankings or championships where permitted.
- A ban from BEL activities.
- Referral to another authority.

Formal sanctions will be handled under the applicable disciplinary and appeal procedures.

16.41 Aggravating factors

Conduct may be treated more seriously where it:

- Was planned or repeated.
- Involved threats or violence.
- Targeted a protected characteristic.
- Exploited a position of authority.
- Targeted a child or vulnerable person.
- Used a large audience deliberately to cause harm.
- Continued after a warning.
- Involved false evidence or concealment.
- Caused significant disruption or reputational damage.
- Was committed in an official BEL role.

16.42 Mitigating factors

BEL may consider:

- A prompt and genuine apology.
- Immediate removal or correction.
- Cooperation with the investigation.
- Lack of intent.
- Reasonable misunderstanding.
- Provocation that does not excuse but helps explain the conduct.
- Health or personal circumstances where relevant.
- Previous good conduct.

- Steps taken to prevent repetition.

16.43 Former participants

BEL may consider serious conduct by a former eater, member or official where it relates to conduct that occurred during their involvement or materially affects current BEL safety and integrity.

BEL may record an outcome or place conditions upon any future return.

16.44 Final authority

BEL has authority to:

- Determine whether conduct falls within this section.
- Issue reasonable behavioural and social-media directions.
- Protect eaters, officials, venues, sponsors and the public.
- Investigate alleged misconduct.
- Take urgent interim action.
- Refer a matter to the disciplinary process.
- Correct false claims about BEL.
- Protect legitimate criticism and good-faith reporting.

Any formal finding or sanction remains subject to the applicable complaints, disciplinary and appeal provisions.

SECTION 17

INTEGRITY, CHEATING AND COMPETITION MANIPULATION

17.1 Purpose and scope

This section protects the integrity of:

- BEL competitions and Certified Challenges.
- Championships, records and rankings.
- Online and upload events.
- Prize money and awards.
- Qualification and selection processes.
- Official and historical results.

It applies to eaters, officials, organisers, venues, coaches, assistants, witnesses and anyone who knowingly contributes to a BEL result.

A person does not need to hold an Eater Licence or BEL membership to be subject to these requirements.

17.2 General integrity duty

Every person involved must:

- Compete and act honestly.
- Provide accurate information and evidence.
- Follow the applicable rules.
- Avoid creating an unfair advantage.
- Report a significant error that benefits them unfairly.
- Preserve relevant evidence when requested.
- Cooperate with reasonable BEL enquiries.

17.3 Cheating and honest mistakes

Cheating is any deliberate or dishonest action intended to obtain or provide an unfair:

- Result or placing.
- Ranking or qualification benefit.
- Record or championship.
- Prize or payment.

- Competitive advantage.

Attempting, encouraging, assisting or concealing cheating may also breach this section, even where the attempt is unsuccessful.

BEL will distinguish deliberate cheating from:

- An accident.
- Misunderstanding.
- Carelessness.
- Official error.
- Organiser or venue error.
- A reasonable difference in judgement.

An honest mistake is not automatically cheating, but an obvious material error should be reported promptly.

17.4 Live competition cheating

Cheating in a live competition may include:

- Hiding, discarding or spitting out food improperly.
- Moving food to another eater or allowing someone else to consume it.
- Receiving unauthorised assistance.
- Falsely presenting an incomplete mouth as clear.
- Continuing after time while claiming an earlier completion.
- Altering the starting quantity or required components.
- Interfering with food, equipment, timing, scales or counters.
- Impersonating another eater.
- Deliberately obstructing an official's view.

Small crumbs, liquid residue and reasonable judging differences are not automatically evidence of cheating.

Where food may be crushed, squashed or combined, officials will make the best reasonable visual assessment possible. An eater must not use this to conceal a material amount of food.

17.5 Online and upload cheating

Online or upload cheating may include:

- Editing, cutting, speeding up or slowing down footage.
- Pausing the recording or timer without permission.

- Combining footage from separate attempts.
- Moving food outside the camera view.
- Receiving hidden assistance.
- Substituting the product or quantity after showing the packaging.
- Concealing leftovers.
- Manipulating a timer, date or completion time.
- Using another person or a false identity.
- Using altered or artificially generated footage to create a false performance.

Unclear, interrupted or incomplete footage does not automatically prove cheating, but BEL may reject an entry that cannot be verified.

17.6 Certified Challenge integrity

During a BEL-Certified Challenge:

- The approved food and quantity must be served.
- The eater must attempt the complete challenge.
- Timing and results must be recorded honestly.
- Leftovers must not be hidden or removed improperly.
- Required photographs, footage and witness evidence must be genuine.
- The venue must not confirm a challenge that was not completed.
- The eater and venue must not cooperate to create a false result.

A genuine restaurant preparation or weighing mistake is not automatically cheating by the eater.

Where the quantity is wrong, BEL may accept, adjust or reject the result, change the points or permit another attempt.

An eater who knowingly conceals a substantial underweight challenge may be treated as assisting cheating.

17.7 Timing, counting and weighing

No person may deliberately:

- Stop or alter a timer improperly.
- Provide a false completion time.
- Alter an item count.
- Substitute smaller or lighter items without approval.
- Remove required components.
- Falsify a starting or leftover weight.
- Tamper with scales or measuring equipment.

- Add packaging or containers to a recorded food weight.
- Alter leftovers before inspection.

A technical failure or genuine calculation error should be reported and corrected fairly.

17.8 Collusion and result manipulation

Collusion occurs when two or more people cooperate dishonestly to create an unfair or false outcome.

This may include:

- Agreeing who will win or lose.
- Arranging false finishing positions.
- Deliberately underperforming to benefit another eater.
- Manipulating qualifications, rankings or titles.
- Coordinating false evidence or witness statements.
- An official agreeing to overlook a breach.
- A venue approving an incomplete challenge.
- Manipulating a result for money, sponsorship or betting.

Poor performance, tactical pacing or withdrawal for safety is not evidence of collusion by itself.

17.9 Prize money and prohibited sharing

Prize money must be paid to and retained by the eater officially awarded that prize.

An eater must not agree, offer or arrange to:

- Share or divide BEL prize money with another eater.
- Pay another eater to withdraw or underperform.
- Exchange prize money for assistance during a competition.
- Return part of a prize to an organiser, official or venue improperly.
- Use prize sharing to influence placings, rankings or qualification.

This applies whether the arrangement is made before or after the competition.

Where a team competition expressly provides a shared team prize, it may be divided only under the published event rules.

BEL may withhold or recover prize money where a prohibited sharing arrangement is established.

17.10 Interference, sabotage and food tampering

No person may deliberately:

- Touch or interfere with another eater or their food.
- Provide prohibited assistance or signals.
- Distract another eater through prohibited conduct.
- Damage or obstruct a recording.
- Alter food to change the difficulty unfairly.
- Secretly introduce spice, allergens or another substance.
- Contaminate food or make another person ill.
- Create a false safety incident.

Suspected malicious food tampering may be reported to the police or another appropriate authority.

17.11 False information and evidence

A person must not deliberately provide false information concerning:

- Identity or age.
- Licence, classification or eligibility.
- Qualification or previous attempts.
- Competition quantity, time or result.
- Medical or safety information specifically requested by BEL.

A person must not fabricate or alter relevant:

- Videos or photographs.
- Timings or weight records.
- Packaging or receipts.
- Messages or screenshots.
- Witness statements.
- Identity or medical documents.
- BEL licences, certificates, results or records.

A genuine spelling, administration or recording error may be corrected without being treated as cheating.

17.12 Officials, organisers and venues

Officials, organisers and venue representatives must not:

- Favour an eater dishonestly.
- Alter or fabricate a result.
- Ignore cheating in return for a benefit.
- Destroy evidence improperly.
- Apply rules differently for a dishonest purpose.
- Pressure another official to make a false decision.
- Use confidential information to manipulate an outcome.

An incorrect decision made honestly and in good faith is not cheating.

17.13 Bribery and improper benefits

No person may offer, request, give or accept money, gifts, services or another benefit intended to influence:

- A result or official decision.
- Ranking points or qualification.
- Selection for a championship.
- Certification of a record or challenge.
- A disciplinary decision.
- Suppression of a rules breach.

Reasonable hospitality or a modest genuine gift is not automatically prohibited, but it should be disclosed where it could create a concern.

17.14 Betting and inside information

Betting connected to a BEL event is permitted only where it is offered lawfully through an established official bookmaker.

Private betting pools, informal wagers connected to manipulating an event and betting through unauthorised services are not permitted as part of BEL activity.

BEL eaters must not bet on a BEL competition in which they are entered, selected or directly involved.

Officials, organisers, venue representatives and other persons capable of influencing the event must not bet on that event.

A prohibited bet must not be placed indirectly through:

- A friend or family member.
- Another eater.

- A business or organisation.
- A second account.
- Any other third party.

No person may:

- Manipulate a result for betting purposes.
- Pass confidential inside information to someone for betting.
- Accept a payment or benefit connected to a betting arrangement.
- Conceal an approach to fix or manipulate a result.

Members of the public who have no inside information or ability to influence the result may use a lawful official bookmaker.

General gambling unrelated to BEL remains outside these regulations.

17.15 Performance-altering substances and methods

An eater must not take or use any substance, medication, product, device or artificial method for the purpose of improving their competitive-eating performance.

Prohibited assistance includes anything used to:

- Suppress or prevent vomiting.
- Numb pain, burning or extreme spice.
- Artificially increase appetite.
- Accelerate digestion or stomach emptying.
- Conceal illness, pain or physical distress.
- Reduce the natural physical effects of the challenge.
- Create another artificial or unsafe advantage.

This applies to prescription products, non-prescription medication, supplements, sprays, gels, devices and other methods where they are being used as a performance aid.

An eater must not stop taking genuine prescribed medication contrary to medical advice.

Where prescribed medication may provide a significant advantage or create a safety concern, the eater should disclose this privately when requested. BEL may:

- Permit participation.
- Apply reasonable conditions.
- Request appropriate medical confirmation.
- Refuse entry to a particular event.

- Exclude the affected result from records, titles or ranking points.

Normal food, permitted drinks and ordinary preparation or training are not prohibited unless the specific event rules state otherwise.

Refusing participation is not a punishment where it is necessary to protect the eater's safety or competition fairness.

17.16 Reporting integrity concerns

Suspected cheating or manipulation should be reported promptly with any available:

- Names and event details.
- Photographs or footage.
- Messages or screenshots.
- Timing, counting or weighing information.
- Witness details.

Reports should distinguish facts and personal observations from suspicion.

BEL may accept confidential or anonymous information, although action will depend upon its reliability and supporting evidence.

A person must not retaliate against someone for reporting honestly, refusing to participate in manipulation or assisting BEL.

17.17 False accusations

Knowingly making a false or malicious allegation of cheating may itself be misconduct.

An allegation will not be treated as malicious merely because it cannot be proven.

BEL will consider whether the reporter genuinely believed the concern and had a reasonable basis for raising it.

17.18 Evidence and investigations

BEL may:

- Review official, submitted and spectator footage.
- Request original recordings and relevant documents.
- Speak to eaters, officials and witnesses.
- Examine timing, counting and weighing records.

- Seek information from venues and organisers.
- Obtain technical or specialist advice.
- Request relevant messages or screenshots voluntarily.
- Delay confirmation of a result.

Relevant evidence must not be deliberately deleted, altered, destroyed or fabricated after an integrity concern arises.

BEL cannot seize private devices or compel disclosure beyond its lawful and contractual authority.

Refusal to provide requested evidence may be considered but does not automatically prove cheating.

17.19 Standard of proof

BEL will decide an integrity allegation using the balance of probabilities—whether the available evidence shows that it is more likely than not that the alleged conduct occurred.

BEL does not need criminal-level proof beyond reasonable doubt.

However, the more serious the allegation and possible punishment, the stronger, clearer and more reliable the evidence should be.

BEL must consider:

- Quality and authenticity of the evidence.
- Available footage and official records.
- Credibility and consistency of witnesses.
- Explanations provided by the accused person.
- Whether evidence supports an innocent explanation.
- Whether the alleged conduct affected the result.
- Any relevant surrounding circumstances.

Suspicion, rivalry, rumour or an unsupported accusation will not normally be sufficient to establish cheating.

17.20 Interim action

While an investigation is taking place, BEL may temporarily:

- Withhold confirmation of a result.
- Withhold points or prize money.

- Suspend a record.
- Delay the transfer of a championship belt.
- Restrict participation.
- Require extra supervision or recording.
- Replace an official.

Interim action is precautionary and does not mean cheating has been proven.

17.21 Findings and competition consequences

BEL may determine that:

- No breach occurred.
- Evidence is insufficient.
- An honest mistake occurred.
- A rule breach occurred without dishonesty.
- Attempted or completed cheating occurred.
- Another person assisted the breach.

BEL may then:

- Correct an error.
- Apply a penalty or disqualification.
- Remove a placing or ranking points.
- Withhold or recover prize money.
- Correct or remove a record.
- Vacate or reallocate a championship.
- Order another attempt or competition.
- Declare a result void.
- Correct historical records.

A competition correction may be made without disciplinary action where the error was genuinely accidental.

17.22 Disciplinary action

Cheating or manipulation may result in:

- A warning.
- Additional supervision.
- Exclusion from a future event.
- Suspension.
- Loss of an official role, Eater Licence or membership.

- A fixed-term or indefinite ban.
- Referral to the police, a regulator or another authority.

BEL will consider whether the conduct was planned, repeated, created a safety risk, involved false evidence, affected a major prize or championship, or involved several people.

Prompt admission, cooperation and genuine self-reporting may be treated as mitigating factors.

17.23 Historical results and publication

BEL may investigate and correct a historical result where reliable evidence later becomes available.

BEL may publish an integrity decision where reasonably necessary to:

- Correct results or rankings.
- Explain the removal of a record or title.
- Confirm a suspension or ban.
- Protect future competitions.
- Maintain public confidence.

Any publication should be accurate and proportionate.

17.24 Appeals and final authority

A person subject to a formal integrity finding or sanction may use the applicable BEL appeal procedure.

An appeal does not automatically restore a result, prize, title or eligibility while it is being considered.

BEL has final regulatory authority to:

- Investigate suspected cheating or manipulation.
- Decide whether a result is reliable.
- Withhold or correct results, points, prizes, records and titles.
- Take reasonable interim action.
- Refer matters to the disciplinary process.
- Protect genuine reporters and witnesses.
- Correct official and historical records.

Formal findings and sanctions remain subject to the applicable appeal provisions.

SECTION 18

COMPLAINTS, PROTESTS AND APPEALS

18.1 Purpose

This section provides a fair process for dealing with:

- Competition protests.
- Complaints about conduct or administration.
- Challenges to results, points and records.
- Appeals against formal BEL decisions or sanctions.

BEL will aim to handle matters fairly, consistently and within a reasonable time.

18.2 Types of case

For this section:

A competition protest challenges something that happened during or directly affected a competition, challenge or result.

A complaint raises a concern about conduct, administration, safety, treatment or another BEL-related matter.

An appeal asks BEL to review a formal decision that has already been made.

BEL may reclassify a submission where it has been made under the wrong process.

18.3 Event-day questions

An eater should raise an immediate rules or judging concern with the referee or Event Lead as soon as reasonably possible.

Where possible, the concern should be raised:

- Before the result is finalised.
- Before the eater leaves the competition area or venue.
- While relevant food, equipment and witnesses remain available.

An eater must not disrupt the event, threaten an official or refuse a safety instruction while raising a concern.

18.4 Competition protests

A competition protest may concern:

- Timing or counting.
- Food quantity or consistency.
- An alleged rules breach.
- An eater's eligibility.
- Incorrect placing.
- Ranking points.
- Online or upload evidence.
- Certified Challenge verification.
- A record or championship result.
- Conduct that materially affected the competition.

Disagreement with an official's reasonable judgement is not automatically grounds for overturning a result.

18.5 Who may submit a protest

A protest may normally be submitted by:

- An eater directly affected by the decision.
- Their authorised representative.
- An official or Event Lead.
- An organiser or venue where directly relevant.
- BEL acting on its own information.

A spectator or member of the public may provide evidence but will not normally have a personal right to demand a particular competition outcome.

18.6 Protest deadlines

A live-event concern should be raised immediately where possible.

A formal written protest must normally be submitted within:

- 48 hours of the live competition result; or
- 48 hours after BEL publishes an online, upload or Certified Challenge result.

BEL may consider a late protest where:

- Important evidence was not reasonably available earlier.
- A serious safety or integrity issue is involved.
- The delay resulted from exceptional circumstances.
- Correcting the result is necessary to protect BEL's integrity.

18.7 Complaints

A complaint may concern:

- Conduct by an eater, official, organiser or venue.
- Bullying, harassment or discrimination.
- Safety or welfare.
- Social-media conduct.
- Administration or communication.
- Misuse of BEL branding.
- Failure to provide an advertised prize.
- A conflict of interest.
- Another alleged breach of BEL regulations.

An emergency, crime or immediate safeguarding danger should be reported to the appropriate emergency service or authority first.

18.8 Complaint deadline

A complaint should normally be submitted within 28 days of the incident or of the complainant becoming reasonably aware of it.

BEL may consider an older complaint where:

- The matter is serious.
- There is a reasonable explanation for the delay.
- A pattern of conduct is alleged.
- Reliable evidence remains available.
- Safety, safeguarding or integrity requires consideration.

18.9 How to submit

Formal protests, complaints and appeals should be sent to:

craig@britisheatingleague.uk

The submission should include:

- Name and contact details.
- Connection to the matter.
- Event, date and people involved.
- Clear description of the concern.
- Regulation or decision challenged, where known.
- Outcome requested.
- Available photographs, video, messages or other evidence.
- Names of relevant witnesses.

BEL may accept another method where necessary or appropriate.

18.10 Anonymous reports

BEL may consider anonymous information, particularly where it concerns:

- Safety.
- Safeguarding.
- Violence or threats.
- Discrimination.
- Cheating or manipulation.
- Serious misconduct.

Anonymous information may be harder to investigate, and the reporter will not normally have a personal right to receive updates or appeal the outcome.

18.11 Acknowledgement and initial assessment

BEL should acknowledge a formal submission within seven days where reasonably possible.

BEL may then:

- Request further information.
- Refer the matter to an event official.
- Resolve an obvious administrative error.
- Treat the matter as a disciplinary allegation.
- Combine related cases.
- Dismiss a matter that is clearly outside BEL's authority.
- Take urgent interim action.
- Refer a criminal, legal or safeguarding matter to another authority.

18.12 Informal resolution

Where appropriate, BEL may attempt to resolve a matter through:

- Explanation or clarification.
- Correction of an administrative error.
- Apology.
- Mediation or discussion.
- Correction or removal of a post.
- Agreement about future conduct.
- Refund, credit or another practical solution.

Informal resolution will not normally be used where serious violence, safeguarding, discrimination, deliberate cheating or other major misconduct requires formal consideration.

18.13 Fairness and opportunity to respond

Before making a formal adverse finding, BEL should normally:

- Explain the substance of the allegation.
- Provide a reasonable opportunity to respond.
- Consider relevant evidence from both sides.
- Address any material conflict of interest.
- Give reasons for the decision.

BEL may limit disclosure where necessary to protect children, medical information, confidential sources, legal rights or another person's safety.

18.14 Evidence

BEL may consider:

- Official and spectator footage.
- Competition records.
- Photographs.
- Messages and screenshots.
- Witness statements.
- Timing, counting and weighing evidence.
- Venue and organiser records.
- Relevant public posts.
- Admissions and explanations.
- Other reasonably reliable information.

BEL will consider authenticity, context and whether material may have been edited.

18.15 Competition decision

After considering a protest, BEL may:

- Confirm the original result.
- Correct a time, count, placing or points award.
- Apply or remove a penalty.
- Disqualify an attempt.
- Restore a result.
- Order a recount or evidence review.
- Arrange another attempt or event.
- Declare a result void.
- Correct a record or championship outcome.
- Refer suspected misconduct for disciplinary action.

18.16 Written decisions

A formal decision should normally state:

- What was considered.
- The main findings.
- The outcome.
- Any correction or sanction.
- Whether an appeal is available.
- The appeal deadline.

BEL does not need to publish or disclose confidential personal information unnecessarily.

18.17 Grounds of appeal

An appeal is not simply another opportunity to repeat disagreement with the original decision.

An appeal should identify at least one of the following:

- A significant rule or procedure was applied incorrectly.
- Important available evidence was not considered.
- Significant new evidence has become available.
- The decision was unreasonable based upon the evidence.
- The sanction was clearly excessive or insufficient.
- A material conflict of interest affected the decision.

18.18 Appeal deadline and fee

An appeal must normally be submitted within seven days after the written decision is issued.

BEL may extend this period where there is a reasonable explanation or fairness requires it.

The appeal should identify the grounds relied upon and provide any new evidence.

BEL will not charge a fee for submitting a complaint, competition protest or appeal.

18.19 Current decision-making authority

At present, the President holds final internal decision-making authority for BEL complaints, protests and appeals.

The President may:

- Review the matter personally.
- Request advice from a senior BEL official.
- Appoint an independent advisor.
- Ask an appropriate panel to review the evidence.
- Delegate a particular decision where appropriate.
- Obtain legal, medical, safeguarding or technical advice.

Unless decision-making authority has been expressly delegated, the final internal decision remains with the President.

Where the President is personally involved in the complaint, an independent advisor or suitable person may be appointed to review the evidence and provide a recommendation or make the decision where authority has been delegated.

18.20 Future BEL board

BEL may establish a formal board or disciplinary and appeal panel in the future.

If created, BEL may transfer some or all responsibility for:

- Complaints.
- Competition protests.
- Disciplinary decisions.
- Appeals.
- Safeguarding matters.
- Integrity investigations.

The composition, authority and voting process of any future board or panel must be approved and published by BEL.

Until such authority is formally transferred, final internal decision-making authority remains with the President.

18.21 One appeal

A person is normally entitled to one internal appeal against a formal BEL decision.

Once the appeal has been decided, the matter is internally final.

BEL may reopen the case only where:

- Significant new evidence becomes available.
- Evidence used in the decision is shown to be false.
- A serious procedural failure is discovered.
- Reopening the matter is necessary for safety, safeguarding, integrity or basic fairness.

18.22 Appeal powers

The person reviewing an appeal may:

- Confirm the original decision.
- Overturn it.
- Change the outcome or sanction.
- Return the matter for reconsideration.
- Request further evidence.
- Arrange a new hearing or review.
- Correct an administrative error.
- Take another fair and proportionate step.

18.23 Effect of an appeal

Submitting an appeal does not automatically suspend:

- A disqualification.
- A competition correction.
- Withholding of prize money.
- A safety restriction.
- An interim suspension.
- Removal from an event or BEL communication space.

BEL may pause the effect of a decision where this can be done safely and fairly.

18.24 Abusive, repeated or vexatious submissions

BEL may restrict the handling of submissions that are:

- Knowingly false.
- Abusive or threatening.
- Repeated without new information.
- Intended primarily to harass.
- Clearly unrelated to BEL.
- An attempt to reopen a final matter continually.

BEL may require all further contact to be made through craig@britisheatingleague.uk and may set reasonable communication limits.

A submission will not be treated as vexatious merely because it is persistent, critical or ultimately unsuccessful.

18.25 Confidentiality and publication

BEL will handle complaints, protests and appeals with appropriate care.

Information may be shared where reasonably necessary with:

- The person complained about.
- Relevant officials or organisers.
- Witnesses.
- Medical, safeguarding or legal advisors.
- Insurers.
- Police, regulators or other authorities.

BEL may publish an outcome where necessary to correct results, explain a suspension or protect public confidence. Any publication should be accurate and proportionate.

18.26 No retaliation

No person may threaten, punish, exclude or harass someone for making an honest complaint, submitting a protest, appealing a decision or providing evidence.

Knowingly false or malicious reports may be dealt with separately.

18.27 External rights

BEL's internal process does not prevent any person from:

- Reporting a crime.
- Seeking emergency or medical assistance.
- Contacting a regulator or safeguarding authority.
- Obtaining legal advice.
- Exercising a legal or consumer right.

18.28 Final authority

BEL has authority to:

- Classify and manage submissions.
- Correct competition and administrative errors.
- Investigate complaints and protests.
- Take reasonable interim action.
- Appoint an advisor or review panel.
- Confirm, vary or overturn decisions.
- Restrict abusive communications.
- Publish proportionate outcomes.
- Close a matter when the internal process is complete.

At present, the President holds final internal decision-making authority unless authority has been formally delegated.

The final internal decision remains subject to any legal rights that cannot lawfully be excluded.

SECTION 19

DISCIPLINARY ACTION, SUSPENSIONS AND BANS

19.1 Purpose

This section explains how BEL may respond to breaches of its regulations.

Disciplinary action must be fair, proportionate and based upon the seriousness and circumstances of the conduct.

19.2 Persons and organisations covered

BEL may take disciplinary action involving:

- Eaters.
- Members and Eater Licence holders.
- Officials and Event Leads.
- Organisers and venues.
- Coaches, assistants and team members.
- Volunteers.
- BEL representatives.
- Certified Challenge venues.
- Anyone participating in or acting on behalf of BEL.

BEL may consider conduct that occurred while a person was involved with BEL even if they later leave or allow their membership or licence to expire.

19.3 Grounds for disciplinary action

Disciplinary action may result from:

- Breaching BEL competition rules.
- Cheating or manipulating a result.
- Serious or repeated safety breaches.
- Violence, threats, abuse or harassment.
- Discrimination or sexual misconduct.
- Food tampering or sabotage.
- False evidence or dishonest information.
- Betting or prize-sharing breaches.

- Social-media misconduct.
- Misuse of BEL branding, titles or licences.
- Failure to return a defendable championship belt.
- Repeated lateness, withdrawal or non-attendance.
- Refusal to follow reasonable official instructions.
- Retaliation against a complainant or witness.
- Failure to comply with a previous sanction.
- Conduct that seriously damages BEL's integrity or safety.

19.4 Informal action

A minor first incident may be addressed through:

- Advice.
- Education.
- A reminder of the rules.
- An informal warning.
- An agreed apology or correction.
- Additional event instructions.

Informal action does not need to become a formal disciplinary record unless the conduct is repeated or more serious than first understood.

19.5 Formal sanctions

BEL may impose one or more of the following:

- Formal warning.
- Final warning.
- Required apology, correction or removal of content.
- Event-day time, quantity or placing penalty.
- Disqualification from a result.
- Loss or correction of ranking points.
- Withholding or recovery of prize money.
- Removal or correction of a record.
- Loss, suspension or vacation of a title.
- Probation or additional supervision.
- Exclusion from a future event.
- Suspension from BEL activities.
- Withdrawal of membership or Eater Licence.
- Loss of an official or representative role.
- Removal from BEL communication spaces.
- Fixed-term or indefinite ban.

- Withdrawal of event sanctioning or venue certification.
- Referral to another authority.

19.6 Event-day penalties

A referee or Event Lead may impose an immediate competition penalty where permitted by the event rules.

This may include:

- Warning.
- Item or quantity deduction.
- Time penalty.
- Reduced placing.
- Loss of points.
- Disqualification.
- Removal from the competition area.

An event-day decision may later be reviewed by BEL.

More serious or repeated conduct may also be referred for separate disciplinary action.

19.7 Lateness and non-attendance

Eaters must arrive by the time stated in the event information and normally at least one hour before the advertised competition start time.

Where an eater arrives late, withdraws without reasonable notice or fails to attend after confirming, BEL may consider:

- How late the eater was.
- Whether the competition was delayed or disrupted.
- Whether food or resources had been purchased for them.
- Whether reasonable notice was provided.
- The explanation given.
- Previous lateness, withdrawals or non-attendance.
- Whether the circumstances were outside the eater's reasonable control.

BEL may impose one or more of the following:

- Verbal or written warning.
- Final warning.
- Loss of the eater's place at that event.

- Refusal to delay the competition.
- Loss of the entry fee where permitted.
- Reduction or removal of participation or placing points.
- Deduction of points from the eater's BEL season total.
- Disqualification from a specified future event.
- Exclusion from one or more future events.
- Temporary suspension from BEL competitions.
- Additional arrival or confirmation conditions for future events.

BEL may combine these outcomes where repeated lateness or non-attendance justifies it.

BEL does not have to issue every lower-level penalty before imposing a stronger sanction where the disruption, previous history or circumstances justify that decision.

An isolated delay caused by a genuine emergency or circumstances outside the eater's reasonable control will not normally result in a serious sanction, particularly where BEL was informed promptly.

19.8 Interim suspension

BEL may suspend or restrict a person temporarily while a serious matter is investigated.

This may be necessary to protect:

- Safety or safeguarding.
- Other eaters or officials.
- Competition integrity.
- Evidence.
- BEL venues, sponsors or the public.

An interim suspension is precautionary and does not mean misconduct has been proven.

BEL should keep the restriction under review and avoid making it broader or longer than reasonably necessary.

19.9 Notice of an allegation

Before imposing a formal sanction, BEL should normally:

- Explain the substance of the allegation.
- Identify the regulations that may have been breached.
- Provide a reasonable opportunity to respond.
- Consider relevant evidence and explanations.

- Notify the person of the decision and appeal rights.

Urgent interim action may be taken before this process is complete.

19.10 Failure to respond

If a person does not respond within a reasonable stated period, BEL may decide the matter using the available evidence.

Failure to respond does not automatically prove the allegation.

BEL may allow a late response where there is a reasonable explanation.

19.11 Standard of proof

BEL will decide disciplinary allegations on the balance of probabilities—whether it is more likely than not that the alleged conduct occurred.

The more serious the allegation and potential sanction, the stronger and more reliable the evidence should be.

19.12 Selecting a sanction

BEL will consider:

- Seriousness of the breach.
- Harm caused or risked.
- Effect upon other eaters or results.
- Whether the conduct was deliberate.
- Safety and safeguarding implications.
- Previous relevant conduct.
- Cooperation and honesty.
- Any apology or corrective action.
- Whether the conduct was repeated.
- Personal circumstances where genuinely relevant.
- The need to prevent future breaches.
- Consistency with similar BEL decisions.

19.13 Aggravating factors

A sanction may be increased where the conduct:

- Was planned or repeated.

- Involved violence, threats or discrimination.
- Created a serious medical risk.
- Targeted a child or vulnerable person.
- Involved cheating, bribery or false evidence.
- Affected a championship, record or significant prize.
- Involved abuse of an official position.
- Continued after a warning.
- Involved retaliation or concealment.
- Seriously damaged confidence in BEL.

19.14 Mitigating factors

BEL may reduce a sanction where there is:

- Prompt and truthful self-reporting.
- Genuine remorse.
- A full apology or correction.
- Cooperation with the investigation.
- Limited effect upon the event.
- A reasonable misunderstanding.
- No previous misconduct.
- Evidence of coercion or significant personal circumstances.
- Action taken to prevent repetition.

19.15 Suspended sanctions and probation

BEL may suspend a sanction for a stated period.

The sanction may take effect if the person commits another relevant breach during that period.

BEL may also impose probation conditions, including:

- Additional supervision.
- Behaviour or communication requirements.
- Earlier event arrival.
- Additional video evidence.
- Restriction from a particular person or group.
- Completion of appropriate training or guidance.

19.16 Fixed-term and indefinite bans

A fixed-term ban lasts for the period stated in the decision.

An indefinite ban has no automatic end date but may be reviewed after a minimum period specified by BEL.

A ban may apply to:

- All BEL activities.
- Live competitions.
- Online and upload events.
- Certified Challenges for points.
- Titles and records.
- Official or representative roles.
- BEL communication spaces.
- Particular venues or people.

BEL must state the scope and start date of the ban.

19.17 Effect of suspension or ban

Unless the decision states otherwise, a suspended or banned person must not:

- Enter affected BEL competitions.
- Earn BEL ranking points.
- Attempt BEL records or titles.
- Act as an official or representative.
- Use an active Eater Licence to imply eligibility.
- Circumvent the sanction through another identity or third party.

Existing historical achievements will normally remain unless the misconduct affected those results.

A person is not automatically entitled to an entry-fee refund where they become ineligible because of their own misconduct.

19.18 Breach of a sanction

Attempting to evade or breach a sanction may result in:

- Extension of the suspension or ban.
- A new disciplinary charge.
- Removal of results obtained during the restricted period.
- Withdrawal of points, prizes, records or titles.
- An indefinite ban in a serious case.

Anyone who knowingly helps a person evade a sanction may also face disciplinary action.

19.19 Other organisations and authorities

BEL may consider relevant information or sanctions from:

- Another competitive-eating organisation.
- A venue or event organiser.
- A sports governing body.
- Police, courts or regulators.
- A safeguarding authority.

BEL will not automatically copy another organisation's decision without considering:

- Reliability of the information.
- Fairness of the original process.
- Relevance to BEL.
- Current safety or integrity risk.
- The person's explanation.

BEL may impose its own temporary restrictions while obtaining further information.

19.20 Publication

BEL may publish a disciplinary outcome where reasonably necessary to:

- Confirm eligibility or ineligibility.
- Explain changes to results, rankings, records or titles.
- Protect participants, venues or the public.
- Correct misleading information.
- Maintain confidence in BEL.

Published information should be accurate, proportionate and limited to what is reasonably necessary.

BEL will not normally publish informal advice or minor warnings.

19.21 Return after suspension or ban

Before allowing a person to return, BEL may require:

- Completion of the stated suspension period.
- Compliance with all previous conditions.

- Return of BEL property.
- Payment of an undisputed amount owed.
- Evidence that a safety or conduct risk has been addressed.
- A return meeting or written agreement.
- A probationary period.

Return is not automatic after an indefinite ban.

19.22 Appeals and decision-making authority

A person may appeal a formal disciplinary decision under Section 18.

An appeal does not automatically suspend the sanction.

At present, final internal disciplinary authority rests with the President unless authority has been formally delegated.

BEL may appoint an advisor, panel or future board to review or decide disciplinary matters.

19.23 Final authority

BEL has authority to:

- Investigate alleged breaches.
- Take urgent interim action.
- Impose proportionate penalties and sanctions.
- Correct affected results, points, prizes, records and titles.
- Suspend or withdraw licences, membership and official roles.
- Exclude or ban individuals and organisations.
- Set conditions for a person's return.
- Publish proportionate disciplinary outcomes.
- Refer serious matters to another authority.

All formal disciplinary decisions remain subject to the applicable internal appeal procedure.

SAFEGUARDING, EQUALITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

20.1 “We All Eat Together”

“We All Eat Together” is BEL’s official equality, inclusion and anti-discrimination campaign.

It represents BEL’s commitment to welcoming people from every background and treating everyone fairly and with dignity.

No person should be excluded, disadvantaged, abused or treated unfairly because of:

- Race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin.
- Religion, faith or belief.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.
- Gender or gender reassignment.
- Disability or medical condition.
- Age, subject to legitimate event-safety restrictions.
- Pregnancy or maternity.
- Marriage or civil-partnership status.
- Political opinion where protected by applicable law.
- Social or economic background.
- Body shape, size or appearance.
- Level of eating experience or public profile.
- Any other personal characteristic unrelated to legitimate competition eligibility or safety.

“We All Eat Together” applies across:

- Live BEL competitions.
- Online and upload events.
- BEL-Certified Challenges.
- BEL membership and Eater Licences.
- Rankings, titles and selections.
- Official communication spaces.
- BEL media and promotional activities.
- Venues, officials and organisers acting under BEL authority.

20.2 Purpose and scope

This section applies to:

- BEL competitions and Certified Challenges.
- Online and upload events.
- BEL communication spaces.
- Travel or accommodation arranged by BEL.
- Media, sponsor and promotional activities.
- Officials, organisers, venues and volunteers.
- Eaters, members, assistants and representatives.

BEL is committed to an environment that is safe, respectful, inclusive, free from abuse and unlawful discrimination, and reasonably accessible to disabled people.

Safety and fair competition must remain central to every decision.

20.3 Safeguarding responsibility

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

A person must act where they reasonably believe that a child or adult at risk:

- Is in immediate danger.
- Has been abused, neglected or exploited.
- Is being groomed or harassed.
- Is at risk of sexual or physical harm.
- Is being pressured into unsafe participation.
- Cannot protect their own wellbeing adequately.

An emergency must be reported to the emergency services immediately.

20.4 Safeguarding Lead

Until BEL appoints a separate Safeguarding Lead, the President will hold responsibility for receiving and coordinating safeguarding concerns.

The President may:

- Receive and record reports.
- Take immediate protective action.
- Preserve relevant information.
- Contact emergency services or safeguarding authorities.
- Restrict participation or contact temporarily.
- Seek specialist advice.

- Refer a matter for disciplinary action.
- Appoint or delegate responsibility to a suitable person in the future.

The President and any future Safeguarding Lead do not replace the police, social services, medical professionals or other statutory authorities.

20.5 Eaters aged 16 or 17

BEL permits eligible eaters aged 16 or 17 to enter applicable events independently.

BEL does not routinely require:

- Written parental or guardian consent.
- A parent or guardian to attend.
- A compulsory emergency contact.

An eater may provide an emergency contact voluntarily.

Anyone under 18 may still be treated as a child for safeguarding purposes where required by applicable law or guidance.

Eaters aged 16 or 17 must:

- Provide accurate identity and age information.
- Follow safety and welfare instructions.
- Inform BEL of a relevant concern affecting safe participation.
- Not enter an event designated as 18+.

Where a serious incident occurs, BEL may contact the emergency services, an appropriate safeguarding authority or an available family contact where necessary.

20.6 Events restricted to adults

BEL may designate an event as 18+ because of:

- Extreme spice or heat.
- Food quantity or difficulty.
- Alcohol content.
- Venue licensing.
- Insurance requirements.
- Medical or safeguarding risk.
- Applicable host-country law.

Extreme-spice competitions will be restricted to people aged 18 or over.

20.7 Adults at risk

An adult may require additional safeguarding protection because of disability, illness, injury, age, dependency or another circumstance affecting their ability to protect themselves.

BEL will consider:

- The person's wishes.
- Their ability to understand and make the decision.
- Immediate safety.
- Whether coercion or exploitation is present.
- Whether specialist or statutory assistance is required.

Disability alone does not mean that an adult lacks capacity or independence.

20.8 Prohibited safeguarding conduct

The following are prohibited:

- Physical, sexual or emotional abuse.
- Grooming or exploitation.
- Neglect.
- Bullying and harassment.
- Coercive or controlling behaviour.
- Sharing intimate content without consent.
- Sexualised communication with a child.
- Pressuring someone to compete when unsafe.
- Retaliation against a person who reports a concern.
- Using a BEL position to obtain an improper relationship or personal benefit.

20.9 Positions of trust and boundaries

Officials, organisers and BEL representatives must maintain appropriate boundaries.

They must not:

- Use their position to pressure an eater sexually, financially or personally.
- Engage in sexualised communication with a person under 18.
- Arrange unnecessary private meetings with a child.
- Share private accommodation with an under-18 eater unless they are the eater's parent, guardian or otherwise lawfully responsible for them.

- Provide unnecessary one-to-one transport to a child without appropriate safeguards.
- Request inappropriate photographs or private information.

Necessary communication with a 16- or 17-year-old about an event should remain professional and, where practical, use official BEL channels.

20.10 Photography, filming and livestreaming

BEL events may be photographed, filmed or livestreamed.

Recording must not:

- Enter toilets, changing areas or private medical spaces.
- Focus upon a child in an inappropriate or exploitative manner.
- Broadcast private medical treatment without a proper reason and permission.
- Include intimate or degrading footage.
- Reveal private safeguarding information.
- Continue where an authorised official has prohibited recording for safety or welfare reasons.

BEL may remove or restrict a person who records inappropriately.

20.11 Equality and non-discrimination

BEL will not tolerate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation or discriminatory abuse.

Everyone must be given a fair opportunity to participate where they satisfy the legitimate eligibility and safety requirements.

BEL may still apply reasonable and published requirements involving:

- Minimum age.
- An event being designated 18+.
- Eater classification.
- Qualification or ranking position.
- Nationality, residence or regional connection for a specified title.
- Venue capacity.
- Medical and safety suitability.
- Competition format.

These requirements must have a genuine competition, safety or legal purpose and must not be used as an excuse for discrimination.

20.12 Responsibility for the campaign

Eaters, officials, organisers, venues and BEL representatives are expected to support the principles of “We All Eat Together”.

BEL may:

- Challenge discriminatory behaviour.
- Require offensive or discriminatory content to be removed.
- Remove a person from an event or BEL communication space.
- End a relationship with a venue or organiser that discriminates.
- Take disciplinary action.
- Promote positive examples of inclusion.
- Use the campaign in education, events, clothing and BEL media.

A disagreement or isolated misunderstanding should be handled proportionately, but deliberate or repeated discrimination may be treated as serious misconduct.

20.13 Fair eligibility requirements

BEL may apply legitimate and published eligibility requirements involving:

- Minimum age.
- Eater classification.
- Qualification or rankings.
- Nationality, residence or regional connection for a specified title.
- Venue capacity.
- Safety and medical suitability.
- An event being designated 18+.

A requirement must not be used as a disguised reason for unlawful discrimination.

20.14 Reasonable adjustments

BEL, organisers and venues should consider reasonable adjustments for disabled people.

Depending upon the circumstances, adjustments may include:

- Accessible entry information.
- Additional explanation or alternative communication format.
- Step-free access or an appropriate competition position.
- Accessible toilets where reasonably available.
- Additional time for registration or briefing.
- A support person or interpreter.

- Suitable seating or positioning.
- Adjustments to lighting, sound or crowd exposure.
- Assistance moving equipment.
- Another practical adjustment that does not create an unreasonable safety risk or unfair competitive advantage.

Requests should be made as early as reasonably possible.

20.15 Disabled eaters and support people

A disabled eater may request permission to attend or compete with a support person.

BEL will consider:

- The eater's individual needs.
- Nature of the disability or medical condition.
- Competition food, quantity and format.
- Choking and other medical risks.
- Venue accessibility.
- Whether the support person requires access to the competition area.
- Whether additional medical or official supervision is needed.
- Whether the proposed support affects competition fairness.

A support person may assist with:

- Communication.
- Movement and physical access.
- Understanding instructions.
- Personal equipment.
- Obtaining help during an emergency.
- Another adjustment approved by BEL.

Unless specifically approved, a support person must not:

- Feed the eater.
- Consume or handle competition food.
- Interfere with timing or judging.
- Provide prohibited coaching.
- Complete any part of the challenge.
- Conceal signs that the eater is unwell.

20.16 Additional safety requirements

Where a disability or medical condition creates an additional competition risk, BEL may require:

- A support person to be present.
- Additional medical supervision.
- An additional official.
- An accessible competition position.
- Modified emergency arrangements.
- A separate or adjusted competition format.
- Appropriate confirmation that the risk has been considered.

BEL may refuse participation where a serious risk cannot reasonably be managed.

A safety restriction must be based upon the individual circumstances and must not be imposed merely because the eater is disabled.

Where an adjustment fundamentally changes the competition or provides material assistance, BEL may place the result in a separate category or decide that it does not qualify for standard rankings, records or titles.

20.17 Medical conditions and disability

A disability or medical condition does not automatically make an eater ineligible.

BEL may request only information reasonably necessary to assess:

- Safe participation.
- Emergency arrangements.
- A requested adjustment.
- Whether an event-specific risk can be managed.

Medical information should be handled privately and shared only where reasonably necessary.

BEL officials do not provide individual medical clearance or replace advice from a qualified healthcare professional.

20.18 Pregnancy

Pregnancy must not result in unfair treatment.

Because competitive eating may present additional risks, BEL may:

- Discuss event-specific risks privately.
- Recommend that the eater obtains medical advice.

- Offer withdrawal, transfer or another reasonable arrangement.
- Refuse participation where a serious risk cannot reasonably be managed.

An absence connected with pregnancy should be handled fairly when reviewing classification, inactivity or event commitments.

20.19 Accessible complaints

A person who cannot reasonably submit a safeguarding, equality or accessibility concern in writing may request another suitable method.

BEL may accept:

- Telephone or video conversation.
- Voice recording.
- Assistance from a representative.
- An accessible digital format.
- Another reasonable communication method.

BEL may create a written record and ask the person to confirm its accuracy.

20.20 Reporting concerns

Safeguarding, equality and accessibility concerns should normally be sent to:

craig@britisheatingleague.uk

A report should include, where possible:

- Person affected.
- Nature of the concern.
- Date and location.
- Immediate risk.
- People involved.
- Available evidence or witnesses.
- Action already taken.

If the concern involves the President personally, the reporter may contact an appropriate police force, local-authority safeguarding service or another relevant external authority directly.

20.21 Immediate protective action

BEL may take urgent action including:

- Stopping participation.
- Removing a person from an event.
- Arranging medical assistance.
- Separating individuals.
- Restricting contact.
- Preserving footage or messages.
- Contacting an available family contact.
- Notifying police, social services or another authority.
- Imposing an interim suspension.

Protective action is precautionary and does not mean an allegation has been proven.

20.22 Confidentiality and information sharing

BEL will handle safeguarding and equality information carefully but cannot promise complete confidentiality.

Information may be shared where reasonably necessary to:

- Protect a child or adult at risk.
- Obtain medical or specialist assistance.
- Investigate the concern fairly.
- Comply with the law.
- Inform police, social services, insurers or safeguarding authorities.
- Give an accused person a fair opportunity to respond.

Only relevant information should be shared.

20.23 Background and suitability checks

BEL may require appropriate checks, references, declarations or safeguarding training for roles involving responsibility for children or adults at risk.

A criminal-record check will be requested only where the role is eligible and it is appropriate or legally required.

The absence of a criminal conviction does not automatically establish that a person is suitable for every role.

20.24 Reporting by organisers and venues

An organiser, official or venue must report a serious safeguarding concern to BEL as soon as reasonably possible.

They must not wait for BEL before contacting:

- Emergency services where there is immediate danger.
- Police where a crime or serious threat is suspected.
- The appropriate local-authority safeguarding service.
- Medical assistance where someone is unwell or injured.

The report to BEL should explain:

- What happened.
- Who was affected.
- Immediate action taken.
- Whether another authority was contacted.
- Any continuing risk.
- Available evidence or witnesses.

Failure to report a known serious concern may itself be considered under BEL's disciplinary rules.

20.25 No retaliation

No person may threaten, punish, exclude or harass someone for:

- Reporting a genuine safeguarding concern.
- Requesting a reasonable adjustment.
- Raising an equality complaint.
- Assisting an investigation.
- Refusing unsafe or inappropriate conduct.

A knowingly false or malicious report may be considered separately, but an unproven concern is not automatically malicious.

20.26 Outcomes and disciplinary action

A breach may result in:

- Advice or training.
- A warning.
- Adjustment of event arrangements.
- Removal from an official role.

- Restricted contact.
- Removal from an event or communication space.
- Interim or formal suspension.
- Withdrawal of licence, membership or venue certification.
- Fixed-term or indefinite ban.
- Referral to police, social services or another authority.

Formal disciplinary action and appeals will follow Sections 18 and 19.

20.27 Events outside the United Kingdom

A BEL event held elsewhere in Europe must comply with the safeguarding, equality and accessibility requirements of the host country.

BEL may apply a higher internal standard where reasonably practicable.

20.28 Final authority

BEL has authority to:

- Protect participants and the public.
- Appoint a Safeguarding Lead.
- Consider adjustment requests.
- Take urgent protective action.
- Restrict or remove unsuitable individuals.
- Share information where reasonably necessary.
- Refer concerns to external authorities.
- Impose disciplinary action under BEL regulations.

At present, final internal authority rests with the President unless formally delegated to a Safeguarding Lead, advisor, panel or future BEL board.

SECTION 21

DATA PROTECTION, MEDIA RIGHTS AND LEGAL TERMS

21.1 Purpose

This section explains how BEL may collect and use personal information, record and promote its activities, use submitted content, maintain official records and apply reasonable legal terms.

BEL will comply with applicable data-protection, privacy and consumer law.

21.2 Personal information

BEL may collect information reasonably required to administer its activities, including:

- Names, competition names and contact details.
- Age and identity-verification information.
- Photographs and Eater Licence information.
- Membership, entry and payment records.
- Results, rankings, points, records and titles.
- Competition photographs, audio and video.
- Medical, allergy, disability and accessibility information where necessary.
- Complaints, disciplinary and safeguarding information.
- Website, communication, sponsorship and commercial information.

BEL may use this information to manage entries, licences, safety, eligibility, payments, results, communications, complaints, discipline, promotion, insurance, legal duties and official BEL history.

BEL should collect only information reasonably necessary for a legitimate purpose.

21.3 Privacy Notice and lawful processing

BEL will maintain a separate website Privacy Notice explaining:

- Who controls personal information.
- What information is collected and why.
- The lawful bases relied upon.
- How long information is retained.
- Who it may be shared with.

- Individual data-protection rights.
- How to raise a concern.

Depending upon the circumstances, BEL may rely upon contract, consent, legitimate interests, legal obligation, vital interests or another lawful basis.

Where consent is relied upon, it may be withdrawn. Withdrawal does not make earlier lawful processing unlawful and may not require BEL to remove information retained under another valid lawful basis.

21.4 Health and sensitive information

Health, disability, allergy and other sensitive information will be handled with additional care.

BEL will:

- Request only information reasonably necessary.
- Restrict access to appropriate people.
- Avoid unnecessary publication.
- Use it for safety, participation, adjustments, safeguarding or legal purposes.
- Identify any additional legal condition required.
- Delete or anonymise it when no longer reasonably required.

In an emergency, relevant information may be shared with medical professionals or emergency services where necessary to protect life or safety.

21.5 Information concerning 16- and 17-year-olds

BEL will handle information concerning people under 18 with particular care.

BEL may still publish appropriate competition information such as:

- Competition name.
- Photograph or event footage.
- Result and placing.
- Ranking points.
- Championship or record.

BEL must not unnecessarily publish private contact, medical, family or safeguarding information.

21.6 Results, rankings and permanent records

BEL may publish an eater's:

- Name or recognised competition name.
- Photograph.
- Nationality or represented region where relevant.
- Classification or licence level.
- Results, rankings and points.
- Records, titles and championships.
- Relevant disqualification, suspension or correction.

Official results, rankings, records and championship history may be retained permanently as part of BEL's sporting and historical record where lawful.

An eater cannot normally require an accurate official result to be erased merely because they no longer compete.

21.7 Sharing and protecting information

BEL may share relevant information where reasonably necessary with:

- Organisers, venues and officials.
- Medical and safeguarding personnel.
- Payment, website and technology providers.
- Insurers and professional advisors.
- Media and sponsors where appropriate.
- Police, courts, regulators or other authorities.
- Another competition organisation where safety or integrity reasonably requires it.

BEL must not sell private contact or medical information to advertisers.

BEL will take reasonable steps to protect information from loss, unauthorised access, alteration, misuse or disclosure. A suspected serious data breach will be assessed and reported where legally required.

21.8 Retention and individual rights

Information will be retained only as long as reasonably necessary for administration, safety, safeguarding, legal obligations, financial records, disputes, insurance and competition history.

Different types of information may have different retention periods.

Subject to applicable law, a person may request:

- Access to their information.
- Correction of inaccurate information.
- Deletion in appropriate circumstances.
- Restriction of or objection to certain processing.
- Withdrawal of consent where consent is relied upon.
- Transfer of certain information.

These rights are not absolute and may not require BEL to erase accurate competition, legal, safeguarding or disciplinary records.

Requests should be sent to:

craig@britisheatingleague.uk

A person may also complain to the Information Commissioner's Office or another relevant authority.

21.9 Administrative messages, marketing and cookies

BEL may send necessary messages about entries, safety, results, memberships, licences, payments, rule changes and complaints.

Promotional marketing will be sent only where legally permitted. A person may unsubscribe from marketing without losing essential administrative communications.

BEL will maintain a separate website Cookie Policy covering essential cookies and any analytics, payment, video, social-media or marketing services. Consent will be obtained where legally required.

21.10 Event filming and refusal of entry

BEL competitions, challenges and promotional activities may be photographed, filmed, audio recorded, livestreamed and broadcast.

Eaters should be informed where recording forms part of the event.

Where filming is required for result verification, event coverage, broadcast, sponsorship or another legitimate event purpose, BEL may refuse entry to someone who will not agree to the necessary recording.

Recording must still comply with BEL's safeguarding and privacy rules.

21.11 Submitted footage and media licence

By submitting photographs, video, audio or other competition content to BEL, the person confirms that:

- They are entitled to submit it.
- Required participants have been informed appropriately.
- It does not knowingly infringe another person's rights.
- It is genuine and has not been manipulated dishonestly.
- Any significant third-party restriction has been disclosed.

The person grants BEL a non-exclusive, worldwide, royalty-free licence to:

- Store and review the content.
- Edit, crop, subtitle, format and brand it.
- Publish, livestream and broadcast it.
- Use it on websites, social media and printed materials.
- Provide it to sponsors, media and event partners.
- Use it for promotion, programmes, education, results and commercial BEL activity.
- Archive it as part of BEL history.

This licence will continue for as long as reasonably necessary and legally permitted.

No additional payment is due unless a separate written agreement provides otherwise.

21.12 Name, image and likeness

BEL may use an eater's name, competition name, image, voice, biography, interview, public profile and verified achievements in connection with:

- Events and results.
- BEL publicity and social media.
- Programmes and handbooks.
- Broadcasts and documentaries.
- Sponsors and commercial partners.
- Merchandise and historical records.

BEL must not use a person's image to create a knowingly false personal endorsement.

21.13 Editing, ownership and third-party content

BEL may edit content for length, presentation, branding, subtitles, privacy, safety or copyright.

BEL must not edit material deliberately to fabricate misconduct, create a false statement or misrepresent a result.

Unless otherwise agreed, BEL owns or controls content created specifically by or for BEL, including official graphics, programmes, handbooks, event media, rankings, logos and belt designs.

A person may share official posts through normal platform functions but must not sell, license or materially alter BEL-owned content without permission.

BEL may mute or remove unauthorised music, private information or third-party material from submitted content.

21.14 Media restrictions and removal requests

BEL may impose reasonable restrictions involving:

- Results not yet announced.
- Unreleased footage.
- Sponsor or broadcaster exclusivity.
- Private medical or safeguarding information.
- Confidential disciplinary matters.
- Restricted event areas.

Eaters must not publish embargoed results, times or recordings before BEL's announcement.

A person may ask BEL to stop using particular content where there is a serious privacy, safety or safeguarding concern.

BEL will consider the person's rights, lawful basis, historical and verification needs, existing media agreements and whether removal or editing is practical.

BEL cannot guarantee removal of copies already published or lawfully held by third parties.

21.15 Assumption of risk

Competitive eating carries inherent risks including:

- Choking or aspiration.
- Vomiting.
- Allergic reaction.
- Burns or extreme-heat reactions.
- Digestive injury or illness.

- Dehydration or overhydration.
- Loss of consciousness.
- Hospital treatment.
- Serious injury and, in an extreme case, death.

Participation is voluntary.

Every eater is responsible for:

- Considering their own health and fitness.
- Following medical advice.
- Providing accurate requested safety information.
- Understanding the event rules.
- Stopping and seeking help when necessary.
- Following officials' safety instructions.

An entry declaration acknowledges risk but does not remove legal rights that cannot lawfully be excluded.

21.16 No individual medical advice

BEL and its officials do not provide individual medical diagnosis or clearance unless a suitably qualified healthcare professional has been appointed for that purpose.

General safety information is not a substitute for advice from the eater's own qualified healthcare professional.

BEL may refuse participation where a risk cannot reasonably be managed.

21.17 Organiser and venue responsibilities

BEL sanctioning or certification does not transfer an organiser's, venue's or food provider's legal responsibilities to BEL.

They remain responsible for matters within their control, including:

- Food safety and allergens.
- Venue safety and accessibility.
- Licences and permissions.
- Staff and contractors.
- Insurance.
- Emergency arrangements.
- Advertised prizes.

- Compliance with applicable law.

BEL remains responsible for its own acts and obligations.

21.18 Reasonable limitation of liability

To the fullest extent lawfully permitted, BEL will not be responsible for losses that:

- Were not reasonably foreseeable.
- Resulted from false or withheld information.
- Were caused by an eater ignoring rules or safety instructions.
- Arose from an independent venue, organiser, supplier or platform outside BEL's reasonable control.
- Consist of personal travel, accommodation or loss of earnings following a lawful event change.
- Resulted from circumstances BEL could not reasonably prevent.

Nothing in these regulations excludes or limits liability where doing so would be unlawful, including liability that cannot legally be excluded for death or personal injury caused by negligence, fraud or statutory consumer rights.

21.19 Cancellation and circumstances outside control

BEL may cancel, postpone or change an event because of unsafe conditions, severe weather, venue failure, food-supply problems, medical or security incidents, government instructions, transport disruption, technical failure or another circumstance outside reasonable control.

BEL will apply the cancellation, refund and prize provisions in these regulations and the published event terms.

21.20 Accuracy, event rules and amendments

BEL will make reasonable efforts to keep its website, rankings and event information accurate and may correct errors or outdated information.

A clear event-specific rule may override a general handbook rule where it was published before entry and does not conflict with law or essential BEL safety requirements.

BEL may amend these regulations because of safety learning, legal developments, new competition formats or operational experience.

Material changes should have a published effective date and should not normally be applied retrospectively unless necessary for safety, safeguarding, integrity or correction of a false result.

21.21 Third parties and governing law

Reference to a sponsor, venue, restaurant, bookmaker, product, website or third-party service does not guarantee or endorse every aspect of that organisation.

BEL is not responsible for independent third-party content or availability, subject to any specific legal or contractual responsibility.

Unless mandatory law requires otherwise, these regulations and BEL's internal administration are governed by the law of England and Wales.

Events in Scotland, Northern Ireland or another European country must also comply with applicable local and mandatory law.

21.22 Acceptance and final authority

By entering a BEL activity, an eater agrees to follow:

- These regulations.
- Published event-specific rules.
- Reasonable safety instructions.
- Applicable venue terms.
- Relevant privacy and media information.

If one provision is invalid or unenforceable, the remaining provisions will continue so far as legally possible.

BEL's decision not to enforce a rule once does not permanently waive that rule.

BEL has authority to:

- Administer personal information lawfully.
- Publish official results and history.
- Record and promote BEL activities.
- Use properly submitted content under the granted licence.
- Protect confidential, health and safeguarding information.
- Correct inaccurate information.
- Apply reasonable legal and operational terms.
- Update these regulations.

At present, final internal authority rests with the President unless formally delegated.