

26TH ANNUAL PROSTART CULINARY TEAM
COMPETITIONS

UNIVERSAL ORLANDO
EDIBLE
CENTERPIECE
COMPETITION



FLORIDA
RESTAURANT &
LODGING
ASSOCIATION

GENERAL COMPETITION OVERVIEW

Event Personnel

The ProStart Culinary Team Competitions are hosted by the Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association Educational Foundation (FRLAEF) and made possible through the generous support of industry sponsors, donors, and volunteers. Together, these partners help provide a high-quality, industry-driven experience that showcases student talent and supports the development of future restaurant and hospitality leaders.

Personnel Group	Who They Are	Primary Responsibilities
Event Organizers	FRLAEF staff members	Plan, manage, and oversee all aspects of the ProStart Culinary Team Competition; coordinate competition operations, logistics, and participant experience.
Volunteers	Trained and assigned by FRLAEF	Provide event support, assist with competition operations, guide participants, and help ensure a successful event experience. Serve as official timekeepers, escort teams through the competition process, communicate timing milestones, and support fair competition procedures.
Judges	Restaurant and foodservice industry professionals and post-secondary educators	Evaluate team performance, provide feedback, and score competitions according to established criteria.

Eligibility Requirements

Students	
Enrollment	Students must be currently, actively enrolled in a Full or Premier ProStart program. The program must be a confirmed ProStart program as recognized by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation.
Team Member Definition	Active Competitor is student preparing centerpiece.
Competition Limit	Active competitor must be Junior or Senior.
Competition Categories	A student may only compete in one competition
Teams	
Team Size	One student

COMPETITION EXPECTATIONS & GENERAL DISQUALIFICATIONS

Failure to comply with the following information may result in disqualification. See full lists of disqualifications and penalties in the sample Edible Centerpiece Score Sheet.

Participation

- Competitor will send all required information to the FRLAEF no later than January 29, 2027. (If necessary, you will be able to make changes after you turn in your information.) If all the required information is not received by January 29, 2027, the first team on the waiting list will replace your team in the competition.
- Competitor must attend all assigned competition segments.
- Competitor is responsible for arriving on time and following all competition schedules and instructions.
- If Competitor experiences a medical emergency competition staff, at their discretion, may stop the timer until the medical situation is resolved. The competitor will then be given the time remaining to complete the meal.
- Competitor may not leave the competition space, for any reason, without prior approval from FRLAEF staff.

If you encounter **unexpected travel delays** beyond the control of your team **that impact your attendance** at any portion of the event, please **notify FRLAEF** in a timely manner to avoid disqualification.

Communications

- From check-in through the completion of competition, competitor may not receive coaching, assistance, or communication from spectators, educators, mentors, family members, or other supporters.
- The determination of what constitutes coaching or unauthorized communication is solely at the discretion of FRLAEF and Judges.
- FRLAEF strives to provide fair and consistent evaluations; however, all judged competitions involve professional discretion. All judges' decisions and scores are final. All questions regarding scoring must be directed to laura@frla.org. Judges should not be contacted directly after the competition by teams, or educators.

Conduct & Professionalism

- Competitor is expected to conduct themselves in a safe, respectful, and professional manner throughout the event.
- Competitor must follow safe foodservice and workplace practices at all times. Unsafe behavior, horseplay, or actions that create a risk of injury will not be tolerated.
- Prohibited behavior includes, but is not limited to, illegal activity, nonprescription drug use, alcohol use, unsportsmanlike conduct, harassment, or any behavior that threatens the safety or integrity of the competition.
- Competitor must comply with all written and verbal instructions provided by FRLAEF.
- Educators, mentors, chaperones, family members, and other team supporters share responsibility for supporting appropriate conduct and compliance with competition rules. Misconduct by any adult associated with a team that compromises the fairness, safety, or operation of the event may result in penalties or disqualification of the team.
- Educators and mentors may assist competitor in preparing for the competition but may not develop the menu. Their expertise is limited to menu suggestions and technique advice.

Edible Centerpiece Competition Overview

Competitor will demonstrate their creative ability during a 60-minute competition through the preparation of an edible centerpiece consisting of fruits and vegetables.

Competition Segments and Scoring

Segment	Time (in minutes)	Possible Points
Competition Day		
Station Report	10	
Production Mise en Place	15	
Centerpiece Production	60	
Judging Critique	10	90
Station Clean-up	20	
Dishwashing (Optional)	Unlimited	
Totals	~2 hours	90 points

Competition Schedules

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

Equipment & Workspace

Item	Notes
Provided prior to Arrival	
Uniform Elements: • Aprons • Hats • Name Badges	Teams will receive required Apron, Hat and Name Badge in advance of the event.
Provided at Workspace for Production	
One (1) eight-foot table	The station table will be covered with a tablecloth, which must remain in use during the competition. The table may not be moved prior to or during the competition. All preparation must be done on the table.
Access to ice	Available prior to and after the competition only.
Access to running water	Available prior to and after the competition only.
Refrigeration	Available prior to and after the competition only.
Freezer	There is no freezer space available.

Competitor must provide ALL necessary supplies to prepare the centerpiece they have selected, such as utensils, cutting boards, knives, hand tools, hair/beard nets, gloves, and enough cloths for competition and clean-up.

Evaluation Criteria, Penalties and Disqualifications

Evaluation criteria for each judging category, penalties, and disqualifications are included in the [Sample Edible Centerpiece Competition Score Sheet](#).

Uniform Requirements

Element	Specifications	When to Wear
Chef Coat	White, Long-Sleeved	All Segments
Pants	Loose, Long, Black or Checkered	All Segments
Shoes	Black, hard sole, non-slip, non-porous, closed toe AND heel	All Segments
Apron & Hat	MUST wear items provided	All Segments

Teams should refer and adhere to ServSafe standards as they relate to uniform and hygiene in the workspace to include: Hair completely covered, facial piercings taped over. Per Florida health code, no jewelry may be worn except for a wedding band (covered by a glove) and a medical alert bracelet (kept inside uniform and away from food).

Station Report

10 Minutes | Not Scored

Contestant will:

- Move to their assigned station when escorted by the Timer.
- Meet their assigned Timer, who will time each segment of competition
- May not begin any portion of Mise en Place

Mise en Place

15 Minutes | Evaluations considered in category critiques

Competitor will:

- Set up station for production; organize equipment/ingredients
- Measure ingredients
- Obtain water/ice from designated area; wash produce at sinks
- Wash produce and fresh ingredients
- Set up sanitizing solution
- Dried, canned, or frozen packaged items may be opened and portioned

Policies and Procedures

- Competitor may not alter, process, or transform ingredients beyond their original state, or perform any tasks beyond what is permitted during Mise en Place.
- After Mise en Place, competitor may only leave the workstation. Any requests to leave the workstation must be approved by a competition official.
- Large containers or items may not be larger than 2ft x 4ft x 3 ft. Stacked containers may not exceed dimensions above and may not be used to create additional workspace.
- Equipment and supplies must be contained either on the table or underneath the table. Competitor may only work on the table from the interior of the space.
- Competitor may raise his/her table if the table remains steady. If the judges rule the table is unsafe, competitor must lower the table.

Production

60 Minutes | Evaluations considered in category critiques

- Competitor must use fruits and/or vegetables as edible ingredients. The following items may be used as enhancements to the centerpiece: skewers, toothpicks, gelatin/aspic, nuts, food coloring, fresh/dried herbs and spices, shredded coconut, and edible flowers. There is no limit to the number of items used. Competitor will be penalized if non-edible and/or edible ingredients other than those listed above are used.
- Sugar art is not allowed.
- Skewers and toothpicks may show if an integral part of the piece.
- There are no restrictions on the size of the finished product. The Edible Centerpiece must be able to support its own weight without structural assistance. The finished product will be judged from 360 degrees.
- Competitor may not use any templates, stencils, cookie cutters, pictures and/or a mandolin when preparing the centerpiece. If any of the above is used, the Competitor will be disqualified.
- No gas, electric or battery-operated devices may be used.
- Glove use is not required but is left at the discretion at the Competitor.
- Competitor is not allowed to sit during the 60 minutes of centerpiece preparation time.

Post-Production

30+ Minutes | Evaluations considered in category critiques

Judges' Feedback:

- After production, competitor receives feedback from judges and cleans up their stations before dismissal.
- Feedback will occur on the competition floor as soon as the Competitor's 60 minutes is complete. The Competitor is allowed to ask questions during feedback.
- The Competitor is allowed to use an audio recording device to record the critique and feedback. The Competitor may not have the audio device on him/her during the competition. They may retrieve it prior to feedback.
- Due to space limitations, no one is allowed to join the Competitor for the feedback.

Station Cleanup

- Competitor has twenty (20) minutes to clean and vacate the station. The Competitor must return the station to the condition it was in when he/she arrived.
- Once off the competition floor, the Competitor has officially completed the competition and may communicate freely.

Awards:

The Competitors finishing in the top five (5) will receive medals from the FRLAEF.

Sample Edible Centerpiece Competition Score Sheet

EVALUATION CRITERIA	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT	SCORE
Contestant Presentation/Work Skills (50 points)						
Contestant Appearance Including but not limited to: • White chef coat • Black or checkered chef pants • Apron • Black, closed toe non-skid shoes • Hat • Uniform clean and presentable	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Work Organization Including but not limited to: • Utilization of a plan • Mastery of skills required for individual tasks • Proper mise en place • Proper time management	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Follow Safety and Sanitation Including but not limited to: • Personal hygiene • Proper knife safety • Proper use and handling of food contact surfaces	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Proper use of Tools Including but not limited to: • Using tool for appropriate task	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Work Area Cleaned Including but not limited to: • Work area cleaned in appropriate time	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Product Presentation						
Originality Including but not limited to • Creativity • Uniqueness	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Precision of Cuts Including but not limited to • Clean cuts • Intricate and detailed knife work	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Degree of Difficulty Including but not limited to • Complicated Techniques	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Appearance Including but not limited to • Balance of color • Shape • Texture	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
DISQUALIFICATIONS						
	Unauthorized coaching or communication.					
	Contestant did not return all required paperwork by January 29, 2027.					
	Unsafe, illegal, or unsportsmanlike misconduct from team member(s) and/or adult supporters.					
	Contestant did not report to the competition floor on time.					
	Contestant used gas, electric or battery-operated device					
	Used templates and/or pictures when preparing the centerpiece					
	Created a centerpiece using sugar art					
PENALTIES						
	Did not leave station in a sanitary manner					6 pts
	Team was not dressed in uniform.					5 pts
	Used pre-prepared ingredients					10 pts
	Used edible ingredients besides fruits, vegetables, nuts, herbs, spices, shredded coconut and edible flowers					10 pts
	Used non-edible ingredients besides those allowed (skewers, toothpicks, food coloring and gelatin)					10 pts

	Team began any competition segment before their assigned start time.	1/2 pt per 15 secs
	Team did not finish any competition segment within their allotted time.	1/2 pt per 15 secs