

26TH ANNUAL PROSTART CULINARY TEAM COMPETITIONS

FRESH FROM FLORIDA **WAITER'S RELAY** COMPETITION



**GENERAL
OVERVIEW**



**FLORIDA
RESTAURANT &
LODGING
ASSOCIATION**

COMPETITION

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 Competitors are students participating in the relay.
Competition Limit	Active competitors must be Juniors or Seniors.
Competition Categories	A student may only compete in one competition.
Teams	
Team Size	Each team consists of three team members.
School	The team must consist of students from the same school or career center. If the students are not from the same school or career center, the team will be disqualified. Only one team per school may compete in the Waiters Relay Competition.
Alternates	No alternate competitors are allowed.

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

- Teams 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.
- Teams must attend all assigned competition segments.
- Teams are responsible for arriving on time and following all competition schedules and instructions.
- If a team experiences a medical emergency competition staff, at their discretion, may stop the timer until the medical situation is resolved. The team will then be given the time remaining to complete the meal.

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

- 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

- Competitors are expected to conduct themselves in a safe, respectful, and professional manner throughout the event.
- Prohibited behavior includes, but 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.
- Teams 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.

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.

UNIFORMS

- All team members must present a uniform appearance throughout the competition. The emphasis is on team uniformity.
- Appropriate apparel for front-of-the-house attire (such as apron, white shirt, black pants, and closed toe shoes). Attire may also include polo shirts or dress shirts, dress pants/skirts and dress shoes. Sponsor logo T-shirts are acceptable as are jeans. Themed outfits are acceptable if theme is consistent across all team members and outfits are safe to run the relay in. All attire, including length of shorts and skirts, must be school appropriate. The uniform listed above are examples and not required in their entirety.

Waiter's Relay Competition Overview

Participating teams will demonstrate their ability to set a table with three designated place settings and three napkin folds while racing against the clock.

Element	Specifications	When
Wrist Coil Key Chain	Prior to a team member beginning their leg of the competition, they must receive the team wrist coil key chain from the previous team member to proceed.	All Segments
Tablecloth and Dishes	Tablecloths and dishes will be provided on banquet table along the route.	First Leg
Place Setting	Three required place settings: American, Russian and French. Contestant determines which seat gets which place setting. https://frla.org/2026-napkin-folds-place-settings/	First/Second Leg
Napkin Folds	Three required napkin folds: Envelope, Lily and Pyramid. Control/click on the link above to watch YouTube tutorials or cut and paste the link into your browser. Pictures are attached which will be provided to the judges. Contestant determines which seat gets which napkin fold.	Third Leg

- Teams will begin the relay at the start/finish line. Banquet Tables will be set up along the side of the relay with various items needed to set the final table on each station. **Past the stations will be a round table with three chairs.**
- The FRLAEF will provide all items required to complete the relay (i.e. napkins, dishware, flatware, glassware, tablecloths and wrist coil key chain). They will be placed on the banquet tables to the side of the running area.
- Teams will not be assessed penalties for how the team members carry any of the items to the table. For example, the team member carrying the glasses to the table does not have to carry them as if he/she were serving guests.
- Judges will be placed throughout the relay to determine if a team member drops any items. If any item is dropped, the team will be given a 10 second penalty for each item dropped.
- After the first round, the top 8 teams will advance to the second round. The top 8 teams will then run the relay again. The teams' scores from the second round will determine the winners.

Waiter's Relay

Each team member runs one "leg" of the competition.

First Leg	- Take the wrist coil key chain and proceed to the banquet tables. - Bring a tablecloth and the required dishes to the round table. The team member may make as many trips as necessary to collect all the items. - Put the tablecloth on the table. The tablecloth must cover the entire tabletop and not touch the ground. - Place all the dishes on the table according to their designated place setting which is determined by team member. - Go back to the start/finish line to hand off the wrist coil key chain to the second team member.
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<i>Second Leg</i>	• Take the wrist coil key chain and proceed to the silverware and glassware area. • Deliver all the necessary silverware and glassware to the table they are setting. The team member may make as many trips as necessary to collect all the items. • Set the table exactly as the designated place settings require. • Go back to the start/finish line to hand off the wrist coil key chain to the third team member.
<i>Third Leg</i>	• Take the wrist coil key chain and proceed to the napkin area. • Pick up three (3) napkins and bring them to the table they are setting. The team member may make as many trips as necessary to collect all the items. • Fold one of each of the three napkin folds: Envelope, Lily, and Pyramid and place at the setting of their choice. • Go back to the start/finish line. When the third team member crosses the finish line, the timer will record the time.

SCORING

- Each team will be timed while completing the Waiter's Relay Competition.
- Any penalties will be added to the final time.
- After the first round, the top eight teams will advance to the second round.
- During the second round, each of the top eight teams will run the relay again.
- The teams' scores from the second round will determine the top five winners.

PENALTIES

1. Incorrectly setting items in the relay (i.e., incorrect placement of knives) during the leg. If a team member fixes the problem later the team still receives one (1) minute.

For example, if one knife is set incorrectly, the team receives 1 minute added to their final score. If more than one knife is set incorrectly, the team still only receives 1 minute added to their final score. The maximum penalty per item type is 1 minute.

- Addition of one (1) minute for dinner plates
 - Addition of one (1) minute for bread plates
 - Addition of one (1) minute for knives
 - Addition of one (1) minute for forks
 - Addition of one (1) minute for spoons
 - Addition of one (1) minute for glasses
 - Addition of one (1) minute for napkins
2. Napkin fold must closely resemble the designated napkin fold. If the judges decide the napkin fold does not resemble the designated napkin fold:
 - Addition of one (1) minute per napkin not resembling the designated napkin fold. The maximum penalty is three (3) minutes. That is a one-minute penalty per incorrect napkin fold.
 3. If any item is dropped, there will be a 10 second penalty for each item dropped.
 4. If the tablecloth does not cover the entire tabletop and/or parts of the tablecloth touch the ground, a 10 second penalty will be assessed.
 5. Inappropriate attire (i.e., not school appropriate) and/or no uniformity among team members:
 - Addition of one (1) minute.

DISQUALIFICATION

1. If team is not present at their appointed time to compete, the team may be disqualified.
2. Team does not return all required paperwork by January 29, 2027 deadline.
3. The team is comprised of students from different schools or career centers.
4. Teams and all associated competitors must be eligible to compete, as defined by the terms of eligibility above. Teams found to be ineligible will be disqualified. Additionally, any individual students found to be ineligible will result in complete team disqualification.
5. Misconduct including, but not limited to, any nonprescription drug use, alcohol use, unsportsmanlike conduct, or any activity that is illegal under federal, state, or local laws, at the event, during competition, during unsupervised free time, during supervised competition social activities or in activities or locations related to the event. Should such alleged misconduct come to the FRLAEF's attention, the matter will be investigated as the FRLAEF deems appropriate. Any decision as to appropriate action due to misconduct, up to and including disqualification, is at the sole discretion of the FRLAEF and is final.
6. Teams must participate in each event segment in the competition, or they will be disqualified. Failure to compete in any segment will result in disqualification.
7. By entering the contest, the student, and the team he/she represents accept this requirement as well as all other conditions of the Florida ProStart Culinary Team Competitions.

IN CASE OF A TIE

1. The teams will participate in a "finals" relay race. In the event of a tie, all the above rules will apply to this tie breaker.

AWARDS

1. The teams that finish in the top five will receive medals from the FRLAEF.
2. Various colleges may also award scholarships.

NAPKIN FOLDS & PLACE SETTINGS



ENVELOPE



LILY



PYRAMID



American



French



Russian

Sample Score Sheet

RELAY TIME:		PLUS PENALTY TIME:		FINAL RELAY TIME:			
PENALTIES		DINNER PLATE	BREAD PLATE	KNIVES	FORKS	SPOONS	GLASSES
ADDITION OF ONE MINUTE							
ADDITION OF ONE MINUTE		ENVELOPE	LILY	PYRAMID	NO TEAM UNIFORMITY		
ADDITION OF 10 SECONDS		DROPPED ITEM(S) -- tally each dropped item below;			TABLECLOTH - penalty if it doesn't cover entire table		
REASON FOR DISQUALIFICATION:		DID NOT ARRIVE AT COMPETITION ON TIME					
EXPLANATION OF PENALTIES		Incorrectly setting items in the relay (i.e. incorrect placement of knives) during the leg. If a team member fixes the problem later the team still receives one minute added to their time. For example, if one knife is set incorrectly in the Russian setting, the team receives a one minute penalty. If more than one knife is set incorrectly in the Russian place setting, the team still only receives one minute added to their final score. The maximum penalty per place setting per item type is one minute. If a knife is set incorrectly in Russian and a knife is set incorrectly in American, a total of two minutes is added for knives. Teams are required to demonstrate the Envelope, Lily, and Pyramid napkin folds. The napkin folds must closely resemble the attached diagrams. The maximum penalty is three minutes--one minute per napkin fold.					