



2026 WLAC Summary of Rule Changes

2025 Rule	2026 Rule	Reason for Change	Impact on Competition Bodies
2.1 Competition Summary			
<p>A. The championship is comprised of 3 separate rounds – Preliminary, Semi-Finals, and Finals.</p> <p>B. In the Preliminary Round, competitors will produce a total of 4 beverages: 1 set of matching free-pour lattes and 1 set of matching designer lattes.</p> <p>C. The highest scoring 12 competitors after the Preliminary Round will advance to the Semi-Finals Round.</p> <p>D. In the Semi-Finals Round, there are 2 components:</p> <p>i. Art Bar – the competitor will produce 1 designer latte at the Art Bar, according to the schedule arranged by WCC during the event.</p> <p>ii. Stage Presentation – competitors will produce a total of 6 beverages: 2 separate sets of matching free-pour lattes and 1 set of matching free-pour macchiatos.</p> <p>E. At the end of the Semi-Finals Round, the highest scoring 6 competitors will advance to the Finals Round.</p> <p>F. In the Finals Round, competitors will produce a total of 6 beverages; 2 sets of matching free-pour lattes, and 1 set of matching designer patterns.</p>	<p>A. The championship is comprised of 2 or 3 separate rounds, depending on the number of competitors.</p> <p>B. If the number of competitors is up to 35, there will be 3 rounds: Preliminary, Semi-Finals, and Finals.</p> <p>C. If the number of competitors is more than 35, WCC has the discretion to adjust the competition to 2 rounds: Preliminary, and Final.</p> <p>D. In both round configurations, the Preliminary Round will be comprised of Stage Performance and Art Bar. The Semi-Finals (if activated) and Finals Rounds will be comprised of Stage Performance only.</p> <p>E. The round configuration will be confirmed 8 weeks prior to the commencement of the WLAC.</p>	<p>Flexible round configurations have been introduced in line with other WCCs to allow for a higher number of competitors to participate within the limits of the hosting trade shows.</p>	<p>Competition Bodies can decide their round configuration based on rule 16.1.</p>
2.2 Stage Performances			
<p>C. The competitor must present beverages in the order in which the beverage categories are set in</p>	<p>C. The competitor must present beverages in the order in which the beverage categories are set in</p>	<p>The penalty for not serving beverages in the</p>	<p>Competitions Bodies may take up these changes to the</p>

each round. The free pour latte will always be presented first.	each round, otherwise the competitor will receive a 0 score in the Overall score on the Visual Scoresheet. The free pour latte will always be presented first.	correct order has been specified.	2026 season or wait until the 2027 season.
E. Etching on the “free pour” lattes will result in a 0 score being given for the whole beverage category on the Visual Scoresheet.	E. Etching on the “free pour” lattes and macchiatos will result in a 0 score being given for the whole beverage category on the Visual Scoresheet.	Added for clarity.	N/A.
2.2.2 Semi-Finals Round			
N/A	A. The Semi-Finals Round consists of the top 12 scoring competitors from the Preliminary Round.	Flexible round configurations have been introduced in line with other WCCs to allow for a higher number of competitors to participate within the limits of trade show hours.	Competition Bodies can decide their round configuration based on rule 16.1.
N/A	B. The Semi-Finals Round will be confirmed 8 weeks prior to the commencement of the WLAC.		
A. Each competitor will be given 13 minutes at their assigned station, made up of the following segments: i. 3 minutes Preparation Time, ii. 10 minutes Competition/Performance Time.	C. Each competitor will be given 14 minutes at their assigned station, made up of the following segments: i. 3 minutes Preparation Time, ii. 11 minutes Competition/Performance Time.	The required beverages have been updated for the Semi-Finals and Finals Rounds so that in case the Semi-Finals round is not activated, the macchiatos are maintained in the WLAC.	Competition Bodies can decide their round configuration based on rule 16.1.
B. Competitors are required to make 6 total beverages, in the following order: i. sets of matching free-pour lattes (4 beverages total), ii. 2 matching free-pour macchiatos.	D. Competitors are required to make 6 total beverages, in the following order: i. sets of matching free-pour lattes (4 beverages total), ii. 2 matching designer pattern lattes.		
2.2.3 Finals Round			
N/A	A. If the Semi-Finals Round is activated, the Final Round consists of the top 6 scoring competitors from the Semi-Finals Round. If not, the Final	Flexible round configurations have been introduced in line	Competition Bodies can decide their round

	Round consists of the top 6 scoring competitors from the Preliminary Round.	with other WCCs to allow for a higher number of competitors to participate within the limits of trade show hours.	configuration based on rule 16.1.
A. Each competitor will be given 14 minutes at their assigned station, made up of the following segments: i. 3 minutes Preparation Time, ii. 11 minutes Competition/Performance Time.	B. Each competitor will be given 13 minutes at their assigned station, made up of the following segments: i. 3 minutes Preparation Time, ii. 10 minutes Competition/Performance Time.	The required beverages have been updated for the Semi-Finals and Finals Rounds so that in case the Semi-Finals round is not activated, the macchiatos are maintained in the WLAC	Competition Bodies can decide their round configuration based on rule 16.1.
B. Competitors are required to make 6 total beverages, in the following order: i. sets of matching free-pour lattes (4 beverages total), ii. 2 matching designer pattern lattes.	C. Competitors are required to make 6 total beverages, in the following order: i. sets of matching free-pour lattes (4 beverages total), ii. 2 matching free-pour macchiatos.		
2.3 Art Bar			
J. The photographs will be judged by a panel of 4 judges: 3 certified WLAC judges and 1 judge who may be chosen for their artistic expertise (e.g., chef, artist, designer, etc.) and may not have coffee expertise. K. The judges will assess the photographs of the beverages on their overall appealing impression and contrast between ingredients.-	K. Photographs may be used by WCC for promotion and will be part of an online and/or in-person contest, to determine the Art Bar Winner. The Art Bar contest will be separated from the WLAC stage competition. No scores from the Art Bar will be counted towards the final tabulation for awarding the title of World Latte Art Champion. The winner of the Art Bar contest will be announced on Finals day and will be awarded separately. However, it is possible for a single competitor to win both awards. L. Competitors must participate to the Art Bar under penalty of disqualification for the World Latte Art Championship and the Art Bar Contest.	The Art Bar will be a separate contest judged by the audience. It is mandatory for competitors to participate to the Art Bar round.	Competition Bodies can decide their round configuration based on rule 16.1.
2.5 Beverage Definitions			
This section and its subsections have been reorganized. Changes in content are highlighted in this document.			

<p>D. Extraction times are suggested to be a minimum of 15 seconds for macchiatos and 20 seconds for lattes. In the case of fully-automatic espresso machines being provided, this rule is not used.</p>	<p>D. Extraction times must be a minimum of 15 seconds for macchiatos and 20 seconds for lattes in a continuous extraction. In the case of fully-automatic espresso machines being provided, this rule is not used.</p>	<p>Added for clarity.</p>	<p>Competitions Bodies may take up these changes to the 2026 season or wait until the 2027 season.</p>
<p>N/A</p>	<p>F. Cooling tools (e.g., whiskey stones, cooling stones, etc.) may be used to affect the temperature of the provided milk. Cooling tools can be added to the milk during preparation time on stage. Competitors are not allowed to alter the composition of the provided milk (e.g., by using additives, ingredients, flavorings, ice, liquid coolants, etc.) or they will receive a 0 score in the Overall Impression on the head judge scoresheet.</p>	<p>Competitors can now make use of cooling tools to alter the temperature of the provided milk.</p>	<p>Competitions Bodies may take up these changes to the 2026 season or wait until the 2027 season.</p>
<p>F. Coffee and milk will be provided by the WLAC. Competitors are not permitted to use their own. Failure to do so will result in a 0 visual scores for that beverage.</p>	<p>G. Coffee and milk will be provided by the WLAC. Competitors are not permitted to use their own. Failure to do so will result in a 0 visual scores for that beverage. In the case of the Art Bar, failure to use the provided milk will result in disqualification in the Art Bar round.</p>	<p>A penalty for the Art Bar has been added since there are no scoresheets in use for this round.</p>	<p>Competitions Bodies may take up these changes to the 2026 season or wait until the 2027 season.</p>
<p>2.5.1 Free Pour Latte and Macchiato</p>			
<p>/</p>	<p>A. For the purpose of the WLAC, a free pour latte and macchiato are intended to be prepared by pouring steamed milk from a milk jug directly into the official competition cups without the use of any other tools.</p>	<p>Added for clarity.</p>	<p>N/A.</p>
<p>B. No etching or surface decoration are allowed on the free-pour latte and macchiato, and they will result in a 0 for all visual scores for that beverage</p>	<p>D. No etching or surface decoration are allowed on the free-pour latte and macchiato. Additionally, the spout of the milk jug must not be used as an etching tool. Utilizing etching or surface decoration will result in 0 for all visual scores for that beverage.</p>	<p>Added for clarity.</p>	<p>Competitions Bodies may take up these changes to the 2026 season or wait until the 2027 season.</p>
<p>2.5.2 Designer Pattern Latte</p>			

/	F. The use of surface ingredients and/or etching on Designer Pattern Lattes is evaluated based on how well they complement and elevate the patterns. Using surface ingredients and/or etching does not correlate directly with higher scores.	Added for clarity.	Competitions Bodies may take up these changes to the 2026 season or wait until the 2027 season.
---	---	--------------------	---

2.5.3 Art Bar Lattes

/	B. All surface ingredients, food coloring, and other café ingredients are acceptable on Art Bar lattes, without limitations.	The Art Bar Lattes section has been added. In the Art Bar round, competitors can use surface ingredients, food coloring, and café ingredients without limitations.	Competition Bodies can decide their round configuration based on rule 16.1.
---	---	--	---

4.3 Milk

Competitors are required to use WLAC-provided milk during their performance. Provided milk may be a choice of two or more options, and milk sponsor information will be updated at https://wcc.coffee/worldlatte-art-championship . Competitors must take unopened milk bottles with them on stage. They may not prepare milk offstage. Competitors can prepare their milk from the unopened milk bottles during preparation time.	Competitors are required to use WLAC-provided milk during their performance. Provided milk may be a choice of two or more options, and milk sponsor information will be updated at https://wcc.coffee/worldlatte-art-championship . Competitors must take unopened milk bottles with them on stage. They may not prepare milk offstage. Competitors can prepare their milk from the unopened milk bottles during preparation time. Competitors are allowed to use cooling tools to affect the temperature of the milk. Competitors are not allowed to alter the composition of the provided milk (e.g., by using additives, ingredients, flavorings, ice, liquid coolants, anything that could dissolve/melt into a component of the milk itself, etc.).	Competitors can now make use of cooling tools to alter the temperature of the provided milk. The composition of the provided milk cannot be altered.	Competitions Bodies may take up these changes to the 2026 season or wait until the 2027 season.
---	--	--	---

7.7 Overtime Penalties

<p>A. During the Art Bar competition, competitors must place their completed beverage in the designated judging/photography location before the end of the 5-minute competition time. If a competitor goes over the allotted 5 minutes, they will receive a 0 for Art Bar.</p>	<p>A. During the Art Bar competition, competitors must place their completed beverage in the designated judging/photography location before the end of the 5-minute competition time. If a competitor goes over the allotted 5 minutes, their beverage will be disqualified for the Art Bar round.</p>	<p>The overtime penalty for the Art Bar has been updated.</p>	<p>Competition Bodies can decide their round configuration based on rule 16.1.</p>
--	---	---	--

7.8 Coaching

<p>Instructions or ‘coaching’ may not be provided to a competitor during their competition time under penalty of disqualification. WCC encourages audience participation and enthusiastic fan support that does not interfere with the competition. Coaches, supporters, friends, or family members are not allowed on stage or to interfere with the competition while it is in progress, otherwise the competitor is subject to disqualification by the stage manager or presiding head judge.</p> <p>As discussed in the “Forgotten Accessories” section below, no persons other than the competitor may retrieve forgotten accessories or equipment for the competitor. Delivery/retrieval of forgotten items by any person other than the competitor will result in disqualification.</p>	<p>Instructions or ‘coaching’ may not be provided to a competitor during any time on stage under penalty of disqualification. WCC encourages audience participation and enthusiastic fan support that does not interfere with the competition. Coaches, supporters, friends, or family members are not allowed on stage or to interfere with the competition while it is in progress, otherwise the competitor is subject to disqualification by the stage manager or presiding head judge.</p> <p>As detailed in the “Forgotten Accessories” section below, no persons other than the competitor may retrieve forgotten accessories or equipment for the competitor. Delivery/retrieval of forgotten items by any person other than the competitor will result in disqualification.</p>	<p>Added for clarity.</p>	<p>N/A.</p>
--	--	---------------------------	-------------

10.1.2 Competitors’ Total Score

<p>The competitor’s total score of Stage Presentation will be tallied by adding the total of the 2 visual judges and 1 head judge scoresheets, and any time penalty subtracted from the total.</p> <p>To calculate the total score of Art Bar, each judge’s score will be multiplied by 3, and then calculated by adding the total score of each</p>	<p>The competitor’s total score of Stage Presentation will be tallied by adding the total of the 2 visual judges and 1 head judge scoresheets, and any time penalty subtracted from the total.</p>	<p>Removed details regarding Art Bar score as this portion of the competition is no longer scored by the judges.</p>	<p>Competitions Bodies may take up these changes to the 2026 season or wait until the 2027 season.</p>
--	--	--	--

judge. The total Art Bar score will be added to the Semi-finals Stage Presentation score to determine the total Semi-final scores.			
13.1 Best Practice			
B. Do something that is not sanitary or food safe with a cloth (e.g., touching it to the face or mouth, etc.).	B. Do something that is not sanitary or food safe with a cloth, accessories, and tools (e.g., touching it to the face or mouth, etc.).	Added for clarity.	Competitions Bodies may take up these changes to the 2026 season or wait until the 2027 season.
13.3 Overall Impression of Technical Skills and Use of Machine			
A. The competitor's overall workflow and use of tools, equipment, and accessories.	A. The competitor's overall workflow and use of tools, equipment, and accessories, including cooling tools for the milk, if used.	Added for clarity.	Competitions Bodies may take up these changes to the 2026 season or wait until the 2027 season.
14.2 Art Bar Round			
A. The addition of a Semi-Finals Round in the bar area is to allow the competitors to push the boundaries in their creativity and artistic aesthetics without the stress of being judged on stage. Patterns presented should be an inspiration for baristas worldwide and be an impressive representation of the barista's skills for the general public.	A. The addition of the Art Bar round in the bar area is to allow the competitors to push the boundaries in their creativity and artistic aesthetics without the stress of being judged on stage. Patterns presented should be an inspiration for baristas worldwide and be an impressive representation of the barista's skills for the general public.	Flexible round configurations have been introduced in line with other WCC to allow for a higher number of competitors to participate within the limits of the hosting trade shows.	Competition Bodies can decide their round configuration based on rule 16.1.
B. The photographs will be judged by a panel of a minimum of 4 judges, 3 certified WLAC judges, and 1 judge who may be chosen for their artistic expertise (chef, artist, designer etc.) who may not have coffee expertise.	B. The photographs will be judged by in-person and/or online audiences.	Art Bar will no longer be exclusively judged by WLAC judges.	Competition Bodies can decide their round configuration based on rule 16.1.

/	C. The Art Bar winner will be announced onsite at the awards ceremony.	Added for clarity.	Competition Bodies can decide their round configuration based on rule 16.1.
15. Appeals at the World Latte Art Championship			
In section 15 and its sub-sections, updates have been made to reflect current competition support structures. Information has been re-organized between sub-sections.			N/A.
N/A	This section applies to WCC only, see the section "Appeals at Competition Body Events" below for information on the appeal process at Competition Body events.	Added for clarity, no formal changes from current practices.	N/A.
15.3 Appeals at the World Coffee Championships			
<p>If a person does not agree with a decision, they may appeal the decision in writing to the WCC CSC. All decisions made by the committee are final.</p> <p>The appeal letter must include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name • Date • A clear and concise statement of the complaint • Date and time references (if applicable) • Comments and suggested solution • Party/Parties involved • Contact information <p>Any written protests/appeals omitting this information will not be considered. All persons must submit their written complaint or appeal through the complaint form available on the website at https://wcc.coffee/rules-regulations within 24 hours of the incident. The complaint will be received by the WCC team and shared with the WCC CSC.</p>	<p>If a person does not agree with a decision, they may appeal the decision in writing. All persons must submit their written complaint or appeal through the complaint form available on the website at https://wcc.coffee/rules-regulations within 24 hours of the incident. The complaint will be received by the WCC team and will be evaluated.</p> <p>The appeal letter must include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name • Date • A clear and concise statement of the complaint • Date and time references (if applicable) • Comments and suggested solution • Party/Parties involved • Contact information <p>Any written protests/appeals omitting this information will not be considered. Active competition appeals that are discussed in public commentary before a final decision is made will be dismissed.</p>	Updated in line with the Competitor Code of Conduct.	N/A.

16.7 Extraction Time

Shot times for shots that are not served are not included in this score. Extraction times must be a minimum of 15 seconds for macchiatos, and 20 seconds for lattes.

Shot times for shots that are not served are not included in this score. Extraction times must be a minimum of 15 seconds for macchiatos, and 20 seconds for lattes in a **continuous extraction**.

Added for clarity.

Competitions Bodies may take up these changes to the 2026 season or wait until the 2027 season.