

# PigMania

Lebanon, Ohio

Dave and Becky Druetzler

It was a dark and stormy night . . .

Well, not exactly. The "tropical depression known as Harvey" did arrive in Lebanon, Ohio just ahead of the competitors. Harvey, so it seemed, thought that spending a day or two at Miami Valley Gaming Casino would be a suitable respite before continuing his trip east. Although he quickly wore out his welcome and provided those notorious "not ideal conditions", Harvey could not dampen the mood among the 40 KCBS teams opting for this outstanding first year competition.

PigMania began with a KCBS judge class on Thursday evening led by instructor Steve Grinstead (on his way to the American Royal) and cooked by Bark Brothers BBQ. Participants had the opportunity to put their new skills to the test by judging Kids Q or the Rib Off on Friday afternoon, or Saturday's contest.

Early on, it became apparent that collaboration was the prevailing theme for the weekend. We were surprised to find the Velvet Smoke BBQ competition trailer parked at a cook site with no team, learning later that Bark Brothers BBQ borrowed it to cook for the CBJ class and the contest. A knock on the Big Dogg BBQ trailer door summoned Roger Cole of Extra Mile BBQ as the lone occupant. Shiggin' or helpin' – you decide! A Royal reshuffle had Bert 'Skippy' McLain of PB&J BBQ teaming up with Bad Habit BBQ to compete as Skippy's Bad Habit. More on them in a minute.

Cook site layout was distributed along two sections of MVG's horse racing track, assigned in consideration of electrical needs. Due to the weather, all musical acts for the weekend, including Elvis, had to be moved inside adjacent to the judging area. The only adjustment to the contest was moving the cooks' meeting to an outdoor event tent, which meant that cook teams could enjoy dinner and live music inside following official business. Slogging across the track on Friday provided a constant reminder of the needs of others who had been more adversely affected by Harvey

and our BBQ brethren who mobilized as part of Operation BBQ Relief. Chris Dyer of Blue Dog BBQ coordinated efforts among competition teams to come together for the cause, raising \$1,000.

Contest day arrived with Harvey still trying to beat the house, but considering his losses by midmorning and moving on before the first turn-in. As one competition cook suggested, if the judges were saving their top scores for a rainy day, maybe this was it! MVG provided an ample and comfortable space for judging and MVG staff could not have been more complementary or hospitable as the contest progressed. One of the weekend's rewards was introducing the MVG general manager to money muscle – which might just have brought a tear to his eye.

With a strong volunteer cohort and top notch competition, judging ran like clockwork – although, that last pork turn-in with just 6 seconds to spare was a little unnerving! Twenty-two teams received calls with these category winners:

Chicken – WeQ4U  
 Ribs – Tire Smoke BBQ  
 Pork – Skippy's Bad Habit  
 Brisket – High on the Hog Ohio  
 Dessert – Bo-B-Q  
 Rib Off – High on the Hog Ohio  
 People's Choice – High on the Hog Ohio

Mark Bowman of WeQ4U, competing in his 69th contest, brought home his first Grand Champion and received heartfelt congratulations from those present as well as many throughout KCBS. The collaboration that brought us Skippy's Bad Habit took Reserve Grand Champion.

Organizers Dan & Ann Hurst and their team worked tirelessly to make this first-year contest a success. With this one in the books, there was nothing left to do except relax, listen to the zydeco band, and play the video slots before heading down the BBQ trail.



# GRILLIN & CHILLIN BBQ COOKOFF

Owensboro, KY

By Phillip & Kathy Brazier

Diamond Lake Resort opened its gates once again for the 12th annual Grillin & Chillin BBQ Cookoff. For the second year, the Kentucky Kookers BBQ team have organized the event. Team members, Kenny Jackson, Bruce Kittinger, Randy Hurm and Lewis Boteler (supported and ably-assisted by their wives Tena, Mary, Lesa and Mary Sue) have proven once again that you can leave it to a BBQ team to know how to put on a great contest. Their efforts, along with those of Brian and Janice Smith and Joe and Laurie Meythaler, owners of Diamond Lake Resort and their staff, assure a first class event.

One of the things about this contest that stands out in our and teams' memories through the years are the practical jokes that have gone back and forth between Phillip and Brian Smith, one of the Diamond Lake owners. There have been lots and lots of jokes and gags played on Brian and he has been a really good sport (most of the time). Teams have even gotten in on the act and helped in pulling off some of these jokes. As expected, when we were visiting teams on Friday to give out the entry boxes, many teams wanted to know "what are we going to do to Brian this year?" After much consideration, Phillip decided that he would let Brian off this year and not play any jokes. Unfortunately, Brian didn't believe it and was on his guard all weekend waiting for the joke that never came.

This year's event had 42 teams from seven different states in attendance. The activities got started with our cooks' meeting, followed by a great pot-luck supper, on Friday evening, for all cook teams and any judges who would like to participate.

Since Diamond Lake Resort is a family oriented camping facility with over 200 camping spots, many of which are permanent residences, the organizers decided to add something new. This year they held a Camper's Q, where any camper could compete by cooking and entering 3 pork chops. This year's winner was Troy Edge. Congratulations, Troy.

Saturday morning, the organizers served up a delicious breakfast of biscuits, sausage, ham, gravy, and just about any kind of doughnut you could ask for. A great start for a big day!

Although we had several judges who forgot to come, we had enough dedicated judges to get the job done (our thanks to the Table Captains who did double duty for us) and for their efforts, these folks were treated to some really good barbeque. And a REALLY SPECIAL thank you to Dave and Becky Druetzler for making the trip.

When the awards were announced, the following teams were named winners in the following categories. People's Choice – Ole Man Larry's BBQ  
 Chicken – Hot Cole's BBQ  
 Ribs – Blue Chip BBQ  
 Pork – Extra Mile BBQ  
 Brisket – Scuffletown Smokers  
 Reserve Champion – Scuffletown Smokers  
 Grand Champion - Grey Street BBQ

Congratulations to all these teams and all who participated. I know the organizing committee and the Diamond Lake staff were glad you came and we hope you were too.

Take your competition ribs and chicken to a "Whole 'NUTHA Level!"



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