

THE NEXT LEVEL COOKOFF 2025

OFFICIAL RULES

NO PURCHASE OR PAYMENT OF ANY KIND IS NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN. A PURCHASE OR PAYMENT WILL NOT INCREASE YOUR CHANCE OF WINNING.

850 ESPN Cleveland and Circle K are giving fans the chance to compete against members of ESPN Cleveland's *The Next Level*, Emmett Golden, Jerod Cherry, and Nick Paulus in a grilling competition. Qualification for the contest will open on Thursday, July 31, 2025 at 3:00PM ET. To qualify, fans must upload a photo and fill out the entry form at <http://www.ESPNClevelandContests.com>. The qualification period will end at 11:59PM ET on Thursday, August 28, 2025. ESPN Cleveland team members will then select five (5) qualifiers to compete in the cookoff on Friday, September 5, 2025 from 6:00PM ET to 8:00PM ET on Old River Road outside of the ESPN Cleveland studios located at 1109 Old River Road, Cleveland, Ohio, 44113. All participants will be required to prepare their burgers/sliders on-site using a charcoal grill and/or electric appliances. Each participant will be supplied with a \$50 gift card prior to the competition to purchase the groceries needed for their dish. Preparation tables, serving platters, and serving utensils will all be supplied by ESPN Cleveland. All other needed items, including the grill and charcoal, will need to be brought by participants. Participants must have an easy-to-transport grill and must cook using charcoal or wood-pellets. Grills and appliances utilizing propane or grease will not be permitted. Safe internal temperature of meat will be verified by an ESPN Cleveland teammate at plating. Participants must prepare enough food for twenty (20) small servings each to be plated on a 5-inch by 2.5-inch dish. There will be one (1) grand prize winner among the 5 fans and one (1) grand prize winner among TNL hosts. Additionally we will recognize the winning "team" (Fans vs. Hosts). The grand prize winners will be determined by the **panel of judges made up of fans and ESPN Cleveland talent**. The grand prize winner will receive \$1,000.00 cash and Championship belt. If a host wins the grand prize, they may accept the championship belt but may not win the cash prize. The team (fan or host) with the highest average score will receive a trophy. **Scores will be determined by a voting group comprised of the first ten (10) fans age 21 or older who arrive at the cookoff starting at 6:00PM ET and up to five (5) ESPN Cleveland teammates. Judges will score presentation based on one complete burger from each contestant plated on a 10" plate and will blindly sample each dish and consider the taste and creativity.** In the event of a tie, the individuals in the group will cast another vote selecting only between the tied participants. All entrants must be 18 years of age or older, reside in Ohio, and cannot be a registered cook/chef that competes in BBQ/cooking/grilling competitions.

1. HOW TO ENTER

- a. These rules govern the The Next Level Cookoff 2025 promotion (the "Promotion") being conducted by ESPN Cleveland, 1109 Old River Road,

Cleveland, Ohio, 44113 ("GKB") beginning Thursday, July 31, 2025 at 3:00PM ET and ending Thursday, August 28, 2025 at 11:59PM ET. The cookoff competition will take place on Friday, September 5, 2025. The cookoff will start at 6:00PM ET and will end at 8:00PM ET.

- b. To qualify for the Promotion, you may enter via the following method(s):
- Upload a photo of your best burger and fill out the online entry form located at www.ESPNclevelandContests.com
- i. To participate in the Promotion, you may log onto <http://www.ESPNclevelandContests.com> and follow the links and instructions to enter the Promotion and submit a photo of your best burger along with the following information: your first and last name, complete address, city, state, zip code, telephone number, date of birth and a valid email address in the online entry form. Only one internet entry per person and one internet entry per email address is permitted. Internet entries will be deemed made by the authorized account holder of the email address submitted at the time of entry. The authorized account holder is the natural person who is assigned to the email address by an internet access provider, online service provider or other organization that is responsible for assigning an email address or the domain associated with the submitted email address. Multiple participants are not permitted to share the same email address. Entries submitted will not be acknowledged or returned. Use of any device to automate entry is prohibited. Proof of submission of an entry shall not be deemed proof of receipt by GKB. GKB's computer is the official time keeping device for the Promotion. GKB is not responsible for entries not received due to difficulty accessing the internet, service outage or delays, computer difficulties or other technological problems.
- ii. To participate in the cookoff portion of the Promotion, five (5) qualifiers will be selected by ESPN Cleveland teammates to compete against TNL hosts and the other participants on Friday, September 5, 2025. The cookoff will take place outside of the ESPN Cleveland offices (1109 Old River Road, Cleveland, OH, 44113).
- c. Limit one (1) entry per eligible person during the Entry Period.

2. ELIGIBILITY RESTRICTIONS

- a. The Promotion is open to all persons who are 21 years of age or older, who reside in Ohio, and who are not a registered cook/chef that competes in BBQ competitions. Employees of GKB other than the participating hosts, its subsidiary and affiliated entities, GKB's advertising and promotional agencies, its participating sponsors and the members of their immediate families (spouse, parents, siblings, or children) and/or households (whether related or not) are

ineligible to participate or win. This Promotion is subject to all applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations and is void where prohibited.

- b. Listeners are eligible to win a prize in a Promotion conducted by GKB only once every seven (7) days and only once every thirty (30) days if the prize is valued over \$600. Only one (1) winner per household is permitted in any GKB promotion.
- c. The winner must provide valid government-issued photo identification and provide his or her complete address, date of birth and phone number to claim a prize.
- d. Entrants are required to provide truthful information and GKB will reject and delete any entry that it discovers to be false or fraudulent. GKB will disqualify any entry from individuals who do not meet the eligibility requirements.

3. PRIZES

- a. Five (5) qualifying prizes will be awarded in this Promotion. Each prize consists of the following:
 - One (1) spot in The Next Level Cookoff 2025 competition against the hosts of *The Next Level*.
 - One (1) \$50 gift card for the purchase of groceries for the cookoff.

The Approximate Retail Value ("ARV") of the prize is \$50. The winner will be solely responsible for all taxes and all other fees and expenses not specified herein associated with the receipt and use of the prize. GKB accepts no responsibility for repairing any real or supposed damage to any prize.

- b. One (1) grand prize will be awarded in this Promotion to the fan with the best burger as determined by the fan panel of voters. The grand prize will consist of the following:
 - \$1,000.00 cash prize
 - Championship belt

The Approximate Retail Value ("ARV") of the prize is \$1,250. The winner will be solely responsible for all taxes and all other fees and expenses not specified herein associated with the receipt and use of the prize. GKB accepts no responsibility for repairing any real or supposed damage to any prize.

If the grand prize is awarded in this Promotion to a TNL host, The host may accept the belt but must pass the \$1,000 prize to the fan contestant with the highest total score.

- c. One (1) Secondary prize will be awarded to each member of the “team” determined to have the highest average score as determined by the fan panel of judges. The secondary prize will consist of the following:
 - Trophy
- d. Qualifiers selected to participate in the cookoff may collect their \$50 gift card at the ESPN Cleveland studios (1109 Old River Road, Cleveland, Ohio, 44113) weekdays between the hours of 9AM ET and 5PM ET September 1st through 4th, 2025. If a gift card is not collected by any participant prior to the event, it will be distributed at the cookoff event.
- e. Other prizes, EXCEPT for the cash prize, will be distributed on-site at the end of the Promotion. The cash prize will be awarded as a check that will be sent in the mail the week after the event by GKB representatives. All required affidavits that need to be filled out electronically by the winners, will be sent by email on Monday, September 8, 2025. In the event that a prize or prize certificate is mailed to the winner, it will be with the prior written consent of the winner and therefore, winner assumes the risk of its loss. GKB is not responsible for the safe arrival of a prize or prize certificate.
- f. There is no substitution, transfer or cash equivalent for prizes, except that GKB may, at its sole discretion, substitute prizes or cash of comparable value. The prizes are expressly limited to the item(s) listed above and unless otherwise expressly specified, do not include taxes, gratuities or any other expenses. Other restrictions may apply.

4. WINNER SELECTION AND NOTIFICATION

- a. Decisions of GKB management with respect to the Promotion are final.
- b. The five (5) qualifiers will be selected and notified by ESPN Cleveland teammates of their qualification to participate in the cookoff no later than Friday, August 29, 2025.
- c. The grand prize winners with the best burger as determined by the fan panel of judges will be selected and notified by 8:00PM ET on Friday, September 5, 2025.
- d. Promotion of skill:
 - 1. On Friday, September 5, 2025, 850 ESPN Cleveland and Circle K will conduct The Next Level Cookoff 2025 contest, which will take place outside the patio of the ESPN Cleveland studios in the East Bank of The Flats (1109 Old River Road, Cleveland, OH, 44113).
 - 2. Submission period for a Qualifying Prize:

- a. The submission period to win a Qualifying Prize of one (1) non-transferrable spot in The Next Level Cookoff 2025 contest and a \$50 gift card will begin on Thursday, July 31, 2025 at 3:00PM ET and will end on Thursday, August 28, 2025 at 11:59PM ET.
 - b. Submission pictures will be judged by ESPN Cleveland teammates based on appearance and presentation.
 - c. Top five (5) submissions, as determined by judges, will be invited to compete in The Next Level Cookoff 2025 contest.
 - d. An ESPN Cleveland representative will reach out with the invitation by Friday, August 29, 2025.
3. All participants must have a valid picture ID and be at least 21 years of age or older.
4. All participants must abide by the designated health and safety protocols.
 - b. All pork and chicken will be checked at plating and must be cooked to an internal temperature of at least 165°F.
 - c. Other meats should be cooked to an internal temperature of at least 125°F
5. All participants must have a charcoal or wood-pellet style grill. No gas grills will be allowed. Grills also must be easily transported from home to the contest and back by the selected participants.
6. ESPN Cleveland will provide all participants with a \$50 gift card, preparation table, serving platters, and utensils for blind taste testing.
7. Participants must bring their own charcoal/wood-pellet grill, charcoal, grilling utensils, ingredients, mixing bowls, and any other supplies required for cooking.
8. All participants must arrive by 5:00PM ET and be set to cook by 6:00PM ET
9. Cookoff:
 - a. Each of the five (5) participants will have one (1) hour and fifteen (15) minutes to prepare, grill, and plate their dishes.
 - b. Participants may use any seasonings or ingredients that they want to prepare and cook their dishes, but these items must all be brought from home.
 - c. Once the allotted cooking time has finished, each participant should have enough to serve twenty (20) small samples. One complete burger will be plated for presentation on a 10.5" plate and individual samples will be plated on a 5" by 2.5" paper boat/dish.
10. Grand Prize judging:
 - a. Judging for the Grand Prize will be done in a blind taste-testing format by **members of ESPN Cleveland and the first ten (10) fans who arrive to the event and register to judge.**
 - b. Dishes will be judged based on taste, presentation, and creativity.
 - c. Each judge will award a single score on a scale from one (1) to ten (10) for all judging criteria to each sample.
 - d. Scores from the judges will be added up to determine each participants total score.

- e. The top score amongst participants and hosts will be deemed the winners of the Grand Prizes.
 - f. The team/group (fan or host) with the highest average score will be named the winning team.
 - g. In the event of a tie:
 - i. In the event that two or more participants receive the same total score, judges will cast a single vote for their favored dish in the tie. The dish receiving the most votes will be deemed the winner.
- e. Qualifiers need not listen to 850 ESPN Cleveland to qualify. Qualifiers must be present on the day of the event during the specified times in order to win any of the prizes.
- f. The Grand Prize winners must execute and return any required affidavit of eligibility and/or liability/publicity release within ten (10) days of winning or prize will be forfeited and an alternate winner may be selected by going to the next highest rated contestant. If a potential winner cannot be contacted, fails to sign and return the required affidavit of eligibility and/or liability/publicity release within the required time period, or if a prize or prize notification is returned as undeliverable, the potential winner forfeits the prize.

11. CONDITIONS

- a. Payments of all federal, state and local taxes are solely the responsibility of the winner. The winner will be required to complete and submit an IRS Form W-9 with the winner's full Social Security Number or the equivalent for receipt of any prize valued at \$600 or more or for any prizes awarded by GKB in a calendar year with an aggregate value of \$600 or more. Failure to submit a complete W-9 or equivalent will result in forfeiture of the prize. Such winnings of \$600 or more will be reported to the IRS.
- b. By participating in the Promotion, the winner agrees to have the winner's name, voice and likeness used in any advertising or broadcasting material relating to the Promotion without additional financial or other compensation, and, where legal, to sign a publicity release confirming such consent prior to acceptance of the prize.
- c. Prior to awarding any prize(s) or prize certificate(s), GKB, in its sole discretion, may require Promotion winner(s) (and any travel companion(s) or guest(s)) to sign a liability release, agreeing to release and hold harmless GKB, its subsidiary and affiliated entities, their respective officers, shareholders, directors, employees, agents and representatives and all of their successors and assigns from and against any and all claims or liability arising directly or indirectly from the prize and participation in the Promotion.

- d. If for any reason this Promotion cannot be executed as planned, including, but not limited to, as a result of infection by computer virus, tampering, unauthorized intervention, fraud, technical failures, or any other causes beyond the control of GKB that corrupt or affect the security, administration, fairness, integrity or proper conduct of the Promotion, or if the Promotion is compromised or becomes technically corrupted in any way, electronically or otherwise, the Station reserves the right to cancel, terminate, suspend, or modify the Promotion. If the Promotion is terminated before the original end date, GKB reserves the right to select the winner(s) by random drawing from among all eligible non-suspect entries received as of the termination time/date or otherwise modify the procedure for selecting winner(s).
- e. GKB, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to disqualify any person tampering with the entry process or the operation of GKB's website. Failure to comply with the rules of the Promotion may result in a contestant's disqualification and/or forfeiture of any prize or prizes. If GKB makes a good faith determination that an entrant has cheated or committed fraudulent activity in connection with a Promotion, GKB reserves the right to disqualify that entrant from entering and/or winning future Promotions and to prosecute and seek damages to the fullest extent permitted by law.
- f. GKB reserves the right to make changes in the rules of the Promotion, including, without limitation, the substitution of a prize of equivalent value, which will become effective upon announcement. If due to circumstances beyond the control of GKB, any competition or prize-related event or travel is delayed, rescheduled, postponed or cancelled, GKB reserves the right, but not the obligation, to cancel, terminate, suspend, or modify the Promotion and shall not be required to award a substitute prize.
- g. GKB is not responsible for typographical or other errors in the printing, the offering or the administration of the Promotion or in the announcement of a prize.
- h. For a copy of these Official Rules, send a self-addressed stamped envelope for receipt by Thursday, August 28, 2025 to "The Next Level Cookoff 2025– Official Rules," Attn: Promotions, GKB 1109 Old River Road, Cleveland, OH 44113. For the names of the prize winners, send a self-addressed stamped envelope for receipt by Thursday, October 30, 2025 to the above address marked The Next Level Cookoff 2025 – Winner List." The Official Rules and the Winner List (when completed) shall also be available during regular business hours at the main offices of GKB and may be posted online at www.ESPNClevelandContests.com

12. PRIVACY

- a. By use of GKB's website or by entering the Promotion through GKB's website, you agree to the website's Terms of Use Agreement located at

www.ESPNClevelandContests.com and to the use of your personal information as described in the Privacy Policy located at www.ESPNClevelandContests.com

Administrator: GKB 1109 Old River Road, Cleveland, OH, 44113

Sponsor: Circle K

