



Halifax & Calderdale CAMRA

Updated Guideline on how to Score the Quality of Beer

New ratings and descriptions

This guide is designed to assist CAMRA members in scoring beers accurately and objectively using the National Beer Scoring System (NBSS). Whether you are new to beer scoring or an experienced taster, the following information will help you evaluate and record your impressions to support the quality of cask ales and improve pub standards.

How to Score a Beer: Key Aspects

1. **Appearance:** Examine the clarity, colour, and condition of the beer. Is it clear, hazy, or cloudy? Does it have a good head?
2. **Aroma:** Take in the scent before tasting. Are there pleasant malt, hop, or yeast aromas? Is there any off-putting smell?
3. **Taste:** Take a sip and let it flow around your mouth before swallowing. Beers can reflect many taste sensations. The intensity of the flavours and the finish (the 'aftertaste') make up the whole taste. Give your taste buds a few seconds to register all the differing sensations. Has the publican kept the beer well enough to allow the flavour to come through fully or kept it too long and it's become stale?
4. **Mouthfeel:** How does it 'feel' in the mouth? Most well-kept ales will have a light carbonation and not be flat. They should be served at cellar temperature – that means cool, not too cold.
5. **Knowledge:** Does the staff know about the beers being served and how it should be served including the size of head? If you have a problem with the beer, has it been dealt with professionally?

With thousands of ales to choose from, everyone has their own personal favourites and things that they don't like, but please try to give an honest and objective account of how well-kept a particular beer is. If you aren't sure, then try to do your scoring based on beers that you know that you normally like when they are in good condition.

What is the National Beer Scoring System?

The NBSS rates the quality of the beer based on a marking system that runs from 0 to 5. CAMRA introduced the NBSS with the intention of:

- Providing a more objective beer scoring system that could be used throughout the year.
- Providing a common system that could be used by all branches.
- Moving branches away from the once-a-year subjective voting system.



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How Are Scores Recorded?

The NBSS replaces the old score scale and removes the use of half points. Ratings are still numerical (0–5) for backend purposes, allowing calculation and analysis of scores for pubs. Members are encouraged to use the new set of ‘reactions’ that correspond to the quality of the beer, making scoring easier and more intuitive.

A new tick box is available for ‘no cask beer available’. Automated pub update messages will be sent if someone submits a rating in a pub with no cask beer, or for a pub marked as serving cask but rated as ‘none available’.

New Cask Ratings and Descriptions

Rating	Description	Your reaction
Excellent	Exceptional and clear (if intended to be) with fantastic aromas, flavours and ideal carbonation.	Superb! You tell your friends and compliment the cellar manager.

Please refer to the full NBSS table for all scores (0–5) and their descriptions. Remember, your honest and objective scoring helps ensure cask beer quality and supports CAMRA’s mission.

The ratings replace the score scale and remove the use of half points.

The ratings will still have the numerical value (0-5) attached to them for ‘back end’ purposes to allow for calculation of and analysis of scores for pubs.

Using features from the current descriptions, we have added a set of ‘reactions’ that should help members choose the rating most aligned to the beer they are drinking.

There will be a new tick box, separate from the ratings, for ‘no cask beer available’.

We will also add automated pub update messages where someone submits a rating in a pub with no cask beer, or for a pub marked as serving cask is rated as ‘none available’.



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New cask ratings and descriptions - table

Rating	Description	Your reaction
Excellent	Exceptional and clear (if intended to be) with fantastic aromas, flavours and ideal carbonation.	Superb! You tell your friends and compliment the cellar manager.
Very good	Satisfying and well-kept with a great appearance, good carbonation and enticing aromas and flavours.	You consider having another and may cancel plans to move to another pub.
Good	Nice appearance, good carbonation, aromas and flavour.	Pleasant but not memorable. You're happy to have another but might consider something else.
Acceptable	Unremarkable and ordinary, with no noteworthy characteristics.	You're unlikely to have another unless it is all there is and there isn't another pub to go to.
Poor	Noticeably imperfect.	Drinkable with resentment, but you politely ask for a replacement.
Undrinkable	Unpleasant to drink, likely with a disgusting taste, incorrect appearance and off/foul aroma.	You politely ask for it to be replaced and consider asking the publican to take it off.



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Four Simple Steps to scoring your beers either on a PC or Mobile Phone (other methods are available)

STEP 1: FIND THE PUB



Go to **camra.org.uk/pubs** and find the pub or club page

You can score from the pub, or later if that's more convenient for you

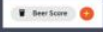


STEP 2: CLICK TO SCORE



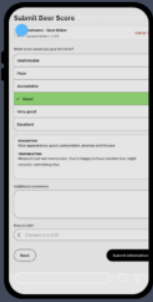
Click 'Beer Score'

(on a desktop, it looks like this!)



Step 2B select the beer you're scoring

STEP 3: PICK YOUR RATING



Decide which rating best fits the **quality** of your beer

(There's descriptions and reactions to help you choose)

You can also add the price of your drink



STEP 4: SUBMIT

You're all done!

You just helped:

- ✓ Select pubs for the Good Beer Guide
- ✓ Update our beer and pub data
- ✓ Other beer lovers find pubs and brewers



Not a CAMRA Member Join today and you can score beers too

<https://camra.org.uk/membership#membership-options>