

MAY 2026

ISSUE 5

THE BULLSHEET

THE KANSAS CITY BARBEQUE SOCIETY

NATIONAL BARBEQUE MONTH



SEE YOU IN TENNESSEE
MAY 22-24!



KCBS AROUND THE WORLD

HEAR FROM OUR REPS
IN JAPAN & ITALY

SPRING BBQ BINGO
WITH REMUS

Kansas City Barbeque Society
402 E. Bannister Rd., Suite E
Kansas City, MO 64131
Ph#: 816.765.5891
Toll Free#: 1.800.963.KCBS

Visit us online at: www.kcbs.us
We reserve the right to edit any article, ad or comment.

More information:
info@kcbs.us
CONTEST SANCTIONING
contest@kcbs.us

KCBS BOARD MEMBERS

Paul Buob
Carol Bigler
Luke Darnell
Donna Fong
Thomas Gearhart
Blake Moore
David Qualls
Jeanne Titus
Randy Todd

INTERNATIONAL BOARD MEMBERS

Wayne and Maria Lohman
Bill and Debby Gage
Rod Gray

The Kansas City Bullsheet is the official members-only publication of the Kansas City Barbeque Society©. Become a KCBS member today at www.kcbs.us.

All KCBS Rules, Bylaws and Member Code of Conduct Policy are available for members to review on www.kcbs.us in the File Archive of the Member's Portal.



Our Mission

Recognizing barbeque as America's Cuisine, the Mission of the Kansas City Barbeque Society is to celebrate, teach, preserve, and promote barbeque as a culinary technique, sport and art form.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Rod Gray

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF AND PUBLICATION DESIGNER

Becka Simmons

CO-FOUNDER AND HISTORIAN

Carolyn Wells

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Paul Buob
Jay Cross
Brian De
Sandi Edelson
Donna Fong
Richard George
Rod Gray
Remus Powers
John Scharffbillig
Bre Via
Carolyn Wells

MANAGER OF CONTEST AND JUDGE PROGRAMS

Sherry Byler

MANAGER OF MEMBERSHIP AND TEAM PROGRAMS

Audrey Johns

OFFICE MANAGER AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

Becka Simmons

Bullsheet Questions?

Bullsheel@kcbs.us

All rights reserved,
© 2026 Kansas City Barbeque Society

KCBS Content Disclaimer

The content of this newsletter is published on behalf of KCBS members and is offered for informational and entertainment purposes only. We strive to be as accurate as possible but can not guarantee accuracy in all matters due to deadlines, multiple sources and the complexity of publishing a product of this magnitude. We encourage and welcome our members to bring inaccuracies to our attention so that they can be corrected as soon as possible in subsequent editions. For permission to reproduce any article in this newsletter, contact bullsheet@kcbs.us. © 2026 Kansas City Barbeque Society

IN THIS ISSUE

- 04** President's Perspective
- 07** Rod's Roundtable
- 10** National Barbecue Month – Spread the Love!
- 11** What Does BBQ Mean to You?
- 12** Forty Years of Barbeque, and Still Getting Started
- 14** Wagyu Meets KCBS: Building Competition Barbecue in Japan
- 18** Where in the World is KCBS? Italy!
- 22** BBQ Bites with Bre
- 26** Singing River Smoke-O-Rama
- 30** Remus says
- 33** April Member Engagement Survey: A Season of Growth and Grit
- 36** Cookie Confidential – Elevating a Classic by Sandi Edelson
- 40** Judge Milestones
- 42** New CBJs
- 43** New Lifetime Members
- 44** New Members
- 49** Upcoming CBJ Classes
- 50** Upcoming Contests
- 60** Upcoming Cooking Classes
- 61** Best of the Best



Wagyu Meets KCBS: Building Competition Barbecue in Japan

By Jay Cross, KCBS Representative –
Tokyo, Japan

Japan is already known around the world for Wagyu and for a culture that values precision, discipline, and craftsmanship. It is also a country where competitors regularly test themselves on the international stage in fields that demand both technical skill and artistic judgment, from cooking to music and dance. I believe barbecue can become part of that story as well.



Photo provided by Jay Cross

American-style barbecue is still a niche in Japan, but interest is clearly growing. In Tokyo and Yokohama, diners can increasingly find brisket, pulled pork, ribs, and other staples of low-and-slow cooking. What was once difficult to find is becoming more visible, and with that, visibility has come a growing curiosity about barbecue not only as food, but also as a craft and a competitive discipline. For that reason, I believe Japan has real potential as a future home for KCBS-sanctioned contests.

I have had the chance to watch that development from several perspectives. I am a Kansas City native, a KCBS Certified BBQ Judge, and a KCBS Representative based in Tokyo. By profession, I am a professor and chemical engineer, but outside the university, barbecue has become a serious passion and, increasingly, a way for me to connect Japanese cooks and barbecue fans with the broader KCBS community. I became a KCBS Certified BBQ Judge in 2022 and, after Representative training in Kansas, Texas, and Arkansas, was appointed a KCBS Representative in 2025.

My own barbecue life in Japan is not exactly the classic American backyard setup. Like many people living in urban Japan, I work with limited space and practical constraints. Much of my cooking is done on a balcony using an electric Weber grill. That may sound unconventional to some U.S. pitmasters, but it reflects an important reality: barbecue culture in Japan is developing in its own way, shaped by local living conditions while still drawing inspiration from American traditions.



Photo provided by Jay Cross



Photo provided by Jay Cross

One reason I am optimistic about barbecue's future in Japan is that Japanese competitors are often drawn to contests that reward detail, consistency, and performance under pressure. KCBS competition barbecue demands all of those qualities. It requires judgment, timing, repeatability, teamwork, and the ability to present food at a high level in a structured format. Those demands fit naturally with the strengths that many Japanese cooks already bring to their work.

Notable Websites:

KCBS Japan website: <https://www.kcbsjapan.org>

Japan Today article:
<https://japantoday.com/category/podcast/the-kong-show-digs-into-a-slow-cooked-texas-smoked-bbq>

Time Out Tokyo Smokehouse page:
<https://www.timeout.com/tokyo/restaurants/smokehouse>

American Craft Beer Experience 2025: <https://uscrafterbeer.jp/>

Wagyu also provides an interesting bridge between Japan and American competition barbecue. Japan is globally associated with premium beef and deep respect for ingredient quality. At the same time, in the United States, Wagyu has become increasingly visible in competition brisket. That overlap does not mean Japanese barbecue should simply imitate American barbecue, but it does suggest that barbecue can become a meaningful area of exchange between Japanese food culture and KCBS competition culture.



Photo provided by Jay Cross

Recently, I had the opportunity to experience the cook side more directly by competing in the American BBQ Cook-off in Tokyo with my team, Meguro-Kansas City BBQ Crew. We prepared baby back ribs with Kansas City influence while also taking into account the Japanese setting and palate. That contest gave me an even greater appreciation for the discipline, adaptability, and creativity that teams bring to the field. It also reinforced my belief that Japan has cooks who can do very well in a competition environment.

Japan is also not starting from zero. The Japan Barbecue Association has spent about 20 years offering barbecue classes and organizing contests, helping to build a domestic community of cooks and enthusiasts. In 2016, JBBQA also organized a KCBS Certified BBQ Judge class in Kawasaki, taught by the KCBS International team, establishing a base of trained judges, some of whom remain active today. That history matters. It means that the next phase of KCBS development in Japan can build on an existing foundation of knowledge, experience, and enthusiasm rather than beginning from scratch. This year, that involvement continues as I serve as a judge at the Japan BBQ Championship on May 24, 2026, a World Food Championships qualifier.

My goal is to help support that next stage by working with organizers, cooks, and judges to encourage future KCBS-sanctioned contests in Japan. Japan already has the talent, discipline, and enthusiasm to become an important part of KCBS's international future, and I hope to see Japanese teams competing with confidence on the world stage in the years ahead.