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A Score Alone Cannot Explain a Culinary Judgement

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How written feedback connects a judge’s observation, the competition criterion and the score while keeping the limits of inference clear.

What does the score tell us?

Two dishes can finish on the same total for different reasons. One loses points for inconsistent portions, another for the texture of the main ingredient. The total places the result on the competition scale. The criterion breakdown shows where the difference lies.

A note worth keeping

“Poor presentation” is broad. “The pieces differed in size across servings, where the criterion required consistency” links a clear observation to a stated requirement.

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The limits of the decision

A judge may observe dryness without knowing which preparation step caused it. The note can describe what reached the table and explain its effect on the score. Diagnosing cooking time or storage requires more information from the kitchen.

Equal totals can hide different paths

In an illustrative twenty-point scale split evenly between texture and presentation, one dish receives 9 and 6, another 7 and 8. Both finish at 15. The first cook needs the presentation note, while the second needs to know what was observed about texture. The arithmetic can be correct and still conceal the detail each cook needs.

Language a competitor can use

“The pieces were uneven” leaves the scope open. Did it happen once or across servings? Was the difference in size or arrangement? A short answer is enough if it specifies what was observed. The report can separate remarks that affected the score from suggestions for future development, helping a competitor understand both the decision and the possible next step.

Who reads the feedback after the competition?

A competitor reads it to see what could be improved. An organiser may later consult it to understand a disputed decision. The language therefore needs to work for someone who did not attend the session. Naming the criterion, describing the observation and giving the recorded effect on the score where available puts the result in context. A second opinion can remain separately identified so the report preserves what happened during the review.

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