

Flying franks



RECORDER STAFF/MATT BURKHARTT

A hot dog tossed by Anna Smith of Southbridge bounces off a small grill in the "fling-a-frank" competition at the Riverside Blues Brews and BBQ festival at Greenfield's Beacon Field on Sunday.

Rain deters crowds but not the fun at Blues, Brews and BBQ festival

By **MIRANDA DAVIS**
Recorder Staff

GREENFIELD — Rain may have kept large crowds away during Sunday's portion of the Riverside Blues, Brews and BBQ, but that didn't stop the barbecue teams from showing up and competing for the event's top prize.

The two-day barbecue festival took place on Saturday and Sunday at Beacon Field in Greenfield. It had two parts: events for the public like a hot dog toss, live music and samples, and the barbecue competition for the professional teams. The teams grilled and smoked various meats and submitted different styles each day to the judges.

The Greenfield Recreational Department organizes the event, which is co-sponsored by Lefty's Brewing Co. and the Rotary Club.

The festival was rain or shine, and the less-than-ideal weather meant smaller crowds than expected, but several of the teams competing said the weather was better than many competitions that take place in the middle of summer.

Kris Yeager of the team "Right on Que" said the event is well-known for New England barbecuers and the fact that the festival takes place in the fall during peak foliage time is also a big draw.

"It's kind of our last hurrah before we all hibernate for the winter," Yeager said.

Yeager said the contest is a friendly environment among teams. This weekend 39 teams competed at the festival, including two past world champion teams.

The event also included 20 different local brewers and several blues bands who performed throughout the weekend. Outside of the live music, the event included several activities including a keg toss, pie-eating contests and beer and barbecue sampling.



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Ian Paradise and Dave Daigle of Pork Butt Paradise of Sterling put the finishing touches on their serving of pork butt before submitting it for judging at the Riverside Blues, Brews and BBQ festival at Greenfield's Beacon Field Sunday. Pork Butt Paradise was last year's festival champion.

Christy Moore, who organizes the event for the Greenfield Recreation Department, said the event was going well despite the weather, but they did expect bigger crowds if the weather had cooperated.

She said the event had a lot of offerings for the public, including the hot dog toss, the keg toss, a beer garden and samples of the barbecue.

"You don't come out to barbecue contests to worry about the weather," he said. "You get what you get."

CHRIS HART, BBQ TEAM MEMBER

The first day of competition was a New England Barbecue Society grilling contest, and the second day was the Kansas City Barbecue Society contest. The winning team from this event qualifies for the Jack Daniel's contest in Tennessee and the American Royal contest in Kansas

City. It's the sixth year that Greenfield has hosted the event. Most of the competitors and judges are from the New England area. Moore said they start planning next year's event in January when they post the applications for the judges.

Chris Hart of the team "I.Que." said the competition is one of the best and brings some top talent. He said the New England is consistently one of the toughest regions in the country.

Hart said that the weather has little effect on competitors. No matter what they come to compete and hopefully take away a trophy.

"You don't come out to barbecue contests to worry about the weather," he said. "You get what you get."

Hart said that no matter what, the event is a nice break from other competitions, which aren't usually in such scenic places.

"It's a nice New England rural event," he said.



RECORDER STAFF/MATT BURKHARTT—Matt Burkhart

Attendees of the Riverside Blues, Brews and BBQ festival at Greenfield's Beacon Field sample food Sunday, October 9.

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