

# How to Score the Quality of Beer

## Introduction

The National Beer Scoring System (NBSS) is used to identify those pubs that serve the very best beer. Beer scores are used to inform decisions on which pubs are nominated by the Branch for the Good Beer Guide.

## What is the National Beer Scoring System?

The NBSS rates the quality of the beer based on a marking system that runs from a 0 to 5, including half-marks.

CAMRA introduced the NBSS with the intention of:

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

## What do the NBSS numbers mean?

<b>0</b>	<b>No real ale available</b>	This can be because the pub never has it or it's run out.
<b>0.5</b>	<b>Undrinkable</b>	No cask ale available or so poor you have to take it back or can't finish it.
<b>1</b>	<b>Poor</b>	Beer that is anything from barely drinkable to drinkable with considerable resentment.
<b>2</b>	<b>Average</b>	Competently kept, drinkable pint but doesn't inspire in any way, not worth moving to another pub but you drink the beer without really noticing.
<b>3</b>	<b>Good</b>	Good beer in good form. You may cancel plans to move to the next pub. You want to stay for another pint and may seek out the beer again.
<b>4</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	Excellent beer in excellent condition.
<b>5</b>	<b>Perfect</b>	Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely.

## Guidance on the Definitions

Sometimes the above descriptions, provided by CAMRA, are not sufficient to help select the appropriate score. This section provides some additional guidance about using the scoring system. Half scores are available and often used.

Beer Score	Descriptive words	Typical Reaction
<b>0</b>	No real ale!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move to another pub</li> </ul>
<b>0.5</b>	Undrinkable Disgusting Appalling Revolting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surely the bar staff should have smelt the state of this beer as it was poured</li> <li>• This beer looks awful</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	Poor Inferior Second-rate Indifferent Off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You'd have to pay me to drink this beer</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	Average Ordinary Mediocre Run of the mill A little tired Passable Acceptable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was OK but nothing to write home about</li> <li>• I'd be looking forward to finishing the pint so I can try a different beer</li> <li>• I wouldn't recommend this beer to my friends</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	Good Enjoyable Lovely Nice Decent Not bad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'd be reasonably happy to drink this beer all night</li> <li>• I would recommend this to my friends</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	Very Good Excellent First-class Superior Great	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hmm, I wonder if I have time for another pint or two?</li> <li>• I'd strongly encourage my friends to try this beer</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	Perfect Superlative Outstanding Stunning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This beer is the nectar of the Gods!</li> <li>• Wild horses wouldn't be able to drag me away from this beer</li> <li>• I'd practically force my friends to have a pint</li> <li>• The beer was so good I just have to pop back to the pub for some more</li> </ul>

## **Additional Notes**

Here are some thoughts about using the NBSS to score the quality of beer.

- Concentrate on the quality of the beer. This can be difficult if you do not like a particular style of beer.
- If you can't decide between two scores, say a 2 and a 3, don't forget you can mark in halves as well. If you can decide between a 3 and a 3.5 then use the lower score.
- If you do score a beer as 0.5 you should take the beer back to the bar and ask for a replacement, which the landlord should do without any quibble. Please indicate whether this happened in the Comments field of your report. All pubs and landlords have the occasional undrinkable pint and shouldn't be penalised as long as they took appropriate steps to correct it.
- Expect to see the majority of scores hovering between 3.0 and 3.5 for a pub known for its beer. The average score for the top 30 pubs in the branch is typically 3.2. A GBG-quality pub should be scoring around 3.5 and above on average.
- How to award a 5. Simple. Before you have even finished swallowing your first sip you're already holding the pint out to the rest of the pub as a shining example of the perfect beer. You've also started to wonder whether you can squeeze in another couple of pints of this 'nectar of the gods' before you have to go home. Note: Experienced beer scorers usually only award one or two 5s each year.

## **Where can I submit NBSS Scores?**

Through WhatPub when logged in as a member.

<https://whatpub.com>

Scores can be viewed and edited:

<http://data.beerscoring.org.uk>

## **Finally...**

Have fun. Beer scoring shouldn't be seen as a chore and certainly shouldn't stop you enjoying your beers!