



Buddy Champion Program

Aim

The Buddy Champion Program aims to make coffee championships more accessible by supporting first-time competitors and encouraging more newcomers to enter the competition scene.

Competitions can be intimidating, especially for those without prior experience or established support networks. This program provides guidance, confidence, and connection—helping newcomers feel supported from the very beginning.

Delivery

Each newcomer competitor is paired with an experienced competitor who acts as a “buddy” throughout the preparation process.

The buddy’s role is to:

- Help ease first-competition nerves
- Clarify expectations, rules, and structure
- Share knowledge, experience, and resources
- Be a trusted point of contact for questions and support

Competitions require a village behind you. Many newcomers may not yet have access to the same resources or know where to find them—this program helps bridge that gap.

Commitment

Each newcomer will receive:

- 2 in-person meetings
- 2 online meetings

with their assigned experienced competitor over the preparation period.

Meeting Structure

1st In-Person Meeting

Pre-Meeting Requirements

- Think about what you would like to achieve in this championship
- Initial routine ideas and what you'd like to contribute or share with the community
- Early thoughts on the coffee you'd like to use
- Any burning questions

Meeting Agenda

- Discuss the newcomer's goals for the championship and how to realistically achieve them
- Identify resources and support needed (NZSCA can assist where appropriate)
- Create a brief preparation timeline
- Go through the scoresheets and competition rules together
- Discuss routine structure and what is required for each course

1st Online Meeting

Pre-Meeting Requirements

- The newcomer has fully written their routine and emailed it to the experienced competitor.
- The EB has pre-read the routine and prepared written feedback
- Review progress on coffee selection

Meeting Agenda

- Go through the routine together in detail
- Discuss feedback, questions, and improvements
- Finalise the coffee selection

2nd In-Person Meeting

Pre-Meeting Requirements

- Coffee selection confirmed
- Routine practiced and memorised

Meeting Agenda

- Full routine run-throughs (repeated practice)
- Dial-in coffee and refine tasting notes
- Ideally work with 2–3 different roast profiles for comparison

2nd Online Meeting

Meeting Agenda

- Final check-in before competition day

Discuss:

Packing list

Transport and logistics

Competition-day strategy

Mindset and readiness

Outcome

By the end of the Buddy Champion Program, newcomers should feel:

- Confident in their routine
- Clear on rules, expectations, and scoring
- Supported by the competition community
- Prepared to step onto the competition stage with belief