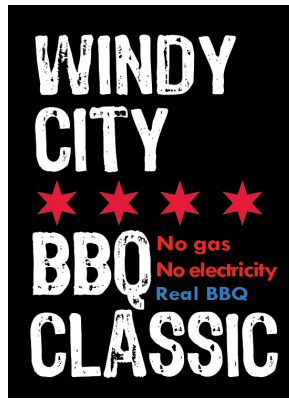


For Immediate release



## **Windy City BBQ Classic Announces New Format as 70 Teams Compete in Chicago's only Kansas City BBQ Society Sanctioned Championship**

*Exclusive Public Event Invites 500 BBQ Enthusiasts for the "Grand Tour of American BBQ" VIP Experience*

CHICAGO (August 26, 2015) –70 Pit Masters and their teams from around the country are set to battle in the fourth annual Windy City BBQ Classic, the only Chicago barbecue competition to ever be sanctioned by the Kansas City BBQ Society (KCBS), the largest competitive organization in the world. This year's competition takes place at the South Parking Lot at Soldier Field on Saturday, September 12 from 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

With more than \$12,500 in prizes for categories including Best Chicken, Best Ribs, Best Pork and Best Brisket, teams will contend for the title of Grand Champion. Each team will present their barbecue anonymously to the more than 70 KCBS-certified judges who will score the meat based on appearance, tenderness and taste. No garnish or sauce will be considered in the judging process. And as a KCBS and state-sanctioned competition, the overall Grand Champion is automatically qualified to compete in the American Royal World Series of Barbecue held later this year.

"It's a big deal that Chicago has a competition sanctioned by the Kansas City BBQ Society," said Jared Leonard, co-founder of the classic and owner of Rub's Backcountry Smokehouse. "The Windy City BBQ Classic is a great venue for the competing teams and an absolute must for the barbecue aficionado or serious foodie who loves BBQ as much as our teams, restaurants and judges."

New this year, 500 people have the ability to join the festivities through a top-notch hospitality experience called the Grand Tour of American BBQ. By purchasing a public VIP access ticket, guests can take a guided tour of "Pit Master Alley" to get a glimpse of the competition as teams prepare their entries for judging.

Additional highlights of the public VIP experience include:

- Regional samples of America's Best BBQ from many of Chicagoland's top BBQ pit masters and restaurants preparing hundreds of pounds of meat, including whole hog, ribs, tips, beef, pork and chicken.
- Craft beer and cocktails supplied by Lagunitas Brewing, Tito's Vodka and Ole Smoky Tennessee Moonshine (must be 21 or older).
- Whole Hog butchering demo, a Windy City BBQ Classic favorite.
- Life stories and a book signing with best-selling BBQ author and pit master Gary Wiviott.
- Raffles, giveaways and surprises, including the chance to win a genuine smoker, just like the competitors' use.
- Live music and entertainment.

"Unlike most rib competitions and festivals, attendees are not able to sample the competitor's ribs since those are for the judges only," said Gary Wiviott, who co-founded the Windy City BBQ Classic in 2012 along with Leonard. "However, the quality of the BBQ that our VIP attendees will be served is outstanding. Whether your BBQ preference is from Kansas City, Memphis, Central Texas, the Carolinas, or the South Side of Chicago, our participating chefs have got you covered."

Tickets are limited to the first 500 people, and can be purchased for \$100.00 per person online at [www.windycitybbqclassic.com](http://www.windycitybbqclassic.com). Gates open at 11:00 a.m. Food service runs from 11:00 a.m. 2:00 p.m. and beverage service runs from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Gates close at 4:00 p.m.

All proceeds from the Windy City BBQ Classic will again benefit Operation BBQ Relief, a not-for-profit corporation founded in response to a need for relief efforts in tornado-stricken Joplin, Missouri in May of 2011. Since then, Operation BBQ Relief has served 575,845 meals, spent 134 days on deployments with the help of over 1200 volunteers.

For more info about the Windy City BBQ Classic, visit [www.windycitybbqclassic.com](http://www.windycitybbqclassic.com).