ACF Culinary Regional Team USA Wins Prestigious International IKA Regional World Championship Title


ACF Culinary Regional Team USA, comprised of five chefs from across the nation, defeated 61 other regional teams for the coveted and prestigious title of IKA regional world champion. This is the first time that the ACF regional team has won since the new format for regional team competition was implemented. The team’s gold medal Oct. 22 put them in position to become the overall winner. Second place was awarded to Culinary Team Alberta and Rhoneköche placed third.

“The United States has always achieved great results, with third-place finishes in 2000 and 2004, against what is a very heavy, consistent field of teams and countries competing,” said ACF National President John Kinsella, CMC, CCE, WGMC, AAC. “The average number of regional teams at the IKA has been around 40, but this year’s IKA showcased 62 regional teams. The team’s commitment, hard work and teamwork paid off, and I am proud of them.”

To prepare for the increased number of teams and level of competition in Germany, the team, based at Westchester Country Club in Rye, N.Y., had three practice sessions in September and one final practice session 13 days before their departure. At the sessions, the team focused on perfecting last-minute changes and getting in the right mindset for competition. The team maximized its resources by using the foundation of ACF Culinary National Team USA’s table, inspired by the work of architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Translated to cuisine, the team presented clean lines accented by wood and copper, and highlighted contemporary food presentations.

“With a stunning performance by pastry chef Jennifer Kopp, who scored 96 out of 100 points, the team scored 93,070 points overall, ahead of Culinary Team Alberta who had 93,000 points,” said Edward Leonard, CMC, AAC, ACF Culinary Team USA manager. “We are very proud of the team’s dedication to represent American cuisine at its best. Because of them, our nation is now number one in the world among regional teams. This is an enormous accomplishment.”

ACF Culinary Regional Team USA members:
- Edward G. Leonard, CMC, AAC; ACF Culinary Team USA manager; executive chef, Westchester Country Club, Rye, N.Y.; ICA-American Culinary Federation (ACF) Big Apple Chapter
- Drew Garms; sous chef, Rosendales, Columbus, Ohio; ACF National Chapter
- Jennifer Kopp, CEPC; pastry chef, Chevy Chase Club, Chevy Chase, Md.; ACF Nations Capital Chefs Association

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The regional competition consisted of the following three categories. Category A: Culinary Art—two show platters, displayed cold; one festive, cold display platter for eight and six different hors d’oeuvres; Category B: Culinary Art—one vegetarian platter as a main course for four, displayed cold; one, three-course menu with hors d’oeuvre, main course and dessert, prepared hot, displayed cold, and four different main courses, prepared hot, displayed cold; and Category C: Pâtisserie—one showpiece, one platter and four different exclusive desserts.

ACF Culinary Team USA’s other regional team, AAC Culinary Regional Team USA, won a gold medal Oct. 20 and placed sixth overall. The AAC regional team was mistakenly announced as the winner at the final awards ceremony, Oct. 23, but the error was rectified.

“I am extremely pleased with both regional culinary teams, especially with the way they handled themselves with the name confusion, not being recognized on stage and with the score mix-up,” Leonard said. “It is unfortunate it happened, but it did, and both of these teams have shown class and professionalism in light of the events. In the end, that is what true ACF members are about.”

Known as the “culinary Olympics” by culinarians around the world, IKA, taking place every four years, is one of the most revered international competitions. Culinary teams and individuals train intensely for years to showcase their culinary skills, prove they are the best and receive a coveted medal, just as athletes train for the Olympics. Winning gold, silver and bronze medals is considered the ultimate accomplishment within the culinary industry. Judging is based on a point system, with medals awarded daily, and the overall category winners are announced at the final awards ceremony, at which time, scoring is released.

ACF Culinary Team USA is the official representative team of the United States in major national and international culinary competitions. It comprises one national team of six members, two regional teams with five members each, and a youth team of five members younger than 23 years old. Sponsors of ACF Culinary Team USA are Kraft Foodservice, Tyson Food Service, Uncle Ben’s, Unilever, Club Managers Association of America, KitchenAid, Chef Revival, Fortessa, The Beef Checkoff, Friedr. Dick, Westchester Country Club and Blodgett.

About the American Culinary Federation
The American Culinary Federation, Inc., established in 1929, is the premier professional organization for culinarians in North America. With more than 21,500 members spanning 230 chapters nationwide, ACF is the culinary leader in offering educational resources, training, apprenticeship and accreditation. In addition, ACF operates the most comprehensive certification program for chefs in the United States. ACF is home to ACF Culinary Team USA, the official representative for the United States in major international culinary competitions. For more information, visit www.acfchefs.org.

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PLEASE CONTACT PATRICIA CARROLL TO SCHEDULE AN INTERVIEW WITH A TEAM MEMBER.

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