

DONNY TEEL



2025 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

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Donny and his wife Cindy are in their 29th year of cooking contests, having competed in just over 800 events—both sanctioned and non-sanctioned—and counting. They’ve earned approximately 110 Grand Championships and 130 Reserve Grand Championships. In 2007, Donny opened a food trailer in their hometown of Sperry, Oklahoma, which he continues to run solo while Cindy maintains a full-time job. As Donny says, he was food trucking before food trucking was cool.

In March of 2018, Donny suffered a stroke on a Saturday mid-morning. He was released from the hospital Monday afternoon and, by that Friday, drove their motorhome three hours to Weatherford, Oklahoma, for a cookoff. He eats, sleeps, and breathes barbecue.

Donny has helped many organizers get their contests off the ground, often traveling across Oklahoma on his own time to scout potential sites and advise on all aspects of hosting—from rain insurance to public engagement and expectations.

He also founded the Oklahoma BBQ Run, which brought together contests across the state to name a State Team of the Year and Category Teams of the Year, culminating in an end-of-year banquet recognizing all the teams.

Donny was instrumental in reviving “The Meat in the Middle” contest after several years of inactivity.

In 2002, he received the “FIREMASTER” award, given to someone who goes out of their way to help teams—whether it’s setting up, assisting in the middle of the night, or helping tear down to head home.

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Career Highlights:

American Royal Side Dish Grand Champion 8 times—6 of those consecutively

American Royal: 2004 GC Open, 2005 RGC Open, 2006 RGC Open, 2006 2nd Runner-Up Invitational, 2008 RGC Invitational

Held the highest score ever recorded in a KCBS contest (717.1430 in Lincoln, AR) for 22 years; possibly also holds one of the lowest winning scores (595.4282)

2005 Jack Daniels World Championship Grand Champion and Grand Champion Dessert

American Royal Grand Champion Legends: 2017, 2018, 2021; Reserve Grand Champion: 2019, 2022

Oklahoma BBQ Hall of Fame, Inaugural Class of 2015

Oklahoma Team of the Year, 2021

KCBS Team of the Year Pork: 2006; Runner-Up: 2010

KCBS Team of the Year Runner-Up Ribs: 2006

2006 RGC World Brisket Invitational

KCBS Board of Directors, 2000–2004

Founding Board Member, Oklahoma BBQ Society