New ratings for cask beer scoring

Beer Scoring Advisory Group (BSAG) exists (in brief), to:

- Promote, support and monitor the National Beer Scoring System (NBSS).
- Ensure NBSS is effective, coherent and aligned with the Campaign's aims.
- Encourage and promote beer scoring, including providing tools and training to help branches.

In 2025, BSAG were asked to come up with recommendations to improve the scores and descriptors currently used in NBSS. This naturally led to discussion of more improvements, evolution, and recommendations.

This paper outlines the initial results of the review, which we propose to implement first.

There may be a secondary set of recommendations with their own implementation proposals.

Premise

Beer Scoring Advisory Group has been asked to review improving scoring and descriptors for cask beers.

These proposed improvements have been put forward with the aim of:

- Simplifying the beer scoring process.
- Developing a greater, and shared, understanding of the scoring system and when each score should be used.
- Increasing the number of scores being submitted, and the number of members submitting scores.
- Separating 'no cask beer available' from the scoring scale.

New ratings and descriptions

The ratings replace the score scale and remove the use of half points.

The ratings will still have the numerical value (0-5) attached to them for 'back end' purposes to allow for calculation of and analysis of scores for pubs.

Using features from the current descriptions, we have added a set of 'reactions' that should help members choose the rating most aligned to the beer they are drinking.

There will be a new tick box, separate from the ratings, for 'no cask beer available'.

We will also add automated pub update messages where someone submits a rating in a pub with no cask beer, or for a pub marked as serving cask is rated as 'none available'.

New ratings for cask beer scoring

New cask ratings and descriptions - table

Rating	Description	Your reaction
Excellent	Exceptional and clear (if intended to be) with fantastic aromas, flavours and ideal carbonation.	Superb! You tell your friends and compliment the cellar manager.
Very good	Satisfying and well-kept with a great appearance, good carbonation and enticing aromas and flavours.	You consider having another and may cancel plans to move to another pub.
Good	Nice appearance, good carbonation, aromas and flavour.	Pleasant but not memorable. You're happy to have another but might consider something else.
Acceptable	Unremarkable and ordinary, with no noteworthy characteristics.	You're unlikely to have another unless it is all there is and there isn't another pub to go to.
Poor	Noticeably imperfect.	Drinkable with resentment, but you politely ask for a replacement.
Undrinkable	Unpleasant to drink, likely with a disgusting taste, incorrect appearance and off/foul aroma.	You politely ask for it to be replaced and consider asking the publican to take it off.