

El Dorado County bbq competition a bucket list item for chef

By Kristi Buffo

When 37-year-old Dwayne Joyner was diagnosed with kidney cancer, his wife asked him what his biggest regret would be should he not survive, besides—of course, missing her and his two young children.

“He said he had always wanted to enter a barbecue competition and, ultimately, open a catering business... and that’s how we came to create the Bucket of Nuts barbecue team,” says John Cain, Joyner’s brother-in-law. During the first weekend of October, Bucket of Nuts will join several dozen teams slated to compete in the Smokin’ for Gold KCBS sanctioned BBQ Cook-off at the El Dorado County Fairgrounds.



Dwayne Joyner

The competition on Oct. 2 is a part of the three-day Gateway to the Sierra Sportsmen’s & Outdoor Expo.

Cain admits that at first the competitions had a bitter-sweet undertone for the team, but recently Joyner had an MRI showing that he’s cancer free.

“The first time we presented our chicken the skin slid right off and slapped the judge right in the nose. Of course that

was the end of that competition,” Cain said. One of the key judging points for barbecued chicken is to present “bite through skin.” Cain thinks he and Joyner have finally figured out what that means and how to do it – but it’s a secret.

In addition to chicken, teams will compete for prize money in a variety of categories, and one team will receive the grand trophy.

Think you might have what it takes to compete? Visit the Fair’s website for details about the Smokin for the Gold competition or the Fun BBQ cook-off (amateurs invited), which will be Oct. 3. Tastings will be available following both competitions, \$10 for five tastes.