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## And then there were 3 cooks left

Herald Staff

Chicken and green beans were on the menu for round three of The Herald Chefs' Challenge, but the dishes looked nothing like Sunday dinner at Grandma's house. The boneless breast meat was variously marinated in coffee, crusted with cornflakes and sauced with puréed squash by the six contestants.

**HERALD INTERACTIVE**



Winnowed from an opening field of 12, they represented culinary programs at three area schools: the Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale, Le Cordon Bleu in Miramar and Florida International University in North Miami, which hosted the

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afternoon cook-off.

As in rounds one and two, which starred hog snapper and filet mignon, respectively, the aspiring chefs were presented with a mystery basket of ingredients and given 15 minutes to write a menu item using some, though not necessarily all, of them.

Then it was into the kitchen for an hour of cooking, followed by presentations to the three judges: chef Dewey LoSasso, Herald Food Editor Kathy Martin and CBS4 reporter Lisa Petrillo.

The students displayed impressive creativity and technical prowess, though a basic blunder knocked out the most senior competitor, Christopher Kark, an FIU grad student: When LoSasso cut into Kark's gorgeous, almond-and-cornflake-crusted chicken, the center of the meat was pink and clearly undone. It cost the 25-year-old a spot in the finals, but earned him a nickname: Mr. Chicken Tataki.

FIU students Alexia Apostolidis, Jovany Bandomo and Luis Mendizabal advanced to the championship round, slated for the kitchen at LoSasso's restaurant, North One 10. The winner receives two round-trip tickets on Spirit Airlines and an internship at North One 10.

The judging criteria were taste, presentation, creativity, organization, marketability, sanitation, culinary prowess and technique.

Contest sponsors are Sansó Foods and Spirit Airlines. Kitchen facilities courtesy of Florida International University and North One 10 restaurant.

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