



# Scheduling a competition

Creating a reasonable schedule is one of the most essential things for your competition to run properly. In order to make it accurate, there are some key factors you must consider.

## Venue details

These are not related to any specific event, however, you must consider all of these when creating your competition's schedule.

1. How many days will the competition last?
2. At what time can you arrive at the venue and what time do you need to leave the venue?

Both of the above tell you how much time you have available to fill with the events you wish. Be aware that the events and the number of rounds you choose require Delegate approval, so before you start building the schedule you should first discuss with the competition Delegate(s) and reach an agreement on the events held and the number of rounds for each event. Keep in mind that it will not always be possible to hold all the events and rounds you initially intended.

You also need to make sure your competition ends with some buffer time before you must leave the venue as any incident could delay the competition and cause unwanted trouble for everyone. Keep in mind that you will still need to take down the competition setup and meet the cleaning requirements of the venue at the end of the day before you leave, so make sure you have enough time for that.

3. How much setting up is needed? For example, will you need to set up chairs for spectators or does the venue already have them ready (such as a theater or event staff)?

Let's assume you can enter the venue at 8 AM, you can't schedule the first event to start at 8:10 AM if it takes you half an hour to set everything up. The same goes for the end of the competition; if it takes you another 30 minutes to disassemble all the setup done, you cannot make a schedule that ends 10 minutes before you leave the venue. This section of the schedule doesn't necessarily have to be publicly available, but as an organizer, you must take setting up and cleaning up into account when scheduling your competition.

You should also leave enough time at the beginning of your competition to check-in people and to register new competitors in case you are accepting [registrations on the spot](#). Make sure the time scheduled for registering and checking-in is appropriate based on the number of competitors of the competition (e.g. Do not schedule only 10 minutes if you have 100+ competitors registered). Be aware that you may also have a high number of people arriving just before the main event if the main event is not the first event of the day, so make sure to take into account the time and resources needed to register and/or check-in those people.

4. How many solving stations will be available?

Knowing how many solving stations can be set up tells you how many people can compete at once. Keep in mind that although more stations can shorten the duration of a round they also require more judges, scramblers and possibly runners depending on the [running system](#) of your competition, so you need to account for the extra time looking for volunteers in case you did not [assign staff tasks beforehand](#).

5. What are the lunch options near the venue?

You need to be aware that while some may go to eat lunch by car, other competitors and spectators may have to go by walking, meaning you have to consider the time it takes for one to walk to a restaurant and then back to the competition venue. Be sure to check more than one option in the area since not everyone wants to or can eat at the same place.



Keep in mind that some people may opt for food delivery (especially if the lunch options are too far to go by walking), so you should also consider that possibility when scheduling lunch time. In case eating inside the venue is not allowed, make that clear in the competition website, as many people may choose to bring snacks or lunch to eat at the venue.

If lunch is provided to competitors, make sure to schedule enough time for people to collect their food from the organizational staff and have lunch before the competition starts again. If the only lunch option available is the one provided by the organizational team, make sure people with dietary restrictions can request special food in advance.

## Announcements, tutorials, and awards

Throughout the day you will have to make some announcements that need to be included on the schedule. This could be a talk about the sponsors, some relevant information about the competition, a competitor/judge tutorial, etc. The latter will usually be either at the start of the competition, just before the main event, or even both. Always be direct and don't make the announcements unnecessarily long, both to avoid taking up too much time and to improve competitors' and spectators' experience. Keep in mind that many people would be annoyed by long, tedious talks. After all finals are done, you still need to account for the awards ceremony. Especially if the competition is holding many events, this can add 20+ minutes to your competition.

## Building the schedule

It's important to note that just because another competition managed to hold a certain event in X time, it doesn't mean it's always possible for it to be done in that time. There are a couple factors that affect how long a given round takes, such as:

- How many competitors you have
- The cutoffs and time limits you are using

These dictate how much time one person can take to complete their average, so having lower/higher cutoffs and time limits will extend or shorten the time it takes to hold a certain event.

- The average speed of the community in the event

This is pretty self-explanatory, but if most people in your region can solve a 3x3 in 12-30 seconds, it takes considerably less time to hold it when compared to a region where most people take 30-60 seconds to solve the cube. Most of the time, the average speed of newcomers will be unknown, so if the region the competition is being held has a tendency to have a high number of newcomers you should schedule some extra time for the most popular events as a safety measure.

- How much the community is familiar with the event

Let's say skewb is being held for the first time in 5 years in the region, that means you'll likely have many incidents due to inexperience (scrambling will take longer, and your average competitor will be slower) as compared to a region that holds skewb every month. This means you'll need to allocate **more** time than usual for that event. The same applies to the other scenario as well (holding an event often leads to more experienced competitors and scramblers), in which you would need to allocate **less** time for that event.

- How much the community is familiar with competitions

Similar to the previous point, but this is more general and will apply to every event. Let's say you're holding the first competition ever in the region, you can be sure there will be lots of incidents due to inexperience with the competing procedure, scrambling will take longer, more judges may have to be trained, etc.

On top of all that, you also need to take the competitor experience into account, meaning you should avoid having two rounds of the same event in a row or sequential rounds of events that are too exhausting,



especially at the end of the day (e.g. Finishing a competition day with FMC, 5BLD and MBLD in a row is not a good idea since people competing in all of them will have a negative experience that could be avoided by simply rearranging the schedule).

Once you have an initial draft of the schedule, you should work in conjunction with the competition Delegate(s) to refine the schedule and assure it fits the local community. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Setting appropriate time cutoffs and time limits.
- Setting appropriate advancement conditions for subsequent rounds.
- Rearranging the schedule.
- Making sure the schedule is neither overly optimistic nor pessimistic.

Always communicate with the Delegate(s) if there are any changes you believe to be necessary or if you have information relevant to the schedule (e.g. A high number of expected new-comers). Make sure that both you and the Delegate(s) know the progress of the schedule draft at all times in order to prevent anyone from losing time working on or trying to improve a schedule that is not accurate. Make sure that between two rounds of the same event you have enough time for entering the results of the previous round and for any preparation you might need (e.g. Making groups for the next round).

## Simultaneous events

Holding multiple events at the same time is an option you may choose, but it's not recommended if you don't have much experience with competition organization. Most of the time, a side room will be used to hold FMC or a BLD event simultaneously to the main area of the competition. Although simultaneous events can be useful in order to hold more events in less time, it also requires a larger venue, more equipment, more staff, and (since there must be a Delegate overseeing all the areas in which an official event is taking place) you need multiple Delegates if you are using separate rooms.

## Making adjustments to the schedule

It's possible that after the registration period closes you may have more or less competitors than you expected. If that's the case, you may consider changing the schedule in order to better accommodate the new amount of competitors you are expecting by adjusting cutoffs and time limits, adding/removing rounds, changing the advancement requirements for subsequent rounds, etc.

Keep in mind that any changes to the schedule must be notified to all competitors in advance and should be discussed with the other organizers (if any) and with the Delegate(s) of the competition. In case you want to add or remove an event after the competition has been announced, you should request that as early as possible since it requires approval from the Delegate(s) **and** from the WCA Competition Announcement Team. If you are unsure about any possible changes or if anything unexpected comes up on the day of the competition, you should discuss it with the Delegate(s) as they will be able to advise you on the best options for each scenario.