

Hello! And welcome to the world of Speedcubing.

This guide is for all the parents (guardians/family/friends) of children, young people and adults who are interested in Speedcubing, the art of fast solving Rubik's Cubes and other twisty puzzles, and in Speedcubing competitions.

This guide is not for the Speedcubers, but we do point to where they can find further information. This guide will not tell you all the detailed rules of Speedcubing nor how to solve a cube.

The guide is aimed at the UK Speedcubing community, but most of the information is relevant for international friends.

We've set out below some of the most common early questions that we've found the parent community ask about.

In case you need to interpret what your *cuber* is saying, words in *blue italics* are also explained in the 'what do all these words mean' section.

And welcome, great to have you here.

The Speedcubing community is one of the friendliest and most inclusive communities we've ever been part of. Everyone involved is a volunteer, doing things on top of their jobs/studies, and there is a real sense of working together so everyone can take part.

There is not the same "negative competitiveness" that other sports/activities can have. Maybe this is because competitors are looking to beat their own personal fastest times rather than beat other competitors.

It is a friendly crowd which is encouraging of newcomers, and very welcoming to neuro and other diversities.

We hope you enjoy being part of the community.

Kirsty Grainger

UK Cube Association Parent Community

Find us at the [UK Cube Association Parent Community | Facebook](#) and join the world's biggest and friendliest family/friends of Speedcubers community!

February 2024



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An Introduction to Speedcubing

What is Speedcubing?

It is the art of fast-solving "twisty puzzles" (including the Rubik's *Cube* which is a 3x3 (pronounced "3 by 3."))

How does Speedcubing work?

Every time you mix up (*scramble*) a *cube* it creates a pattern that is very unlikely to have ever been seen before (there are 43 quintillion different combinations of the 3x3). Speedcubing is solving the *cube*, so all the colours are back in the right order, as quickly as you can. That's it. You can Speedcube anywhere but if you take part in an official competition then you can get your times officially recognised by the World Cube Association (*WCA*) and see them on their website [World Cube Association \(https://www.worldcubeassociation.org\)](https://www.worldcubeassociation.org).

How Do You Learn To Solve a Cube?

YouTube is probably the best way to learn to solve a *cube*. There are lots of different tutorials that you can watch, pause and rewatch to learn. Many competitors start with the 3x3 *beginners' method*. The *beginners' method* is a set of moves you can learn that will solve any 3x3.

YouTuber JPerm has an easy-to-follow tutorial www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ron6MN45LY. Many parents have learned by watching this video too!

And once someone can solve one they can learn new ways of solving: different methods and new *algorithms*.

Can we go to a competition?

Who Can Take part in Speedcubing Competitions?

Anyone! This is one of the best things about Speedcubing competitions. There are no age, gender, country, or other categories while competing. Everyone competes together.

How Old Do You Have to Be to Compete? Is it Split by Age?

There are no age limits (upper or lower) and no age categories for competing. Everyone is welcome and everyone competes on a level playing field. Some parents eventually end up competing (either to the embarrassment or the pride of their *cuber!*)

What Are the Different Categories for Competing?

There are no age, gender, country etc. categories for competing. The main category is the type of *event*. There are 17 'official' cubing *events* (see [What Are All the Different Events/Types of "Cubes?"](#) for more details.)

Do you need a qualifying time or be a certain speed to enter a competition?

Almost always no, you don't need a qualifying time or to be a certain speed to enter a competition. We're really welcoming of anyone able to solve regardless of the time.

There are some exceptions to this:

- National, Continental and World Championships (see question: [Are their National and International Competitions?](#)) Itend to have qualification times for *events*.
- A small number of *events* sometimes have qualifying times or competitor limits at some competitions e.g. fewest moves challenge, and multi-blindfolded. This is due to scheduling.

You also need to know about cut off times and *time limits* for each *event*.

The *time limit* is the maximum time you have to solve the cube. Beyond that time the time will be recorded as *DNF* (Did Not Finish). For the *3x3* this is often ten minutes.

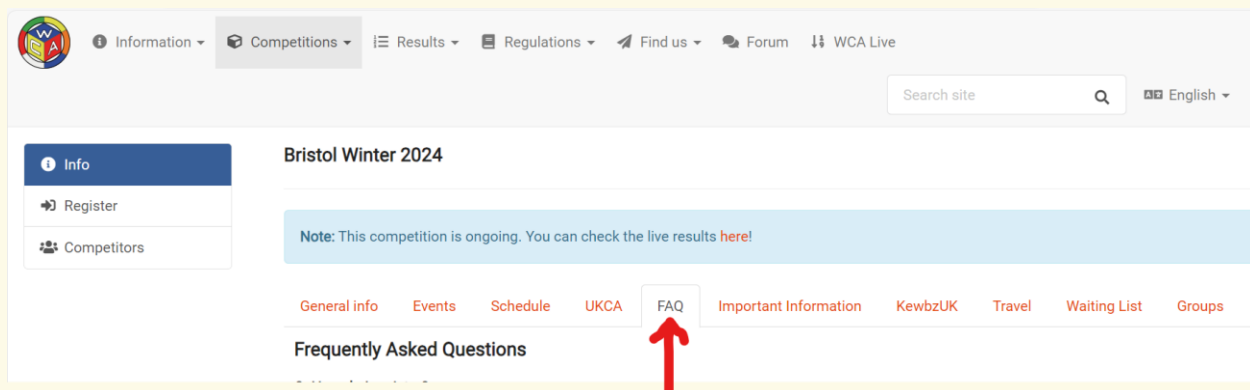
For most *events* a competitor has five attempts to solve the cube. However, you only get to do all five solves if you meet the *cut-off* time in one of the first two solves. The *cut-off* time is the agreed maximum time for that *event* for a competitor to be able to do all five solves. For the *3x3* this is normally 3 minutes.

Are Spectators Allowed? Can We Just Come and Watch a Competition (and Not Compete?)

Yes. Spectators are very welcome. Please check the competition page to see if there is a charge for spectators. Most UK competitions are free to spectators (except the UK Championships).

Some parents find it helpful to bring their child to a competition to watch before they enter so that they understand what it will be like. But many of us didn't do that and found competitions a very welcoming space.

There is an FAQ tab on the competition webpage on the World Cube Association ([WCA](#)) website, and this is where it will set out if there is a charge for spectators. See below image.



Are there National and International Competitions?

Yes, the UK hold a UK Championship most years (normally around October/November). There is a European Championship every two years (years ending in even numbers: 2024, 2026, 2028...)

There is a World Championship every two years (years ending in odd numbers: 2025, 2027, 2029...)

The major competitions are busy but great fun. They are often run over multiple days (3-4 days), and normally take place in sports venues in major towns/cities. We recommend [registering](#) early for these [events](#).

How to enter a competition.

How Do I Find Out When and Where Competitions Are Taking Place?

The details of all upcoming competitions around the world are on the World Cube Association ([WCA](#)) website.

All the upcoming UK competitions that have been announced are available on this webpage: wca.ukca.org

The UK Cube Association ([UKCA](#)) also announces all the UK competitions on its website [UK CUBE ASSOCIATION \(ukca.org\)](http://UK CUBE ASSOCIATION (ukca.org)) and on its social media channels:

UKCA Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/100064627394465>

UKCA Instagram: <https://instagram.com/ukcubeassociation>

There is also a list of [UK competitions in planning](#).

HOWEVER please note that potential competitions on the planning list can and do change before they are announced (nothing like booking travel and accommodation to an Edinburgh competition in planning and the competition moving to Glasgow – learn from that mistake!).

How Does Someone Take Part in a Speedcubing Competition?

The first thing you need to do is *register* an account at this World Cube Association (WCA) website link: www.worldcubeassociation.org/users/sign_up.

Older competitors may wish to sign up using their own email account. For younger competitors it might be easier to sign up using their name but an adult's email account. Don't worry, once you think your child is old enough then you can transfer the account to their email.

Once you have an account you are signed in on the WCA website then you can *register* for (enter) a competition.

How Do You Register for (Enter) a Competition?

Once you have a World Cube Association (WCA) account (see question How Does Someone Take Part in a Speedcubing Competition?) then you can enter or *register* for a competition. The registration period is the time when a competition is open for people to sign-up for competing in that competition.

Each competition has its own webpage on the World Cube Association website (<https://www.worldcubeassociation.org/competitions>). On that page there are a number of tabs and links which contain all the information you need about a competition e.g. local travel/hotels, the schedule, who is competing etc.. It is the first place to look if you have a question about a specific competition.

Each competition webpage has information about the registration. Click on the word registration on the left hand-side.

Each competition has a registration period which opens a few months before a competition and closes the week before the competition itself. However, the registration period will close as soon as all the places in the competition (and waiting list) are full. This means that the most popular, or very small, competitions may close within minutes of opening.

On the competition page on the [WCA](#) website click on the [register](#) link on the left-hand side, and follow the instructions. In particular, make sure to pay the registration fee in order to get accepted. Registration is paid for in pound sterling £.

When you [register](#) you choose which [events](#) you are going to do at the competition. You can choose to do one [event](#) or all of the [events](#) available to you. If it's a 2-day competition and you only want to attend 1 day, you could check the schedule on the competition website and only [register](#) for [events](#) on the day you want to attend.

For UK competitions you pay a flat rate for the competition regardless of how many [events](#) you take part in. Noting that some international competitions based outside of the UK may charge per [event](#).

We do not recommend newcomers [register](#) for the specialist Blindfolded or Fewest Moves Challenge competitions for their first competition. These specialists' competitions have very restricted [events](#) lists and don't normally include the [3x3](#).

What are Series Competitions?

Series competitions are linked competitions. They normally take place in the same venue over a number of days. They often have a theme e.g. 'newcomers' series, which is aimed at people competing for the first time.

You can only [register](#) for ONE competition in a series but you may spectate on the days you are not competing.

Can You Register (enter) on the Day?

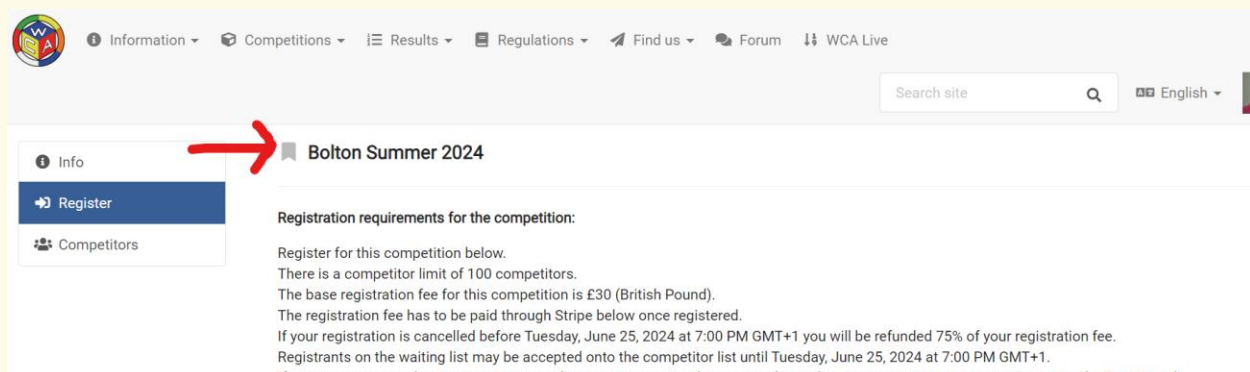
No. You need to [register](#) in advance. Ideally as soon as the competition opens. Ahead of the competition the [UKCA](#) team assigns competitors to different [groups](#)/roles for the competition, and this takes time. It isn't possible to turn up on the day and [register](#) as there would not be time for the volunteers to rearrange the [groups](#)/roles to accommodate additional competitors.

How Quickly Do You Need to Register for (Enter) a Competition?

In the UK, competitions can sell-out very quickly. Although post-2022 the number of competitions has significantly increased (thank you volunteers) and the UK is now averaging around one competition a week over the year. The most popular, or very small, or near to London competitions may be sold-out within minutes. A small competition in the UK is anything with less than 80-100 places (approximately.)

It is worth setting reminders on your phone or texting a fellow cubing parent close to the registration opening time so that you can be on-line when the [registration](#) period opens.

You can bookmark the competition on the World Cube Association ([WCA](#)) website and it will send you an email reminder 24 hours before hand. To bookmark a competition, go to the competition page on the [WCA](#) website. Click on the registration link (top left) and then click on the greyed out chevron shape by the name of the competition (see image below).



The screenshot shows the WCA website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Information, Competitions, Results, Regulations, Find us, Forum, and WCA Live. A search bar and language selector (English) are also present. Below the navigation bar, a sidebar menu is visible with options for Info, Register, and Competitors. A red arrow points to the 'Register' button. The main content area displays the competition details for 'Bolton Summer 2024', including registration requirements and a list of rules.

Registration requirements for the competition:

Register for this competition below.
There is a competitor limit of 100 competitors.
The base registration fee for this competition is £30 (British Pound).
The registration fee has to be paid through Stripe below once registered.
If your registration is cancelled before Tuesday, June 25, 2024 at 7:00 PM GMT+1 you will be refunded 75% of your registration fee.
Registrants on the waiting list may be accepted onto the competitor list until Tuesday, June 25, 2024 at 7:00 PM GMT+1.
If you are a registered competitor you may change your registered events until Tuesday, June 25, 2024 at 7:00 PM GMT+1 on the [Register](#) tab

In the UK, most competitions open their registration mid-week, normally on a Tuesday and normally at 7pm UK time. But each competition page on the World Cube Association ([WCA](#)) will show exactly when that competition opens. On the left-hand side

of each competition page there is a link that says register. If you click on that link you'll be able to see one of: when registration opens; if registration is open; if a waiting list is open; if registration is closed.

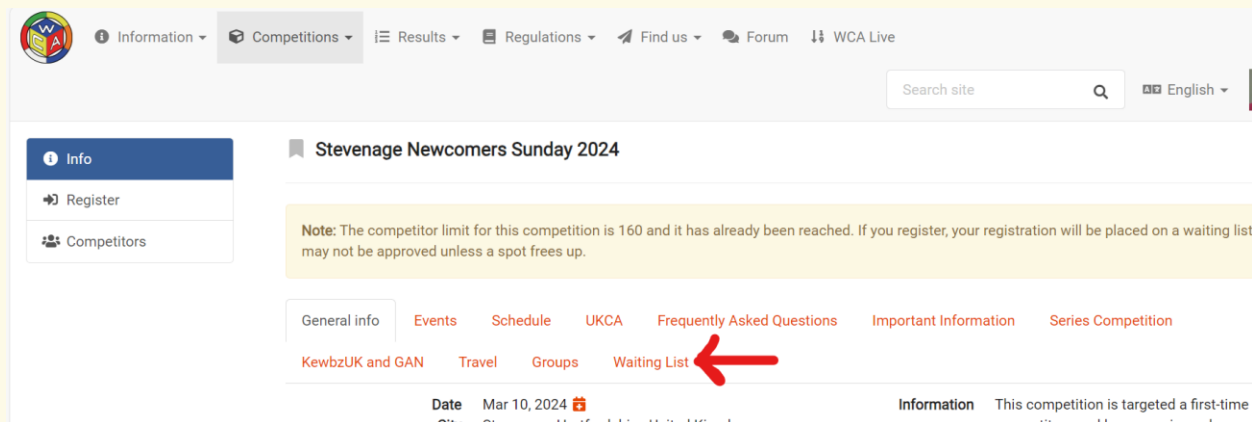
What Is a Waiting List and Should I Go on a Waiting List?

There is a competitor limit (maximum number of places) for each competition, to make sure venues are safe and that competitions can run to time. Once all places have been filled then many competitions hold a waiting list. If a competitor drops out of the competition then the first person on the waiting list is offered the place.

In the UK, we do find that people do drop out so if the waiting list is open it is worth joining the waiting list (via the register link on the competition page on the World Cube Association ([WCA](#)) website).

You have to pay the registration fee to get onto the waiting list, but if you don't get the spot, or decide you want to drop out, you will be refunded this in full.

You can see the waiting list on the World Cube Association ([WCA](#)) website on the webpage for that competition. There is a tab called waiting list if there is a waiting list for the competition. See image below.



The screenshot shows the WCA website interface for the 'Stevenage Newcomers Sunday 2024' competition. The navigation menu includes 'Info', 'Register', and 'Competitors'. A note indicates that the competitor limit of 160 has been reached, and registrations will be placed on a waiting list. The 'Waiting List' link in the navigation menu is highlighted with a red arrow. Below the navigation menu, there is a table with columns for Date, City, and Information.

Date	City	Information
Mar 10, 2024	Stevenage, Hertfordshire, United Kingdom	This competition is targeted a first-time competitors and less experienced.

What's a World Cube Association ID and Profile?

The [WCA](#) ID is a unique identifier given to people who have competed in an official [WCA](#) competition. Once you have competed at a competition for the first time, and the results have been uploaded (normally within a couple of days), you will automatically have a [WCA](#) ID generated for you and it will be on the [WCA](#) website. When you sign up to the [WCA](#) website you'll be given a profile and your ID is linked to your [WCA](#) profile. You may upload a picture to the profile (this is optional).

What to do if plans change or you want to change something.

Can we get a refund if we can no longer make a competition? Can our registration be transferred to a different competition?

If you cancel your registration is before the deadline (which is about a week before the competition), then you are normally refunded 75% of your registration fee (50% is normal for the UK Championship). Each competition will set out the *cut-off* date for the partial refund and you can find that on the competition webpage on the World Cube Association ([WCA](#)) website.

The system behind the [WCA](#) website does not enable the [UKCA](#) team to be able to transfer registration from one competition to another. The [UKCA](#) volunteers are unable to change this. Noting that the [UKCA](#) is not-for-profit and run by volunteers. All monies paid for competitions go towards venue and other costs including a payment to the [WCA](#) for the use of their website and registration software.

My Child No Longer Wants to Compete. What Do I Do?

If your registration is cancelled before the deadline (which is about a week before the competition), then you are normally refunded 75% of your registration fee (50% is normal for the UK Championship). Each competition will set out the *cut-off* date for the partial refund.

To drop out, all you need to do is send the organisers an email, by using the contact link on the competition webpage on the [WCA](#) website.

If your child changes their mind after this date (which in our experience is very common) then don't worry about being a "no show." We understand. It is not possible to get a refund after the cancellation deadline however (see [If You Can't Go to the Competition, What Happens?](#))

If You Can't Go to the Competition, What Happens?

If your registration is cancelled before the deadline (which is about a week before the competition) then you are normally refunded 75% of your registration fee (50% is normal for the UK Championship). Each competition will set out the *cut-off* date for the partial refund.

Refunds can't be made after this point because competitor numbers relate closely to venue costs (the [UKCA](#) is not for profit but can't run at a loss) and because places can't be offered to those on the waiting list after this point. Places can't be offered to others after this date due to the time it takes to set up competitions.

Individual competitors sign up to different [events](#) and ahead of the competition the [Delegates](#) assign competitors to different [groups](#)/roles for the competition and this takes time. It isn't possible to swap to an alternative competitor as their [event](#) list and their experience will be different. The deadline is set to ensure that the volunteer team has enough time to do this work.

Can You Change the Events You Have Registered To Do at the Competition?

Yes, if you do so before the deadline (which is about a week before the competition). Each competition will set out the [cut-off](#) date for changes.

Changes can't be made after this point because ahead of the competition the [Delegates](#) assign competitors to different [groups](#)/roles for the competition, and this takes time. The deadline is set to ensure that the [Delegates](#) have enough time to do this work.

For most competitions, you can edit your [events](#) list on the same page you [registered](#) for the competition.

For some you won't be able to do that, so you'll have to email the organisers of the competition using the contact link on the competition webpages on the [WCA](#) website.

There may be a mix of [events](#) that you can edit yourself and others' that you'll have to email the organisers for. This is because some [events](#) have restricted competitor numbers due to the length of the [event](#) e.g. Multi-Blindfolded and Fewest Moves Challenge.

It is worth saying that we would not recommend that newcomers start with Multi-Blindfolded or Fewest Moves Challenge.

Why can't there be last minute changes to competitors or events at competitions?

Competitors are assigned to different [groups](#)/roles ahead of competitions. The volunteer team needs time to set that up. There isn't time during the competitions themselves to allow changes on the day/weekend.

You're going to a competition! More info.

What Happens at a Competition? What Can I Expect at My First Competition?

We encourage parents to attend the tutorial to understand more and to learn how to help out.

You do not need to read all of this answer! It is provided as a detailed description for those that find it helpful details ahead of attending. But there is a competing and judging tutorial at the start of each day where all this information is covered. Plus there will be lots of people willing to help you at every competition. If you do get to the end of this answer you will be very well prepared for your first competition!

Overall, you will find a warm welcome, and lots of other Speedcubing families.

Competitions are held in large rooms/halls.

Venues are set up with:

Competition area. Which is made up of: the tables at which the competitors solve; a *scramble* table where cubes are mixed up; and a waiting area for competitors.

Staff table: Where the volunteer team runs the competition.

Check-in desk: Where all competitors let the team know that they have arrived and where competitors receive their *competitor card*.

Seating area: Where competitors and spectators can sit to watch the competition or wait to compete.

When you arrive, find the check-in desk. At the desk, the first time someone competes, you'll need to show formal identification of the person that will be competing i.e. the *cuber*. Formal identification includes birth-certificates, passports and driving licences (see [What Do I Need to Bring to My First Competition?](#)) and pick up your *competitor card*.

The *competitor card* (also sometimes called a "group card") looks roughly like:

Comp = competing

Scr = scrambling

Judge = judging

Competitors Name			
ID: 32		WCA ID: 2018GRA01	
Event	Comp	Scr	Judge
2x2x2 Cube	4		1
3x3x3 Cube	1	3	
4x4x4 Cube	2		4
Pyraminx	1	4	
Square-1	3		1
Megaminx	5	1	
Clock	2		3

These numbers tell you which *group* you are in

Once you've done that then you find the seating area and wait. There is no fixed seating in the seating area, so just find a space. Within minutes of arriving, you may find

that your young person is chatting to another competitor or sat on a table with other competitors practicing cubing (talking optional.)

Competitors stay in the seating area until their *event* and *group* is called up. When their *event* and *group* is called up, they take their *cube* to the *scramble* table and place it in the box that contains the *scorecard* with their name on it.

Scorecards look roughly like this:

Name of the Competition			
Event	Round	Group	
3x3	1	2	
ID	Name		
54	Competitors Name		
Scr	Result	Judge	Comp
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
Extra Attempt			
-			
Cut off <3:00		Time limit: 10:00	

At some larger competitions there are multiple *groups* competing at the same time. So *group* 1 and 2 maybe called up together. In these competitions there will be different 'stages' i.e. competing areas. The normally is just a side of a room. *Group* 1 maybe on the left hand stage (on the left hand side of the room) and *Group* 2 on the right hand stage (on the right hand side of the room). If you are unsure where to go ask a *delegate* and they'll be able to show you to where the box with your *scorecard* in is.

Once the *cube* is placed in the box with the *scorecard* then:

- the competitor goes to the competitor waiting area until their name is called they are then taken to a *judge* and table and their cube will be obscured by a *cube cover*.
- They let the *judge* know when they are ready
- the *judge* removes the cover and starts a stop-watch

The competitor has up to 15 seconds to look at (inspect) the cube. Within that time they put the *cube* down, put their hands on the timer and lift them up and start to solve as quickly as they can. Putting their hands back down on the timer once they have completed.

If there are any problems during a solve then the *judge* will put their hand up and call over a *delegate* who will decide what to do.

Competitors, *scramblers* and *judges* are asked to sign the competition sheet using their ID number (which can be found on the *competitor card*).

There are *cut-off* times and overall *time limits* for each *event* but this doesn't stop anyone from taking part. If you don't make the *cut-off* or go over the time-limits then it changes the number of attempts to solve that you get to do and your official result. The time-limit for the *3x3* is normally around 10 minutes so most people who have practiced can solve within this time.

Each competitor gets up to five solves, in each round.

Spectators are encouraged to watch, but please don't go into the competition area (stay at least 1.5m away from judging tables) and please don't use flash photography. There is a tutorial at the start of each day of the competition so if you still want to know more, or ask questions then do go and listen to the tutorial!

Is my child (young person) safe at a competition? Can I leave them on their own at a competition?

No, unaccompanied under 18s are not permitted at competitions.

The *UKCA* have a clear safeguarding policy (Safeguarding — UK CUBE ASSOCIATION (ukca.org)) and a Designated *UKCA* Safeguarding Lead that you can contact if you have any concerns.

Please do not leave your child/young person unattended at competitions at any time. Whilst the *UKCA* aim to ensure the safety of everyone attending, the *UKCA* and its volunteers do not act as parents/guardians, and therefore parents/guardians of young people are at all times responsible for those under 18.

Be aware that many *cubers* have YouTube and other social media channels and are often filming themselves during competitions. It is quite easy for a young person (or adult) to end up in the background of these types of footage.

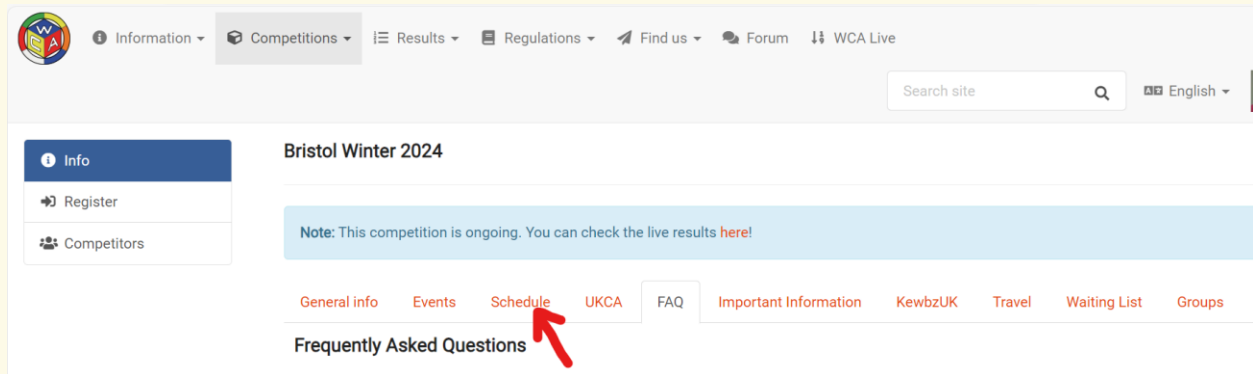
There are sometimes film crews at competitions, but this will be flagged in advance and often you will need to sign to confirm you allow your child to appear in a documentary.

How Long Do Competitions Take?

In the UK, most competitions are over a weekend. With different *events* taking place all day on the Saturday and all day on the Sunday. There may be 1-17 different official *events* during a competition.

Most days start at around 9am and finished between 5pm and 7pm UK time. There is a schedule tab on each competition webpage that will have the specific detail for that competition (see below image).

While competitions try to stick to the schedule, this cannot be guaranteed, and competitions can run early or late. If you are not at the venue when an *event* is running you may miss out on competing in that *event*. We also encourage *clubbers* and parents to help out throughout the day (see questions [Can my young person help at a competition: *run/judge/scramble?*](#) and [Can I help at a competition?](#)).



Do We Have to Stay for the Whole Competition?

No. If the competition is over multiple days but the *event(s)* you are competing in are on a single day, then you do not have to be at the competition on days you do not have *events*.

We encourage competitors to stay at the competition, even if they have finished competing, to help with the competition.

All competitions are run by volunteers and rely on competitors (and parents/spectators) helping when they are not competing (see [Can I Help at Competitions?](#)) to ensure the competition runs smoothly and on time.

What Do You Need to Bring to Your First Competition?

Make sure to bring formal Identification (ID) of some kind i.e. birth certificate, passport, drivers license. This allows confirmation of your date of birth and nationality. This is needed so that you can be formally assigned a World Cube Association ID. You only need to bring identification to the first competition.

Lunch is not provided. Venues tend to be close to outlets that sell food and drink (or have them on-site) and the majority of UK venues allow *clubbers* to bring food and drink. There will be information in the pre-competition email from the *UKCA* should there be restrictions. We recommend bringing snacks and water to all competitions.

Aside from that, make sure you bring all the cubes you wish to compete with. Practice areas can be busy so to make best use of space we encourage *cuBERS* to bring their *timers* but not to bring their cubing mats with them (as they can take up a lot of space on tables).

Do you provide lunch at competitions?

No, lunch is not provided as part of the competitions. Venues tend to be close to outlets that sell food and drink (or have them on-site) and the majority of UK venues allow *cuBERS* to bring food and drink. There will be information in the pre-competition email from the *UKCA* should there be restrictions. We recommend bringing snacks and water to all competitions.

Can My Young Person Help at a Competition: Run/Judge/Scramble?

Running and *judging* are open to everyone and we ask all competitors to help with these activities. There is a tutorial at the start of each day to teach competitors how to do these roles (that are really easy). We encourage parents to help too as this helps the competitions run on time, and from experience it helps the parents' day go quickly and helps you understand what is going on Give it a go!

We don't ask brand new competitors to *scramble*. *Scramblers* are assigned based on a computer program that works out who is likely to be the best *scramblers* who aren't currently competing in that *group*. These are then shown on the *competitor cards* we give out at the check-in desk at the competition.

We avoid letting people "*scramble* because they want to" because we need experienced *cuBERS* to ensure that scrambling is done properly and quickly. It's always a bad feeling when we must ask someone to stop scrambling for not doing their job properly, so we try to do everything to avoid that from happening.

Can I Help at Competitions?

Yes! And please do. This not only helps the competition run smoothly but also helps your day go more quickly (and lets you understand what is happening more quickly). All competitors are required to help with these roles too. Competitions are run entirely by volunteers.

There are two main roles that spectators/parents can help with.

"*Running*"– this doesn't involve any actual running. *Runners* take *cubes* and competitors to *judges* and the cubes back to the *scramble* table. It's very straightforward.

"*Judging*" – this is easier than it sounds and is your opportunity to sit quietly in a chair. *Judges* remove the *cube cover* from the *cube*, start and stop the *inspection time* stopwatch, and write in the times for the solves.

There is a tutorial at the start of each day of competitions to teach people these roles. There are other parents and spectators that will always be willing to help show you what to do.

How Do We Know How They've Done in the Competition? How Do I Know if They are Through to the Next Round?

Volunteers add competitors times to the [WCA](#) live results page during the competition at <https://live.worldcubeassociation.org>. This allows you to see your young person's time. If you forget the name of this site then ask a *delegate* at a competition and they'll be able to help.

Once all the results have been entered into the system (scroll to the bottom of the list and see if there are competitors with no times next to them), then all the competitors highlighted in green are through to the next round.

Alternatively some competitions are now using <https://www.competitiongroups.com>. This allows you to see what *group* they are in for all rounds. Find the relevant competition on the website. Then find and click on their name. It shows you which *groups* competitors are in and is updated as the competition goes on.

What do I do if I lose something at a competition?

At every competition there is a lost property box on the staff table. If you have lost something please check in the lost property or ask a *delegate*. If you realise you have lost something after you have left the competition then go to the [WCA](#) competition webpage and use the contact link to let the organisers know what has been lost or left behind.

We are a friendly community, but the [UKCA](#) can't guarantee, and are not responsible, for the security of property at competitions. We'd strongly recommend that you don't leave property unattended (including cubes).

Do I Need to Know All the Rules?

No. As a parent you don't. Speedcubers will know the rules and be willing to help each other. Competition *delegates* (see [What Do Delegates Do?](#)) will also be on hand to ensure rules are followed.

There is lots of information online: [About the Regulations | World Cube Association](#) but parents are not expected to read this.

How do competitions get organised in the UK?

What Do Delegates Do?

Delegates are volunteers who are formally recognised by the World Cube Association. They oversee competitions and make sure that competitions are run according to the mission, spirit, and regulations of the *WCA*.

UK *delegates* organise and run competitions in the UK.

They are volunteers! And as parents we couldn't be more grateful. They are giving up their whole weekend (and hours beforehand in preparations) so that our young people can compete.

When will there be a competition in my area? Why isn't there a competition in my area?

Prior to 2020 the *UKCA* was running around one competition a month, they now have more volunteers and can run around one competition per week! That is a lot of volunteering.

As part of the increase in competitions, new locations have been added into the calendar and the *UKCA* is continuously looking for new places to hold competitions. It is possible that we have already looked in your area and have been unable to find a viable venue due to limiting factors e.g. venue costs; available facilities; availability; accessibility; and lighting.

An area may be difficult to staff due to the low number of volunteers living close to an area.

It is likely that it will always be the case that some people will have to travel further than others. If you think you know a suitable venue (and have been to a few competitions yourself) then please read the [UKCA FAQ How do I organise a competition in my area](#) to get an initial sense of how feasible the venue is then talk to a *delegate* about it at your next competition.

What does the *registration* money get spent on?

The *UKCA* is not-for-profit and run by volunteers. All monies paid for competitions go towards the different costs of organising *events* including: venue hire; equipment; printing; payments to the *WCA* for the use of their website and registration software; and website upkeep.

Buying Cubes

Do They Need All the Latest Cubes?

While our young people might disagree, the answer is no. Some of the top *cubers* in the world use relatively cheap cubes.

The original Rubik's *Cube* brand tends not to be used in competition as it is not as fast as some of the Speedcubing brands such as GAN or MoYu (a MoYu RS3 M 2020 is less than £10 and a good starter speedcube). A *timer* and a mat might also be a useful investment.

Beyond that they will need a *cube* for each type of *event* they want to compete in but it is worth seeing if they enjoy competing before buying every type of cube.

Where Can I Buy Cubes in the UK? Can I buy cubes at competitions?

There are two *cube* shops based in the UK.

KewbzUK (ukspeedcubes.co.uk)

Speedcubing.org (speedcubing.org)

Members of the [UK Cube Association Parent Community Facebook group](#) have access to a discount code for Kewbz.

Other cubing shops that look like they are based in the UK are not, and many parents have reported significant delays to cubes being shipped from these shops.

Ireland has a speedcubing shop utwist: <https://utwistcubes.com/>

Many UK competitions are sponsored by KewbzUK or Speedcubing.org, and sometimes utwist. They often have stalls selling cubes at the competitions themselves.

Helping Your Youngster

Is There a Cubing Club Near Me? How Does My Child/Young Person Find Local Cubers?

There are community chats in the Facebook group so you can connect with others who might be local to you.

The [UKCA](#) does not organise local cubing groups.

There is a [Discord](#) (Facebook for young people) site that is very active in the UK. You have to be 13 or older to sign-up for [Discord](#). There are specific channels for cubing and there is lots of chat and video/voice calls and sometimes on-line informal competitions. There are older teenagers and adults in [Discord](#) so normal on-line safety considerations apply.

How Do I Help My Cuber with Nerves?

All the best [cubers](#) feel what we describe as nerves before they are competing. But the adrenaline that creates that feeling is also what makes your fingers turn really quickly, so it's not a bad thing. It might be helpful to re-frame the feeling as excitement as excitement also creates adrenaline and that feeling. It can be a helpful way to think about it.

It's also good to know that the more times you compete the more you'll get used to it. First competitions can be tough as everything is new, but they'll still achieve something just by being there and getting their first [PR](#).

It's also good to note that all [cubers](#) normally get faster times at home than they do in competition. It's often down to nerves but also because they have done hundreds of solves at home and only get to do 5-20 in competition.

Do you recommend any speedcubing coaching services?

No, the [UKCA](#) do not formally recognise any speedcubing coaching service and most of the competitors we know have learnt to solve using free on-line videos. (see question: [How do you learn to solve a cube?](#)).

How Do I Help My Cuber When They Are Upset with Their Result?

One thing to focus on is that competitors are competing against themselves and their own times, and improving your own time is more important than whether you finish 50th or 10th. Indeed, some of the biggest smiles in competitions are from competitors getting a sub-1 minute time for the first time in [3x3](#) (even though the fastest in the world are sub

10 seconds). An approach of self-improvement and supporting others as they get better is a good one to foster.

It's also good to note that all *cu*bers normally get faster times at home than they do in competition. It's often down to nerves but also because they have done hundreds of solves at home and only get to do 5-20 in competition.

What about Injuries? Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) or Similar?

As with any sport, injuries can occur.

This page is quite helpful in terms of talking to your young person about how to sit, and a few exercises that might be helpful to start incorporating to their day to help prevent injury: [RSI Treatment And Prevention – What You Need To Know \(swindonsportstherapy.co.uk\)](http://swindonsportstherapy.co.uk)

The Lingo – what are they talking about?

What's the Difference Between a PB and a PR?

PB = Personal Best

... which is the fastest time you've got (either at home or in competition.)

PR = Personal Record

... which is the fastest time you've got in competition (only.)

What Are All the Different Events/Types of “Cubes?”

There are 17 “official” cubing *events*:

2x2, 3x3, 4x4, 5x5, 6x6, 7x7

These are all *cube* shaped with each side with the related number of pieces along each side of the *cube*.

3x3 one-handed

Competitors solve the *cube* using only one hand (they can use their left or right hand, but the other hand must be out of the way once solving starts. Competitors can let the *cube* touch the table during the solve.

Megaminx

A 12-sided dodecahedron *cube*.

Pyraminx

A 4-sided "pyramid" *cube* (the triangle one.)

Clock

This is a flat puzzle with 9 clock *faces* on each side.

Square-1

Cube similar to the *3x3* but not all the *pieces* are the same size or shape, with rectangular ones in the centre. It doesn't always look like a *cube* when it isn't solved.

Skewb

Cube similar in size to the *3x3* but with large diamond shapes in the middle.

Fewest Moves Challenge (AKA FMC, or just "Fewest Moves")

Competitors have a set amount of time (1 hour) to identify how to solve the *3x3* in the fewest moves. They have to write down their solution before the time-limit.

Blindfolded: *3x3*, 4x4, 5x5

Solving the *cube* while wearing a blindfold. The *timer* starts as soon as the cube is revealed, and the competitor inspects the *cube* and puts their blindfold on to solve it in the quickest time possible.

Multiple Blindfolded (AKA "Multi-Blind"):

Solving multiple *3x3* cubes while wearing a blindfold. The *timer* starts as soon as the cubes are revealed, and the competitor inspects the cubes and puts their blindfold on to solve all the cubes in the quickest time possible. Competitors say how many cubes they are going to attempt during *cube* submission and points are given depending on the number attempted and the number solved correctly.

What Do All These Words Mean? (Written for Parents, Not Cubers!)

+2

Pronounced "plus two." It's a time penalty of 2 seconds given to a competitor's result for an action (mistake) during the solve e.g. not finishing the solve completely but only being one move away.

3x3

Normally written as "*3x3*" but pronounced "3 by 3." This is the original *cube* as designed by Ernő Rubik (the Rubik's Cube). Each *face* has nine *pieces* with three along each edge.

Algorithm

A sequence of moves - competitors memorise different *algorithms* so that they can move the *pieces* at speed while competing.

Attempt

Each effort to solve a *cube* in competition is known as an attempt. The number of attempts completed in one round by a competitor can range depending on the *event* and the competition, particularly in relation to the *cut-off*.

Average

For most *events* a competitor has five attempts to solve the cube. Of the five solves, the fastest and the slowest solves are excluded and an average is calculated of the remaining three. This is the average.

Beginners' Method

This is the easiest way to solve a *cube* (but not the fastest) with 7 steps to get from a *scrambled* to a solved cube. Many parents learn this method.

Case

A *case* is a pattern you're recognising as well as the *algorithm* you are executing.

Centres

The *pieces* in the middle of each *face* of the cube.

Competitor card

A piece of paper you are given when you arrive at the competition and *register*. It contains your ID number and tells you which *groups* you are in for competing, scrambling and judging. Sometimes called a "*group* card."

Corners

The *pieces* on the *corners* between *faces* of a *cube*

Cube

Shorthand for any of the twisty-puzzles regardless of the shape.

Cube Cover

The "box" that goes over a *cube* to hide it from view before a competitor starts.

Cuber

Someone who speedcubes.

Cut-off

For most *events* a competitor has five attempts to solve the cube. However, you only get to do all five solves if you meet the *cut-off* time in one of the first two solves. The *cut-off* time is the agreed maximum time for that *event* for a competitor to be able to do all five solves. For the *3x3* this is normally 3 minutes. It is different from the time-limit.

Delegate

Volunteers who are formally recognised by the World Cube Association. They make sure that competitions are run according to the mission, spirit, and regulations of the *WCA*.

Discord

An instant messaging social platform (age 13+) that is widely used for cubers to chat/compete online.

DNF

Did Not Finish. When a competitor attempts a solve but doesn't solve it completely or within the time-limit. Any disqualified results are also listed as *DNF*.

DNS

Did Not Start. When a competitor doesn't start an attempt. This is mostly only used when a competitor forfeits their attempt(s).

Edge pieces

The piece on the outside edge of a cube

Event

Different types of puzzle that are part of the schedule for that competition.

F2L

First Two *Layers (F2L)*. Used when on a *3x3* all the *pieces* in the first two *layers* of the *cube* are solved.

Face

One side of the cube.

Group

Each event is split into a number of *groups* of competitors to help manage the event. If there are 180 competitors then there may be 12 different *groups* for the *3x3*. The *competitor card* tells you which *group* you are competing in.

ID

Identification number – can be found on your *competitor card*.

Inspection time

Once the *cube* is revealed (the cover taken off) the competitor has up to 15 seconds to look at the cube. That 15 seconds is the *inspection time*.

Judge

The person responsible for watching a solve to confirm that it was valid and the initial person to record the times on the competitor record sheet.

Layer

Each *cube* is split into different *layers*, a *3x3* has three *layers*. Beginner methods solve one *layer* at a time.

Lube

No giggling! It is a liquid or gel used on a *cube* to help reduce the friction as it turns (so it should turn faster.)

Parity

This does not happen on a 2x2 or 3x3 but for some of the larger cubes. *Parity* is when the *cube* is in a pattern (*case*) that isn't solvable using the normal *algorithm*, and you need to do some special moves to get the *cube* solved. When your young person has a bad solve on the larger cubes, it is often because of *parity* which they usually can't do anything to avoid (i.e. it's very frustrating.)

PB

Personal Best. The best result you've got (either at home or in competition.)

PR

Personal Record. The best result you've got in competition (only).

Pieces

The coloured parts of a cube.

Popped

When the *cube* falls apart

Register

There are two places in which you might need to *register*. The first on-line for a competition on the *WCA* website. The second is in-person at a competition to let the volunteer team know that you have arrived and so that you can receive your *competitor card*. This second place is now normally called check-in to reduce confusion.

Runner

Someone helping at a cubing competition by taking a *cube* from the *scramble* table, finding the applicable competitor and taking them to a solving station where a *judge* will then supervise their solving. *Runners* also collect cubes after they have been solved and return them to the *scramble* table if there are more attempts to complete.

Scorecard

A sheet for recording times of official solves. Competitors submit their puzzles by placing their *cube* with the record sheet for that event.

Scramble

Mixing up the cube. In competitions there are "official" *scrambles* that must be used.

Single

For most events a competitor has five attempts to solve a cube. Of the five solves, the fastest time is the single result.

Time limit

The *time limit* is the maximum time you have to solve the cube. Beyond that time the time will be recorded as *DNF* (Did Not Finish). For the *3x3* this is often ten minutes. The *time limit* is different to the *cut-off* time.

Timer

The equipment used to time the solve. Starts and stops with both hands touching the timer pads.

TPS

Turns Per Second, i.e. how fast the competitor is turning the cube.

Turning Speed

The speed at which a competitor is turning the cube.

UKCA

UK Cube Association, the UK's recognised regional organisation for organising Speedcubing competitions to *WCA* standards.

WCA

World Cube Association, the governing body for Speedcubing.

Thanks for reading!