Assigning Competition Volunteer Roles

Having reliable, competent, and trustworthy volunteers is essential for your competition to run smoothly and with as few incidents as possible. Here are some thoughts to have when assigning volunteer roles:

Pre-assigning Volunteer Roles

There are two main ways to assign volunteer roles. You can either do it before the competition, or find volunteers on the competition day to work as judges, runners, or scramblers. Both have advantages and disadvantages, so you should be aware of them and pick the one that best fits your local community.

Pre-assigning volunteer roles is done in one of two ways. You can have dedicated volunteers, or you can assign volunteer roles to regular competitors in advance. For the latter, you might want to use Groupifier, as it will automatically generate assignments to the competitors for you. For more information on how Groupifier works, check this link. If you need to make changes to the assignment, consider using AGE. Here is the documentation for AGE.

One of the many ways you can pre-assign volunteer roles is to assign competitors to volunteer in the group right after they compete, and when it gets to the last group, you can assign them to volunteer in the first group of the round. The advantage of this method is that you avoid losing time looking for where people are. Most people should be finishing their solves at about the same time, so many of them will already be near the solving area). Since competitors are volunteering right after they finish their solves, you avoid running into the issue of calling people that did not show up at the competition. It also makes it easier for competitors to keep track of when they are supposed to be judging, scrambling, or running.

It is important to know that having a dedicated team of volunteers is not the same thing as pre-assigning volunteer roles to competitors. With dedicated volunteers, you will have a hand-picked group of individuals who will be working as volunteers throughout the entire competition, often getting some perks in exchange for their work (e.g. waiving their registration fee). The advantage is not only that you can choose people more carefully, but you also have the time to ask questions and train them to ensure they are as qualified as you need. This process helps avoid losing time looking for volunteers at the competition. On the other hand, this selection process is going to cost you additional time and resources since people often will want something in exchange for volunteering throughout the whole competition (e.g. waiving their registration fee). For more information on waiving registration fees for volunteers, see section 1.3 of the Code of Ethics.

You also need to be careful with dedicated volunteers to avoid picking more people than necessary (e.g. you should not have 40 dedicated volunteers for a competition with 60 competitors). You could try to get employees who are from the venue to work as volunteer for the competition, but since they are unlikely to be familiar with cubing, there will be some additional work teaching them how competition processes work.

Pre-assigning volunteer roles to competitors is about having all duties distributed among competitors. Everyone will help volunteer at the competition at some point during the day, so nothing is given in exchange, and each person will have a lower workload. There is no training or a fancy selection process. Although this might result in slightly less qualified volunteers, there is no work needed for a selection process or training before the competition day. A judge tutorial or another means of training judges should still be in place at the competition). You also reduce the competition costs while still getting the advantage of not spending time at the competition looking for volunteers.

The pre-assigned system is a better fit when the local community is relatively new and does not have experience as a volunteer or is not familiar with the Regulations. By training specific individuals beforehand, you can achieve a higher quality of volunteers than by teaching them on the day of the competition. If done correctly, pre-assigning will also result in higher quality competition than assigning volunteer roles on the spot.

Assigning Volunteer Roles on the Spot

If you assign volunteer roles while you are at the competition, you will save time during the pre-comp work. However, you might have trouble finding people willing to help, and even if it only takes a couple of minutes to get enough volunteers, that can add up to a significant amount of time throughout the day. You need to take this into account when scheduling your competition. Remember that some events will take longer to find volunteers than others (e.g. it is harder to find scramblers for 7x7x7 Cube than for 2x2x2 Cube). This approach is useful when your local community is familiar with the Regulations and when there are many people willing to help without getting anything in exchange.

At the Competition

Regardless of the approach you end up taking, it is good to do a quick recap on the competition day covering the competing procedure, the most common mistakes (e.g. judges lifting the cover before the competitor is ready), and an overview of the most important Regulations, such as common penalties or what to be on the lookout for (e.g. competitors wearing headphones while solving). **Always** make it clear that when the volunteer is uncertain about any decision or action, they should call the Delegate to help resolve the issue.

If you are using dedicated volunteers, you can consider using **volunteers groups** for the main event or if you have many people registered in a round (e.g. 3x3x3 Cube First Round). A volunteer group involves all volunteers competing at the same time just before the round is about to start. This allows all volunteers to be available to work during the remaining groups of that round. However, you should avoid doing this for too many rounds in a single competition, as that will most likely cost you more time than splitting the volunteers across all the groups. Also, if volunteer groups are held at any time other than the regular groups for logistic purposes (e.g. during lunchtime), please make this clear on the competition schedule.

Combining Systems

Every approach to assigning volunteer roles has its own advantages and disadvantages. However, there is nothing preventing you from combining volunteer methods at a competition. Be careful not to make a mess with the combinations. In some scenarios, such as having a dedicated volunteers for the main event and having some competitors fulfill volunteer duties too during other events, it might work well. By doing this, you will not fill your competition with too many volunteer groups. Another option is to assign more important roles (i.e. scramblers) to trusted individuals and let other people fill in the remaining roles. Remember that these are not the only combinations possible.

Most of the time, there will not be any significant issue assigning volunteer roles for the first rounds. It might be difficult to know who will proceed to subsequent rounds, so it is important that you do not take chances on specific competitors not advancing to subsequent rounds.

General Considerations When Assigning Volunteer Roles

1. **Judges** should know at least the basic Regulations (e.g. how to distinguish between common +2 penalties and DNFs). They should be focused on the competitor they are judging (e.g. they should not use their phone or solve cubes while judging).

2. **Scramblers** should be trustworthy people to avoid incorrect scrambles. If possible, get help from the faster people at the event, as they can scramble the puzzle quicker and often with greater accuracy. Faster competitors are also helpful when there is an incorrect scramble because they can also solve the puzzle faster. You should let your Delegate review the list of scramblers before the competition.

3. **Runners** should be people who are not too shy, as they might need to call the names a bit loud in noisier venues so that the competitors can hear them. Runners should also be attentive to competitors finishing their solves and puzzles being scrambled to efficiently transfer the puzzles between solving stations and the scrambling table. If possible, runners should also take multiple puzzles at the same time for efficiency. Being familiar with the community can help, but it is in no way mandatory.

4. **Score takers** should have good typing skills, be detail-oriented, and be familiar with entering results into [WCA Live](). They should be able to catch missing signatures and keep up with all incoming score sheets to prevent holding up subsequent rounds.

Translations

You can find translations of this document below. Contact quality@worldcubeassociation.org for instructions on how to add your own translation.

- [Português Europeu (European Portuguese)]() - translated by António Gomes