

Play! Pokémon Pokémon GO Tournament Handbook

ENGLISH VERSION

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1 Eligibility Requirements

1.1 Age of Eligibility

The eligibility requirements detailed in the Play! Pokémon Tournament Handbook apply to Pokémon GO tournaments. However, competitors must also satisfy the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) age of digital consent in their home region to participate in Pokémon GO Championship Series events (any Pokémon GO events that award Championship Points).

The GDPR age of digital consent may vary by region but is never below the age of 13.

A competitor's home region is defined as the region or country in which they live, and their Pokémon Trainer Club account must accurately reflect this information.

1.2 Pokémon GO Minimum Account Requirements

Competitors must ensure their account meets the below requirements to participate in Pokémon GO tournaments:

- Trainers must be at least Level 10 to unlock the Friend List and Battle Request features.
- Where an account is associated with a parent or guardian's Niantic Kids account, the Friend List and Battle Request features must be enabled via the Niantic Kids Parent Portal.

2 Team Construction

2.1 Battle Team Setup

A competitor's team must consist of up to 6 Pokémon, with a minimum of 3 Pokémon. This team, including move sets and Combat Power (CP), must remain unchanged for the duration of the tournament. A move set is defined as the specific Fast Attack and one or two Charge Attacks that a single Pokémon has learned for battle. It is a subset of the Pokémon's move pool, which is all the possible Fast Attack and Charge Attack combinations a Pokémon may learn in Pokémon GO. Competitors then choose any 3 of their total Pokémon to bring to each battle. The competitor may change this chosen combination of 3 Pokémon at the beginning of each new game.

Competitors must indicate which Pokémon are in their team by assigning each one a unique in-game label called a Tag or a unique nickname shared across each Pokémon in the Battle Team. None of the competitor's other Pokémon may have the same Tag or nickname.

Pokémon GO tournaments use Great League format battles. Pokémon must therefore meet the CP requirements for the Great League (1,500 CP or less) to be legal for play.

2.1.1 Allowable Pokémon

Most Pokémon available in-game are legal for play with a few exceptions.

The following Pokémon cannot be included on a competitor's team:

- Ditto
- Shedinja
- Xerneas

The following Pokémon are not permitted for play in Pokémon GO Championship Series events:

- Muk with the Fast Attack *Acid*
- Koffing with the Fast Attack *Acid*
- Weezing with the Fast Attack *Acid*
- Chansey with the Charged Attack *Psybeam*
- Staryu with the Fast Attack *Quick Attack*
- Starmie with the Fast Attack *Quick Attack*
- Porygon with the Fast Attack *Quick Attack*
- Pichu with the Fast Attack *Quick Attack*
- Skiddo
- Gogoat
- Mudbray
- Mudsdaile

Changes to the legality of any Pokémon will be communicated through official channels in advance of any tournament. It is a competitor's responsibility to confirm the legality of their chosen Pokémon ahead of each tournament. The most up-to-date place to find legality updates and changes is the [Banned Pokémon List](#). Pokémon that are removed from the Banned Pokémon List are immediately eligible for use in tournament play.

2.1.1.1 New Releases

From time to time, new Pokémon and/or attacks are added to the game. These additions follow specific eligibility guidelines. The following list of Pokémon and attacks become eligible for use in tournament play at 00:00 UTC on the Tuesday two weeks following their release:

- Pokémon that are brand new to Pokémon GO
 - This includes Pokémon forms that meet one or more of the following compared to existing forms:

- different typing
 - different base stats
 - different move pool
- Pokémon that are newly eligible for the Great League (were not previously available at or below 1,500 CP)
- Pokémon that are newly made available in Shadow or Purified form
- attacks added to a Pokémon’s move pool

A competitor may only include newly released Pokémon or attacks on their team if team registration closes after the newly released Pokémon or attacks become eligible.

In some cases, an existing attack may be updated or modified in the game before or during a tournament. In instances where an attack is updated and is already known by a Pokémon, that attack in its new state is available immediately for Pokémon that already had that attack in their move pool.

There will be one exception to the above rules—the quarterly Seasonal attack updates that Niantic releases in March, June, September, and December will be immediately eligible for tournaments upon release. Any other exceptions to the above policy will be communicated through official channels in advance of any tournament.

2.1.2 Restrictions

The following additional restrictions apply to a competitor’s team:

- A competitor’s team cannot contain two Pokémon with the same National Pokédex number.
- A competitor may not use a Pokémon that is currently Mega Evolved or has Primal Reversion activated.
- A competitor’s team may contain no more than one Pokémon benefitting from a Best Buddy CP boost.
 - Which Pokémon on the team benefits from the Best Buddy CP boost must remain unchanged throughout the tournament.
 - There is no limit to the number of Best Buddy ribbons that may appear in a competitor’s team.

2.1.2.1 Nicknames & Customization

When customizing any aspect of their game, competitors must follow the [Trainer Username and Team Name Policy](#). In addition, the nicknames of Pokémon in a competitor’s team cannot contain a Pokémon nicknamed with the name of another Pokémon—for example, a Raichu cannot be named “Pikachu”.

Any competitor found to be in breach of the above policy during an event will be asked to modify the problematic aspect of their game and may be subject to Unsporting Conduct penalties.

2.1.2.2 Battle Team Authenticity

Taking any action that violates the Play! Pokémon or Niantic Terms of Service or using external devices, services, or programs to modify or create Pokémon in a competitor’s Battle Team is expressly forbidden. Competitors found to have Pokémon that have been obtained by unscrupulous means may receive a

Disqualification, regardless of whether the Pokémon originally belonged to that competitor or was traded to them from any source.

Any Play! Pokémon member who believes they have discovered a new method of illegal team manipulation via any means should report this to the Play! Pokémon team through the Customer Support Portal.

2.2 Team Registration

All Play! Pokémon events require that participants register the exact contents of the team they wish to use during the tournament. Competitors are required to provide a legible and accurate team list and team preview list of the Pokémon that comprise their team. The team list will serve as the source of truth when Organizers and judges are reviewing the legality of a team, so competitors should take care to ensure the clarity and accuracy of their team lists. Competitors are required to register their team for a given tournament by the advertised deadline.

Team lists should be completed in the language to which the competitor's Pokémon GO application is set unless otherwise specified.

Some team registration platforms may provide translation services, especially for events such as Regional and International Championships. However, this should not be assumed, and competitors are otherwise responsible for ensuring that they submit a team list in the correct language.

2.2.1 Late List Submission

It is at the Organizer's discretion whether to allow a competitor who registers late to play in the tournament. If a competitor fails to register a team by the announced deadline and the Organizer allows the competitor to play in the tournament, the Head Judge will review and accept the team list if it is a valid team. That competitor will receive losses for the first round of play.

Late list submissions should only be accepted if team list details have not been publicly published. Once an Organizer has published the team list contents publicly, no further submissions may be accepted in order to protect tournament integrity.

2.2.2 Team List Contents

A full team list should include competitor's name, birth year, and Player ID, alongside the following information for each Pokémon:

1. Pokémon species, including whether that Pokémon is:
 - a. A regional variant (e.g., Galarian Rapidash)
 - b. A specific, named form (e.g., Wash Rotom)
 - c. A Shadow, Purified, or currently boosted Best Buddy Pokémon
2. CP (for Best Buddy Pokémon, list the CP it will be used at)
3. All known attacks

4. HP
5. Nickname for each Pokémon

Many large events will require team list submission through RK9 Labs' Team List Creator. In these cases, the competitor may fill out their team list in any language they wish, as translations are made automatically available to the staff team, though it is recommended they use the language to which the competitor's Pokémon GO application is set to minimize the risk of error. If team lists are submitted through a platform that does not provide automatic translation, they should be completed using the language to which the competitor's Pokémon GO application is set to allow for easy comparison to their in-game team by staff performing team checks.

Competitors may not deliberately obfuscate the contents of this list, such as by refusing to provide clarification when requested by an opponent or staff member.

2.2.2.1 Team Preview List Contents

A competitor's Team Preview list is a truncated version of the full team list. It should include this information:

1. Pokémon species, including whether that Pokémon is:
 - a. A regional variant (e.g., Galarian Rapidash)
 - b. A specific, named form (e.g., Wash Rotom)
 - c. A Shadow, Purified, or currently boosted Best Buddy Pokémon
2. CP (for Best Buddy Pokémon, list the CP it will be used at)
3. All known moves

The Team Preview list is considered an essential piece of equipment for tournament play. Failure to present this list to the opponent at the beginning of each round may result in Procedural Error penalties.

It is the responsibility of the Tournament Organizer to make it clear to competitors how Team Preview lists will be shared with their opponents. If the organizer is providing the Team Preview lists to be shared—for example, by printing the lists submitted through a digital platform such as RK9 Labs—they must provide the lists in at least the local language in the location where the event is held. At International Championships, the lists must also be provided to competitors in English.

Some tournaments (particularly local events) may require competitors to bring their own paper copies of their team list; such must be clearly communicated to competitors within a reasonable time frame before the event. In these cases, two copies of the list will be required: one team list and one Team Preview list. The version of the list provided to the opponent should be in the local language in the location where the event is held.

2.2.3 Team Checks

Team checks are required to be performed at all events that award Championship Points. Play! Pokémon expects that team checks will be performed on at least 10% of teams, but recommends that tournament staff strive to complete as many as is reasonable. The teams of all competitors advancing to the Top Cut phase of a tournament should be checked before those rounds begin.

Team checks may happen at any time during a tournament, from registration through the final round.

During a team check, tournament staff will check the following:

- Lists are complete and legible;
- Teams described are legal for tournament play;
- Battle Team matches the team list submitted;
- If available, the contents of team lists accurately reflect what has been used for game play according to screen recordings from the previous match(es).

3 Equipment Rules

3.1 Devices

Pokémon GO tournaments are played using mobile devices.

At a judge's discretion, a match may be moved to a new station. Competitors must not move their match without receiving permission from a judge. A match may only be moved between games and never while a game is in progress.

3.1.1 Where Devices Are Provided

Some tournaments require competitors to use devices provided onsite. This includes most Championship events, such as Regional and International Championships.

Competitors are not permitted to use their own personal device at such tournaments for tournament play.

The following guidelines apply at events where devices are provided:

- Provided devices are to be used for tournament play only. Personal use of provided devices is not permitted.
- Competitors should be prepared to log in to the provided device with their personal account. Competitors may refer to their personal device for authentication or security reasons while logging in. The personal device must be removed from the play area when this is complete.
- Competitors should log out from the provided device once each match is complete, taking care to remove any saved account information at that time.
- Competitors may not attempt to disconnect or remove any security element from a provided device at any time.

3.1.2 Where Devices Are Not Provided

Some tournaments require competitors to provide their own devices. Where this occurs, it should be clearly communicated to all competitors in advance.

The following rules apply at events where devices are not provided:

- Competitors are responsible for ensuring their device is fully functional.
- Competitors are responsible for keeping their device charged for the duration of the tournament.
- Competitors should ensure that devices and application clients with which they enter Play! Pokémon tournaments are unmodified—that is, free from both custom software and firmware.
- Competitors should ensure they have the latest game update downloaded prior to the start of the tournament, and that the latest software update has been performed on their device.
- Airplane mode must be enabled while the device is connected to a tournament Wi-Fi network.

It is recommended that competitors bring a compatible power bank to tournaments where devices are not provided, as outlets may not be available onsite.

3.1.3 Screen Recording

Screen recording is defined as the process of capturing what appears on your device screen. This captured footage will be saved as a file on the device and can be reviewed in case a competitor has a technical malfunction or other concern during gameplay.

Where devices are provided, competitors are required to record each match using the device's screen record functionality. Competitors should not access, share, or modify recordings taken on a provided device. All screen recordings are retained until the end of the tournament. They are then erased from each provided device. Where devices are not provided, it is highly recommended that competitors have the ability to record the screen of their device. Without a screen recording, it is difficult for a competitor to provide evidence of a technical issue, which may lead to a judge review being denied. Screen recordings should be played back only in the presence of a staff member regardless of whether a device has been provided or not.

3.2 Objects in Play Area

Competitors are permitted to have good luck charms or objects in the play space but must keep the play space neat. There must be no food or drink on the table. Competitors may not bring informational aids, such as type charts, into matches.

At events where devices are provided, a competitor's personal mobile devices must be removed from the play area once that competitor has successfully logged in to the provided device.

3.3 Headphone Use

Headphones may be worn by competitors only if they are wired and plugged directly into the device. The headphone wire must be clearly visible. In the case where devices are provided, please contact a staff member to request the ability to use headphones with said device. A competitor should not unplug a provided device from the charging mechanism in order to connect headphones without express permission from judge staff. Headphones will not be provided.

3.4 Note Taking

Competitors may take written notes during a match and may refer to those notes at any time during that match, including Team Preview. A competitor's note sheet must be completely free of text, handwritten or otherwise, at the start of each match.

Competitors must be timely with their note taking and may not use a device that can send or receive messages as a note-taking device. A competitor may not refer to notes taken during previous rounds while the tournament is still in progress. Written notes taken during a match may not be given to other competitors during the tournament.

A judge may ask to see a competitor's notes and request an explanation if needed. Because a judge may ask to see a competitor's notes while a match is in progress, the use of codes, ciphers, abbreviations, or any other method of obscuring the meaning of the information is not permitted. Additionally, notes taken by a competitor may not contain misinformation intended to deceive tournament staff. Should a judge request clarification or a translation for notes written in a language not spoken by tournament staff, the competitor must oblige.

4 Pokémon GO Tournament Styles

4.1 Double Elimination

Pokémon GO events, such as Regional and International Championships, use the Double Elimination format.

This format features two brackets, one each for undefeated competitors (Winners Bracket) and competitors who have lost one match (Losers Bracket). Competitors are eliminated from the tournament once they have lost two matches. Both brackets are played to completion. The champion of each bracket is then paired together in a Grand Final.

A competitor must receive their second loss of the tournament in the Grand Final in order to be eliminated from the tournament. Should the Winners Bracket champion defeat the Losers Bracket champion in the Grand Final, the Winners Bracket champion wins the tournament immediately.

However, should the Losers Bracket champion defeat the Winners Bracket champion, a “bracket reset” occurs, and play must continue until either competitor receives their second loss of the tournament. In this case, the competitor with a single loss wins the tournament.

4.1.1 Tournament Phases

Pokémon GO events with a large number of competitors may begin with a Pools Phase. In this case, the total number of participants are separated into “pools,” and competitors compete against each other within their pool. The top two competitors from each pool then progress to a Final Phase, where the winner of the tournament is determined.

The number of pools is determined as follows:

Number of Competitors	Number of Pools	Resulting Number of Final Phase Competitors
1–32	1	<i>No Final Phase</i>
33–64	2	4
65–128	4	8
129–256	8	16
257–512	16	32

4.1.2 Bracket Seeding

Brackets may be seeded at the Organizer’s discretion with explicit approval from TPCi before it may be used in a tournament.

When applied, seeding is always determined according to quantitative performance data rather than any subjective criteria. The current methodology for seeding utilizes competitor performance data from the 2024 and 2025 Pokémon GO Championship Series seasons.

4.2 Swiss + Single Elimination (Pokémon GO Challenges and Cups)

Pokémon GO League Challenges and Cups use the Swiss + Single Elimination format.

This format is not unique to Pokémon GO and is described in detail in the Play! Pokémon Tournament Rules Handbook.

4.3 Round Robin

Round Robin may be used at the discretion of the Organizer only when there are 6 or fewer competitors in the tournament for Regional Championships and above.

During a Round Robin tournament, every competitor is paired against every other competitor until no pairings remain still to play.

5 Game Play

5.1 Match Structure

Once a competitor arrives at their assigned station, appropriate preparations should be made to begin play, such as logging in to the device, opening the Pokémon GO application, and determining which method will be used to initiate game play.

Before exchanging Team Preview lists, competitors should carefully review their list for accuracy. If they find any issues with their Team Preview list, a competitor should contact a judge immediately.

When both competitors have arrived at their assigned stations, their preparations have been completed, and both competitors have received the battle request, competitors should exchange team preview lists. This begins the Team Preview phase. While competitors are permitted to view their opponent's team list at any point during battles, at the start of the match, and in between each battle, the maximum time permitted for Team Preview is 2 minutes. If either competitor does not understand their opponent's team list, they should call a judge immediately.

Pokémon GO has a maximum battle length of 270 seconds (4 minutes and 30 seconds).

In between each game in a match, competitors will have the opportunity to select a set of 3 new Pokémon for battle if they so choose. The time in between each battle should not exceed 2 minutes. If there are technical difficulties that occur between games, competitors should call a judge.

Once the match is over, competitors should immediately report the score. For events using Challenge, competitors should call for a judge to report the score. For events using TOM, competitors should accurately complete the match slip and turn it in to the scorekeeper.

5.2 Beginning the Game

Once they are ready to begin, competitors must use one of the following methods to initiate play:

- One competitor may scan the QR Battle Code of their opponent. This feature is accessible from the Nearby Battle section of the Battle menu.

- Competitors may add one another to their Friends List so one competitor may issue a Battle Request to their opponent from their Friends List profile.

Competitors are permitted to use either method, and they may vary the method used to connect for each new game.

5.3 Game Resolution

Generally, a game concludes when a competitor knocks out their opponent's final Pokémon. On occasion, a game will conclude because the battle has reached the maximum time allowed by Pokémon GO (4 minutes). An in-game graphic will inform competitors that time has expired.

A game may also end if one competitor chooses to exit the battle. In this case, the procedures in 5.3.1 regarding concessions should be followed.

The winner should be clearly indicated by an in-game graphic at the end of each game. However, if this graphic is not viewable for any reason, the winner may be confirmed by viewing either competitor's in-game Journal. If neither competitor can agree on the result of a game and the result cannot be verified by viewing a competitor's Journal, this game will be considered void by a judge, and a new game must be played.

If the Journal entry indicates a tie, the game will be considered void and a new game must be played.

5.3.1 Concessions

A competitor may decide to concede for any reason. A competitor who quits a battle before a winner is determined is electing to concede that game.

Competitors may not:

- Resolve a game or match with an intentional draw.
- Ask their opponent to concede.
- Bribe, coerce, or otherwise pressure their opponent into any match result.
- Refer to tournament standings or wait for other matches in progress to resolve before deciding to concede.
- Decide the result of a match through random means (e.g., by coin flip), or through any other choosing method.

5.4 Match Resolution

Most matches at Pokémon GO events are best-of-three. The Winners Final, Losers Final, and Grand Final in double elimination tournaments are best-of-five.

Best-of-three matches conclude when one competitor wins or loses two games. Best-of-five matches conclude when one competitor wins or loses three games.

At events using the Double Elimination tournament style, competitors should call over a judge to report the final match results. Events using Swiss + Single Elimination tournament style should use match slips to report final match results. Once a match result has been recorded on a signed match slip or by reporting the results to a judge, that result is considered final and cannot be changed.

5.5 Reviews Due to Technical Issues

In some circumstances, a technical issue may occur during game play that disadvantages one competitor through no fault of their own. Competitors encountering such issues must initiate a review by a judge in order for a rematch to be considered. Competitors may not determine the results of a review between themselves; a judge must preside over all review rulings.

When a review is initiated, gameplay footage is examined by a judge. The judge will then identify the issue and determine any potential impact the issue had on the outcome of the game. Without a full-screen recording of the entire battle, judges may not be able to make a reasonable determination regarding the impact of the technical issue on the outcome of the game. In this case, the results of the game will stand.

5.5.1 Review Resolution

Judges must use the knowledge and resources available to them to determine whether one competitor received an advantage or disadvantage as a result of the technical issue(s). Should there be a significant impact on the outcome of the game, the game will be considered void, and a new game must be played.

Judges must clearly communicate the issue(s) identified, and the advantage or disadvantage that resulted, to both competitors. Competitors may not refuse to abide by the ruling on a review. A review may be appealed to the Head Judge; however, their ruling on the review is final.

5.5.2 Reporting Reviews

Play! Pokémon tracks review history to monitor the state of the game and to determine if long-term action is necessary. It is therefore important that judge reviews are reported whenever they occur.

A Tournament Review Summary Report should contain the following information:

- Tournament sanctioning ID (if applicable)
- Challenge link (if applicable)
- Player IDs and names of the relevant competitors
- Player IDs and names of any judges who viewed the review
- A detailed account of the relevant proceedings of the event, the response from the judges and organizer, and the reaction, if any, of the involved competitors
- Recording of match in question (as file or link if available)
- Outcome of the review

The Tournament Review Summary Report fully details all reviews requested during any one tournament.

To create a Tournament Review Summary Report, a .csv format spreadsheet file with the headers below should be created:

Tournament ID	Round of Issue	Judge Player ID	Requestor Player ID	Requestor Trainer Name	Opponent Player ID	Opponent Trainer Name	Issue Description	Result of Review	Appeal Judge (if any)	Appeal Result (if any)
XX-XX-XXXXXX	1	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX

A new row should then be completed for each review requested.

Review Reports must be submitted to playercoordinator@pokemon.com within seven days following the tournament's conclusion.

5.5.3 Known Technical Issues

Provided below is a list of known technical issues that have been observed to occur during gameplay.

5.5.3.1 Minor Issues

Minor issues that generally do not impact the outcome of a game:

Final Battle Action Delay	The animations associated with the last action to be performed in battle are delayed, but the action occurs as normal.
Matchmaking Error But Game Starts	Competitors receive an error message while connecting, but the battle begins as normal.
Incorrect Visuals (Minor)	Some graphics are displayed incorrectly during battle. Downloading assets to the device may prevent this in future.
Protect Shield Issue	The Protect Shield animation displays incorrectly though no Protect Shield is used.
Game Synchronization Issues	One competitor appears to begin their turn later than the opponent despite inputs occurring at the same time.
Visual Lag	Some graphics are delayed during battle, though their associated actions occur as normal.

5.5.3.2 Major Issues

Major issues provide one competitor with an unfair advantage or disadvantage, and they usually impact the outcome of a game. Affected games are usually considered void.

Fast Attack Prevents Charged Attack	One competitor using a Charged Attack while their opponent uses a Fast Attack knocks out the competitor's Pokémon incorrectly.
Forced Swap Missed Turn	A competitor's only remaining Pokémon experiences a delay when it is switched into battle. This issue presents in a number of ways, including damage delays, animation delays, or a temporary inability to select a Charged Attack.
Competitor Sees Battle Screen During Cancelled Game	A competitor who cancels a Battle Request by leaving the matchmaking screen may experience an incorrect visual of the battle arena, including the first of their opponent's chosen Pokémon. Potential for abuse exists due to the private information revealed. Judges should take extra care to determine that this particular issue is not intentionally induced by a competitor.
Incorrect Visuals (Major)	Some graphics are displayed incorrectly during battle. As a result, critical information is not available to one competitor. Downloading assets to the device may prevent this in future.
General Lag	A competitor experiences a delay between their input and the associated game action occurring. A "weak connection" notification may accompany this issue.
Application Failures & Freezes	On rare occasions, the application may fail, freeze, or quit unexpectedly.

Others issues outside of those described above may occur, and it is up to the discretion of the judges to determine during a review if those issues impacted the outcome of a game.

6 Rules Violations & Penalties

6.1 Introduction

Play! Pokémon protocols and procedures are intended to foster a spirit of friendly competition at all Play! Pokémon tournaments. However, occasional situations arise, whether unintentionally or otherwise, in which attendees fail to abide by tournament rules or standards of conduct. Failure to adhere to these rules may result in a competitor earning penalties.

Penalties often constitute adjustments made to the circumstances of a competitor's game in progress or next upcoming game to offset potential advantage gained or disruption caused through rules violations.

Competitors may not refuse to abide by the conditions of a penalty that their opponent has earned. For example, a competitor may not choose to concede a game to an opponent who has received a Game Loss penalty for that game.

6.2 Types of Penalties

Though the ways in which penalties may be earned differ depending on the type of event that is being played, the definitions and applications of these penalties remain the same regardless.

The penalties below are presented in order of increasing severity, from a verbal warning (Caution) through to removal from the tournament (Disqualification).

These are the only penalties that should be applied at Play! Pokémon tournaments—judges may not apply any penalty that is not listed below, nor can they modify those that are in any way.

6.2.1 Caution (C)

A Caution is a verbal note to the competitor that a rules violation has occurred.

6.2.2 Warning (W)

A Warning comprises both a verbal note to the competitor that a rule violation has occurred and a written record of that note.

Please note: The final word on what penalties should be applied to which competitors and at what time is up to the Head Judge of the event. While the Organizer and other judges may assign penalties, they should always check with the Head Judge before assigning a penalty more severe than a **Warning**. Additionally, all **Cautions** and **Warnings** assigned by any judge or the Organizer should be reported to the Head Judge of the event.

6.2.3 Game Loss (GL)

6.2.3.1 Definition

The Game Loss penalty is generally used when a mistake has been made that has a severe impact on the game state, to the point where the game is irreparably broken and unable to continue. This penalty is also used for other major procedural errors or problems.

6.2.3.2 Application (Double and Single Elimination)

When issuing a Game Loss penalty during an active game, the game is recorded as a loss for the competitor receiving the penalty. If a penalty is issued immediately after a game concludes, but before the next game proceeds or match results are finalized, the penalty should be applied to the most recent active game.

In extreme cases where significant errors have been made by both competitors in a game, a Game Loss penalty may be issued to both competitors simultaneously. In a double or single elimination bracket, a match winner must be declared. If a match is terminated with no winner, an additional game must be played in order to determine the winner, but the penalty should still be recorded.

If this penalty is issued between rounds, the penalty is applied to the competitor's next game.

6.2.3.3 Application (Swiss)

When issuing a Game Loss penalty during an active game, the game is recorded as a loss for the competitor receiving the penalty.

In extreme cases where significant errors have been made by both competitors in a game, a Game Loss penalty may be issued to both competitors simultaneously. A single-game match terminated in this manner is not a tie; it is recorded as having no winner.

If this penalty is issued between rounds, the penalty is applied to the competitor's next game.

6.2.4 **Match Loss (ML)**

6.2.4.1 Definition

The Match Loss penalty may be used when one competitor's Player Conduct infraction irreparably compromises the integrity of a match, rather than that of a single game.

Such circumstances usually result in one competitor being unable to participate in the match any longer due to extreme discomfort as a result of their opponent's behavior.

6.2.4.2 Application

When issuing a Match Loss penalty during an active game, the match is recorded as a loss for the competitor receiving the penalty. If a penalty is issued immediately after a match concludes and before the match results are finalized, the penalty should be applied to the most recent active match.

If this penalty is issued between rounds, the penalty is applied to the competitor's next match.

6.2.5 **Disqualification (DQ)**

6.2.5.1 Definition

Disqualification is the most serious penalty that can be issued at a tournament. Its use should be strictly reserved for the most extreme cases, where a competitor's actions (whether intentional or unintentional) have significantly and negatively impacted the integrity or operation of the entire event.

Competitors who receive this penalty are removed from the tournament and become ineligible to receive any prizes.

6.2.5.2 Application (Double Elimination)

During Double Elimination rounds, competitors receiving a Disqualification will also receive a Game Loss for all games in their most recent Double Elimination match. Should this result in their first loss for the tournament, they also receive a Game Loss for all games in their next upcoming match.

If a competitor is disqualified while their Double Elimination match is still ongoing, the losses are applied to the current round and, where applicable, to the following round.

If a competitor is disqualified during Double Elimination rounds while they are not participating in an ongoing match, the losses are applied to the most recently completed round and, where applicable, to the following round.

6.2.5.3 Application (Single Elimination)

During Single Elimination rounds, competitors receiving a Disqualification will also receive a Game Loss for all games in their most recent Single Elimination match.

If a competitor is disqualified while their Single Elimination match is still ongoing, the losses are applied to the current round.

If a competitor is disqualified during Single Elimination rounds while they are not participating in an ongoing match, the losses are applied to the most recently completed round and the opponent from that match will advance, if eligible.

6.2.5.4 Application (Swiss)

If a competitor is disqualified during Swiss rounds while their match is still ongoing, that competitor should also receive a Game Loss for all games within that match that have yet to complete. The disqualification is then applied.

If a competitor is disqualified during Swiss rounds while they are *not* participating in an ongoing match, the disqualification is applied immediately.

6.2.6 **Coincidental Penalties**

In cases where both competitors have penalties that result in having no winner when a game requires one, the following procedure should occur:

- 1) To determine a winner, competitors should complete a best-of-one tiebreaker game at the Head Judge's discretion so long as there are at least 10 minutes before the start of the next round.
- 2) If a tiebreaker game cannot be played, the top-seeded competitor will advance as the winner of the current match.

In both circumstances, a match loss will be applied to the next match for the player that advanced as the winner.

6.3 **Penalty Categories**

6.3.1 **Player Conduct (Category A)**

Infractions that fall under the category of Player Conduct include those that contradict the rules of tournament participation at the most fundamental level.

6.3.1.1 A.1. Procedural Error

Minor: Caution	Major: Warning	Severe: Game Loss
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Procedural errors have an impact on the smooth and uninterrupted progression of the tournament, not just for the competitor or competitors involved, but potentially for the staff and for the wider participation group.

a. Minor procedural errors do not cause any substantial delay or inconvenience to tournament proceedings and can be rectified almost immediately.

Examples may include:

- A competitor accidentally enters a designated “staff only” area.
 - A competitor forgets to sign a match slip or fails to report their match results upon leaving the play area but is called back immediately by a member of staff.
-

b. Major procedural errors have the potential to cause a delay to the tournament or to cause an inconvenience to surrounding competitors while they are rectified.

Examples may include:

- A competitor arrives late to their match (by less than 5 minutes).
 - A competitor forgets to sign a match slip or fails to report their match results upon leaving the play area, causing a delay to tournament proceedings while staff attempt to locate them.
 - Following Team Preview, competitor takes an unreasonable length of time to choose which 3 Pokémon to bring to battle.
-

c. Severe procedural errors not only cause disruption to the tournament, but also have the potential to negatively affect the experience of others.

Examples may include:

- A competitor arrives late to their match (by more than 5 minutes).
- A competitor sits at the wrong table and plays the incorrect opponent.
- A competitor forgets to sign a match slip or fails to report match results upon leaving the play area and cannot be located before the next round begins.

6.3.1.2 A.2. Unsporting Conduct

Minor: Warning	Major: Match Loss	Severe: Disqualification
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Unsporting conduct infractions are caused when poor personal conduct on behalf of a tournament attendee results in a detractor from the experience of others.

a. Minor Unsporting Conduct is characterized by mild lapses in judgement that result in a contained incident, or the annoyance of a small group of attendees.

Examples may include:

- A competitor swears mildly in annoyance or in conversation with a friend.
 - A competitor disturbs a match in progress.
 - A competitor leaves food wrappers or other detritus in the play area after their match is over.
-

b. Major Unsporting Conduct is characterized by behavior that displays a lack of respect or consideration for fair play, or for the enjoyment of others in attendance.

Examples may include:

- A competitor attempts to distract or intimidate their opponent into misplay.
 - Unintentional violations of the [Play! Pokémon Inclusion Policy](#) that nonetheless cause distress to others.
 - Refusal to cooperate with a tournament policy, such as signing a match slip.
-

c. Severe Unsporting Conduct demonstrates a blatant disregard for the Play! Pokémon Standards of Conduct, and actively contributes toward the disruption of a safe and family-friendly environment.

Examples may include:

- The use of profanity, slurs, physical threats, or insults toward any other attendee.
- Deliberate violations of the [Play! Pokémon Inclusion Policy](#), made with the intent to provoke or cause distress to others.
- Assault, theft, or other criminal activity.
- Willfully lying to tournament staff, such as during an investigation.
- Bribery or coercion of other competitors.
- Determining the outcome of a match by random means or via other disallowed methods.

6.3.1.3 A.3. Cheating

		Severe: Disqualification
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There is simply no place in Play! Pokémon for those who cheat to gain an advantage over their opponent. As such, all instances of cheating are regarded as severe and merit disqualification.

Examples may include:

- Intentionally committing an infraction with the intent to gain an unfair advantage over an opponent.
- Soliciting and acting upon private game information from an external source during a game in progress.

6.3.2 Pokémon GO Penalty Guidelines (Category D)

6.3.2.1 D.1. Gameplay Error

Minor: Warning		Severe: Game Loss
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Gameplay errors are infractions committed during a game in progress. These infractions are most often caused by a competitor improperly handling their device while playing a game.

- a. **Minor Gameplay Errors** have a brief, reversible effect on the proper progression of a game.

Examples include:

- Delaying the beginning of a match due to needing to source a charger.
-

- b. **Severe Gameplay Errors** usually lead to the irretrievable loss of a game in progress.

Examples include:

- Closing the Pokémon GO application during a game in progress.
- Behavior that directly induces a major technical issue.

6.3.2.2 D.2. Team Legality

Minor: Warning	Major: Game Loss	Severe: Disqualification
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Infractions that fall under the Team Legality category include all problems found with a competitor's team. Such problems are usually caused due to a discrepancy between the Pokémon in the team and those detailed on team lists.

In all cases, the contents of team lists always take priority over the contents of the team. Any discrepancy between the two should therefore always be rectified by modifying the team to remove the offending Pokémon from play.

Afterward, if the Pokémon described on a team list is immediately available, the competitor should then be given the opportunity to add the correct Pokémon on their team. If the competitor is not able to comply, the offending Pokémon should remain on the team but be prohibited from play. The competitor

must inform each opponent that this Pokémon will not be used during Team Preview. If this results in a competitor having fewer than three usable Pokémon remaining in their team, the infraction should be escalated.

a. Minor Team Errors are discrepancies that are between the Pokémon in a competitor's Battle Team and those on a team list and that do *not* give the competitor a potential advantage.

Examples include:

- A Pokémon is listed without accurate form information, but other information on the team list makes it apparent which form is being used.
 - Example: The team contains Sunny Form Castform, but the team list lists simply "Castform." However, the intended form can be identified due to the form-exclusive move Ember recorded on the team list.
-

b. Major Team Errors are discrepancies that are between the Pokémon in a competitor's Battle Team and those on a team list and that *do* give the competitor a potential advantage.

If a competitor concedes the game after identifying a Major Team Error with their Pokémon, any Game Loss penalty earned as a result of the infraction should be recorded as usual but not applied to the match. However, competitors may not concede once a Game Loss penalty has been assessed.

Examples include:

- A Pokémon not included on the team list is incorrectly selected for battle.
 - A Pokémon in the team knows the move Thunder Punch, but that move is listed as "Thunder" on the team list.
 - A Pokémon's CP is not listed (or is listed incorrectly) on the team list.
 - A Pokémon is listed without accurate form information, and no other information on the team list makes it apparent which form is being used.
 - Example: The team contains Sunny Form Castform, but the team list lists simply "Castform." The intended form cannot be identified from information recorded on the team list.
-

c. Severe Team Errors occur when either official tools indicate that a Pokémon has been illegally manipulated, or a competitor's team contains too few Pokémon to continue in the tournament.

Examples include:

- A competitor has fewer than 3 usable Pokémon remaining after receiving earlier penalties.
- Use of a modified Pokémon GO client or any other third-party application that may affect the integrity of the tournament.

6.4 Deviation from Recommended Penalties

Play! Pokémon acknowledges the myriad of different factors at play within each individual ruling, and requests that Professors assess each situation based on its own potential to provide advantage or to confuse the game state. In support, the Play! Pokémon program adopts guidelines rather than rules when it comes to penalties.

The penalties for infractions are simply recommendations and may be increased or decreased in severity based on the individual circumstances of the situation. This may include the point at which the error was caught and the ease with which the corresponding action may be reversed.

6.4.1 Repeated Infractions

One of the purposes of penalties is to educate the competitor of their mistake and remind them to take extra care when completing game actions and interacting with others at tournaments. If, however, infractions are repeated, it may be appropriate to escalate the penalty for each subsequent infraction to further reinforce the necessity of adhering to Play! Pokémon tournament rules.

6.4.2 Age & Experience

Consider the age, experience, and current standing of the competitor. Although these are not always relevant factors, Professors should be aware that mistakes may be made due to lack of experience or the intimidation of playing in a competitive environment.

Competitors who commit more than one type of infraction during a tournament are often genuinely uninformed. Competitive tournaments can be daunting, and there is much to learn about procedure, etiquette, and fair play. It can also be nerve-wracking to compete for prizes at the age of many of our competitors, and they should be given every chance to learn about the game and the Play! Pokémon system.

6.5 Penalty Delivery

Play! Pokémon Professors seek to create fun, safe, and non-stressful play experiences for our competitors. For this reason, the application of penalties should be handled in the most polite and discreet manner possible.

Whenever a penalty is assessed and delivered, that delivery should include the following:

- An explanation of how the competitor's actions are not allowed;
- How the assessed penalty will impact the competitor's tournament;
- A reminder that the competitor may appeal this or any other penalty to the Head Judge.

6.5.1 Discussing Penalties

Due to the nature of some infractions, it is often inevitable that the wider competitor community will become aware of penalties assessed in some circumstances. It is important, however, that Pokémon Professors treat information pertaining to penalties with sensitivity to prevent any undue embarrassment to those involved.

Penalties discussed publicly for reasons of training should be sufficiently anonymized, and penalty history regarding specific competitors should be shared between Professors only when relevant.

Judges should also refrain from providing a public opinion on actual rulings and penalties for which they were not present. The many and varied factors a judge must consider when applying a penalty are easily overlooked or misrepresented in a social forum. To refrain from providing comment is to avoid sharing an underinformed viewpoint that may accidentally undermine a fellow judge.

6.6 Reporting Penalties

Play! Pokémon tracks each competitor's penalty history to differentiate intentional repetition of infractions from unintentional occurrences, and to determine if disciplinary action is necessary.

To aid in this effort, the following documentation must be submitted via the Play! Pokémon Customer Support service upon completion of a tournament.

6.6.1 Tournament Penalty Summaries

The Tournament Penalty Summary fully details all penalties assessed during any one tournament.

To create a Tournament Penalty Summary, a .csv format spreadsheet file with the below headers should be created:

Tournament ID	Round of Issue	Judge Player ID	Competitor Player ID	Category	Severity	Penalty	Notes
XX-XX-XXXXXX	1	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	A	Minor	Warning	

A new row should then be completed for each penalty issued.

Once the file is complete, the file should be attached and submitted via the Play! Pokémon Customer Support service's Tournament Report tool. Select "Penalty Summary" from the relevant drop-down menu. The subject of your submission should be "Penalty Report: XX-XX-XXXXXX", where XX-XX-XXXXXX is the tournament ID.

6.6.2 Disqualification Reports

In the event of a disqualification, it is the responsibility of the Head Judge to submit a full and thorough report of the incident to Play! Pokémon. This report should detail all factors that contributed to the

decision to issue this penalty, as well as the names and Player ID numbers of all Professors who were present at the time of the incident.

Once complete, the file should be attached and submitted via the Play! Pokémon Customer Support service's Tournament Report tool. Select "Disqualification Report" from the relevant drop-down menu.

A disqualification report is required to be submitted following any disqualification issued at a Championship Series event. Repeated failure to submit a thorough report may result in disciplinary action, including ineligibility to hold leadership roles at future events.

6.7 Disciplinary Action

Should a pattern of rules infractions be observed across multiple tournaments, Play! Pokémon may consider taking disciplinary action against the competitor responsible. Such action may include a suspension from the program. In these cases, the competitors will be notified, and their names and Player IDs will be made available to Organizers.

A suspended competitor should not be allowed to participate in or attend any Play! Pokémon events as a spectator, competitor, or judge, or in any other capacity. If a suspended competitor disrupts an event by trying to participate and refusing to leave, the incident should be reported to Play! Pokémon. An extension to the existing suspension may then be applied.

7 Summary of Changes

Date of previous issue: October 15, 2024

Date of current issue: March 31, 2025

1 Eligibility Requirements		
Section	Page #	Change
1.1	3	Age of Eligibility; update regarding competitors under the GDPR age of digital consent
1.2	3	Amendment to section name

2 Team Construction		
Section	Page #	Change
2.1	3	Added definitions for move set and move pool; added clarification regarding tags and nicknames
2.1.1	4	Added Mudbray and Mudsdale to list of prohibited Pokémon
2.1.1.1	4	Added new section on New Releases for clarity and updates on eligibility; also added exceptions to eligibility rules
2.1.2.2	6	Added new section on Battle Team Authenticity
2.2	6	Clarification for team list being the source of truth for discrepancies

3 Equipment Rules		
Section	Page #	Change
3.1.1	8	Change “major” to “Championship”
3.1.3	9	Clarification on reviewing screen recordings

4 Tournament Styles		
Section	Page #	Change

5 Game Play		
Section	Page #	Change
5.5	15	Clarification on reviews—must be initiated with a judge, competitors may not determine review rulings

5.5.1	15	Clarification on reviews—competitors may not refuse a ruling
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6 Rules Violations & Penalties		
Section	Page #	Change