Video Game Rules, Formats, & Penalty Guidelines

Date of last revision: April 30, 2024

Play! Pokémon VG Rules, Formats, & Penalty Guidelines Contents

1.   Team Construction

Competitors are responsible for ensuring that their team adheres to any restrictions set forth by the tournament format and this document. The rules and restrictions that follow are considered the Standard format.

1.1.   Battle Team Setup

A competitor must put the Pokémon to be used for a tournament in a Battle Team and keep the Battle Team unchanged from the beginning to the end of the event. All other unlocked Battle Teams must be empty. Note: Event staff may alter a Battle Team to apply a penalty earned by the competitor.

Teams must have between four and six Pokémon, depending on the event format.

1.2.   Regulation Changes

With each new set of Ranked Battle regulations in the Battle Stadium, adjustments may be made to the list of permitted Pokémon. See below for details.

⊙   Regulation Set G runs until August 31, 2024, at 23:59 UTC.

Sometimes, a new set of regulations may come into effect midway through a tournament that spans multiple days (for example, a Regional Championship). If this happens, the tournament will continue with the format it started with until the end of the event. Single-day Premier Events held as side events at such locations should use the format that is live on the day they occur.

1.2.1.   Regulation Set G

During this series of play, the following additional restrictions will be in place on the Pokémon used in battle.

- Paldea Pokédex No. 001–400, Kitakami Pokédex No. 001–200, and Blueberry Pokédex No. 001–242, as well as certain other Pokémon are eligible to participate. Certain Pokémon may not be used.

    o Only Pokémon obtained in the *Pokémon Scarlet* or *Pokémon Violet* games—including those found in *The Hidden Treasure of Area Zero* DLC—or those transferred from Pokémon HOME are eligible.

    o Competitors may register one special restricted Pokémon to their Battle Team.

    o See Pokémon HOME or the in-game Poké Portal for detailed lists of eligible and restricted Pokémon.

- Terastallizing is permitted.

1.3. Items

- Each Pokémon may hold an item, though no two Pokémon may hold the same item.

- Competitors may use any items that can be obtained through regular gameplay (including—but not limited to—rewards earned through participation in online battles and other functions of games released by The Pokémon Company and Nintendo) or items that have been awarded as part of a distribution or special event.

1.4. Pokémon

- Competitors may use the following Pokémon:

    o Pokémon obtained in the *Pokémon Scarlet* or *Pokémon Violet* games

    o Pokémon transferred from Pokémon HOME

    o Pokémon received at an official event or distribution

- A competitor's team cannot contain more than one Pokémon with the same National Pokédex number.

- Pokémon may make use of any move or Ability available to that Pokémon through normal gameplay. This includes but is not limited to:

    o Hidden Abilities, if available

    o Moves and Abilities made available through an official Pokémon event or promotion

    o Exception: Pokémon may not have the Battle Bond Ability

- Pokémon above and below Lv. 50 are permitted but will be auto-leveled to Lv. 50 during battle.

- Any regional Pokémon form that meets the above criteria and regulations may be used.

1.4.1. Nicknames and Customization

When customizing any aspect of their game, competitors must not use potentially inappropriate, obscene, or otherwise offensive terminology or deliberately make reference to matters that go against the Spirit of the Game.

The nicknames of Pokémon in a competitor's Battle Team may be visible to the opponent. In such cases, the following rules will apply.

- A competitor's team cannot contain two Pokémon with the same nickname.

- A competitor's team cannot contain a Pokémon nicknamed with the name of another Pokémon (for example, a Raichu named "Pikachu").

Any competitor found to be in breach of the above rules during an event may be asked to modify the problematic aspect of their game and/or be subject to penalties up to and including Disqualification.

1.5. Team Lists

The 2024 Video Game Championship Season will utilize an **open team list** format. Competitors are required to provide a legible and accurate list of the Pokémon that comprise their team. All Pokémon information provided on the team list (see below) will be made available to the opponent *except* for the Pokémon's stats (Speed, etc.).

1.5.1. Contents of the Team List

As long as the team list records the competitor's name, in-game Trainer name of the profile they will be participating under, Player ID, and date of birth, alongside the following information for each Pokémon, it will be accepted:

- Pokémon species, including whether that Pokémon is a regional variant (such as Paldean) or a specific named form (such as Wash Rotom instead of Rotom)

  - Form name is required in the case of a form with any changes to stats, types, Ability, move pool, weight, or any other battle statistic. Examples include Dudunsparce, Oricorio, and Toxtricity.

- If the gender of the Pokémon affects any battle statistics, the gender should be listed as a form. Examples include Meowstic and Indeedee.

- Form name is *not* required in the case of forms that are purely aesthetic in nature or entirely dictated by other criteria listed on the team list. Examples include Gastrodon, Sawsbuck, and Alcremie.

- It is strongly recommended that the competitor list the form name regardless of whether the above criteria applies, as failing to list the form name in a case for which it is required could result in penalties.

- Ability

- Held item

- All known moves

- Tera Type

- Level (this should be the actual level the Pokémon is seen to be when viewed in the competitor's in-game Party or Box)

- All stats (HP / Attack / Defense / Sp. Atk / Sp. Def / Speed), recorded at the Pokémon's actual level

1.5.2. Language of the Team List

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 same language as their game 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 game is set to allow for easy comparison to their in-game team by staff performing team checks.

It is the responsibility of the Tournament Organizer to make it clear to competitors how team lists will be shared with their opponents. If the organizer is providing the team lists to be shared—for example, by printing off a competitor view of 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 for event staff and one for opponents. The version of the list provided to the opponent should be in the local language in the location where the event is held.

It is strictly against the Spirit of the Game to deliberately obfuscate information on the team list or present it in a way that intentionally makes it harder for opponents or staff to understand.

2. Equipment Rules

2.1. Game Cards

- Only legitimate versions of *Pokémon Scarlet* or *Pokémon Violet* can be used in Play! Pokémon tournaments. This includes Game Cards and downloadable versions of these games.

- Competitors are responsible for ensuring that their Game Card or downloadable game is fully functional.

2.2. Game Systems

Competitors may use any system in the Nintendo Switch™ family of systems during the competition. This includes—but is not restricted to—the Nintendo Switch™ and Nintendo Switch Lite™ systems. Competitors are responsible for bringing an AC adapter that is compatible with their system.

- Competitors are responsible for keeping their system charged for the duration of the tournament.

- 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.

- Competitors are responsible for ensuring that their game system is fully functional.

- Competitors should ensure that game systems with which they enter Play! Pokémon tournaments are unmodified—that is, free from both custom software and firmware as well as any physical technological modification to the console itself. Competitors

found to be using modified systems may be subject to penalties up to and including Disqualification.

- ⊙ Competitors may be unable to continue to play in a tournament if Parental Controls prevent their system from performing actions that are necessary for tournament play.

- ⊙ An active Nintendo Switch Online membership (paid) is required for participation in Video Game Championship Series events and the console must be able to connect to the internet via an Organizer-provided network.

- ⊙ Competitors must have their wired internet settings set to Automatic.

- ⊙ At live events played using an internet connection (whether wired or Wi-Fi), the console must be in Airplane Mode during matches.

- ⊙ Competitors may be asked by event staff to register their Battle Teams as Rental Teams and provide the Rental Team IDs. Rental Teams may be used for recordkeeping or team checks, and they may be utilized on a provided console for streamed matches, particularly if competitors are using a Nintendo Switch Lite console to participate in the tournament. Competitors may not alter or delete their Rental Teams for the duration of the tournament plus any specified additional time afterward as instructed by event staff.

2.3. Controllers

Joy-Con controllers must remain attached to the Nintendo Switch at all times during match play.

Competitors are permitted to bring their own officially licensed wired controller at Organizer discretion. Wireless controllers are not permitted.

2.4. Game Patches, Updates, and Firmware

Competitors are responsible for ensuring 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 system. Competitors may be penalized, including Disqualification, if their game is found to be missing the latest update, or if their system is not running on the latest firmware at any time during the tournament.

2.5. Connectivity

Various styles of tournament system communication exist for Championship Series events:

- Local wireless

- o This is recommended for local events, but the risk of unstable communication at higher competitor numbers means it is not recommended for larger events.

- Internet

  - o This setup consists of competitors connecting and playing over the internet via a network provided by the Organizer. It is recommended for all larger events, though Organizers are permitted to utilize it at events of any size.

In all cases, competitors will connect to each other using the Link Battle function on the X menu.

Link Codes are utilized to facilitate competitors finding the correct opponent in-game. Competitors are welcome to select their own Link Code, though choosing an unusual number is recommended to avoid pairing with the wrong opponent; for example, the number 1111 1111 should be avoided. Once an opponent has been found, competitors should verify they are paired with the correct opponent.

2.6. Headphone Use

Headphones may be worn by competitors only if they are wired and plugged directly into their game system. The headphone wire must be clearly visible.

2.7. Notes

Competitors may take notes at any time during their match, including during Team Preview, but must begin each round with a blank sheet. Lined, ruled, or grid paper is permitted. No written or printed aids, including type charts, are permitted in the play space.

2.8. 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. No food or drinks are permitted on the play table.

3. Match Play

3.1. Double Battle Format

Each competitor selects four Pokémon from their Battle Team to battle with. At the start of the battle, competitors send out the first two Pokémon in their party, making a total of four

Pokémon on the battlefield. Gameplay continues until a competitor makes all four of their opponent's Pokémon faint or until the in-game time limit has expired.

3.2.   Number of Games

Matches played during Swiss rounds may be best-of-one or best-of-three at the Tournament Organizer's discretion, although best-of-three is strongly recommended for events at the Regional Championships level and above. Any top cut portion of the event must be run as best-of-three.

There is no round time for Video Game Championship Series events. The expectation is that <u>all</u> matches are allowed to run their course of up to three games. No game should be interrupted or terminated before the natural end of the game unless exceptional circumstances occur (such as Sudden Death – see section 3.4.3.).

3.3.   Match Structure

- At the start of each round, competitors sit down across from their opponent. While awaiting announcements for the round to start, appropriate preparations should be made, such as docking consoles into provided stands (where applicable) and agreeing upon a Union Circle Link Code.

- Once the announcement has been made to start the round, competitors are expected to promptly connect to their opponent and begin their battle without delay.

- Once both competitors are connected via Union Circle and have selected **Preparations Complete**, they should then exchange team lists. Team lists can be reviewed and referenced at any point throughout the match. If either competitor does not understand their opponent's team list at this time, they should inform a staff member immediately.

- Competitors are not to delay between games within a match.

- Once the match is over, the score should be promptly reported to the scorekeepers.

- For certain Official Pokémon Tournaments—such as Regional Championships, International Championships, or World Championships—competitors may be required to use a method other than the Union Circle for matchmaking. In these cases, any specific instructions will be provided by the Tournament Organizer.

3.3.1.   Game Time Limits

Competitors may use as much time as allowed each turn. Championship Series tournaments will automatically enforce the following time limits:

- Team Preview: 90 seconds

- Move time limit: 45 seconds

- Player time (Your Time) limit: 7 minutes

- Game time: 20 minutes

In the interest of maintaining an enjoyable tournament environment, Pokémon Organized Play may decide to make revisions to these limits during the season based on feedback from Organizers.

3.4. Match Resolution

- A competitor wins by making their opponent's final Pokémon faint.

- If both competitors' Pokémon faint during the last turn of a match, the game will decide a winner based on a set of coded rules (e.g., whose Pokémon fainted first, what moves were used on the last turn, etc.).

- Competitors are unable to resolve a match with an intentional draw (ID), nor are they allowed to attempt to manipulate gameplay to force a draw.

- A competitor who selects the Run option is electing to forfeit the game. Should both competitors select the Run option during the same turn, the game will be recorded as having no winner.

3.4.1. Resolving Best-of-Three Matches in Swiss Rounds

Use the following criteria, in order, to determine the outcome of a match that is unresolved after the final game has ended. After one of the criteria has been met, none of the others are applied.

1. If one competitor was late to the match or was away from the match without a Judge's permission for any period of time during the round, that competitor loses the match. To avoid an automatic loss, the absent competitor must have notified the Judge of this absence before the end of the match.

2. If both competitors were on time and present for the entire match, refer to the following charts to determine at which point the winner of the match is decided.

Example	Competitor	Game 1 Outcome	Game 2 Outcome	Game 3 Outcome	Sudden Death	Match Outcome
A	Competitor 1	Win	Win	*Unnecessary*	*Unnecessary*	Competitor 1 wins

	Competitor					
	Competitor 2	Loss	Loss			
B	Competitor 1	Win	Loss	Win	*Unnecessary*	Competitor 1 wins
	Competitor 2	Loss	Win	Loss		
C	Competitor 1	Win	Tie	Win	*Unnecessary*	Competitor 1 wins
	Competitor 2	Loss		Loss		
D	Competitor 1	Tie	Win	Tie	*Unnecessary*	Competitor 1 wins
	Competitor 2		Loss			
E	Competitor 1	Tie	Win	Win	*Unnecessary*	Competitor 1 wins
	Competitor 2		Loss	Loss		
F	Competitor 1	Tie	Tie	Tie	Win	Competitor 1 wins
	Competitor 2				Loss	
G	Competitor 1	Tie	Win	Loss	Win	Competitor 1 wins
	Competitor 2		Loss	Win	Loss	

See Section 3.4.3. for the definition of and protocol for Sudden Death games.

If Sudden Death resolves in a tie during Swiss rounds, a tie is given for the match.

3.4.2.   Resolving Best-of-Three Matches in Single-Elimination Rounds

Use the following criteria, in order, to determine the outcome of a match that is unresolved after the final turn has ended. After one of the criteria has been met, none of the others are applied.

1. If one competitor was late to the match or was away from the match without a Judge's permission for any period of time during the round, that competitor loses the match. To avoid an automatic loss, the absent competitor must have notified the Judge of this absence before the end of the match.

2. If both competitors were on time and present for the entire match, refer to the following charts to determine at which point the winner of the match is decided.

Example	Competitor	Game 1 Outcome	Game 2 Outcome	Game 3 Outcome	Sudden Death	Match Outcome
A	Competitor 1	Win	Win	*Unnecessary*	*Unnecessary*	Competitor 1 wins
	Competitor 2	Loss	Loss			
B	Competitor 1	Win	Loss	Win	*Unnecessary*	Competitor 1 wins
	Competitor 2	Loss	Win	Loss		
C	Competitor 1	Win	Tie	Win	*Unnecessary*	Competitor 1 wins
	Competitor 2	Loss		Loss		
D	Competitor 1	Tie	Win	Tie	*Unnecessary*	Competitor 1 wins
	Competitor 2		Loss			
E	Competitor 1	Tie	Win	Win	*Unnecessary*	Competitor 1 wins
	Competitor 2		Loss	Loss		
F	Competitor 1	Tie	Tie	Tie	Win	Competitor 1 wins
	Competitor 2				Loss	
G	Competitor 1	Tie	Win	Loss	Win	Competitor 1 wins
	Competitor 2		Loss	Win	Loss	

If Sudden Death resolves in a tie during Single Elimination rounds, a second Sudden Death game will be played.

3.4.3. Sudden Death

During Sudden Death, competitors begin a new game. Competitors are required to gain an advantage in number of remaining Pokémon over their opponent. After each turn has been completed, tournament staff will determine the number of Pokémon that each competitor has remaining to determine if an advantage has been gained.

- ☉ If both competitors have the same number of Pokémon remaining at the end of the turn, the game continues for another turn.

- ☉ If either competitor has more remaining Pokémon than their opponent at the end of the turn, that competitor wins the game.

- ☉ If both competitors' final Pokémon faint on the same turn, the game will end naturally. In this case, the game will utilize in-built match resolution to determine the result of the game.

3.4.4. Double Game Freeze

In some rare circumstances, competitors may experience a situation where both games freeze, and it is not clear which competitor is at fault *or* it is clear that neither competitor is at fault. In most such situations, the game must be resolved as outlined in the table below, as it cannot progress any further by organic means and/or the schedule of the tournament requires a prompt resolution to be reached. The Head Judge reserves the right to override the resolution of a double game freeze in exceptional situations in favor of a voided game at their discretion, but they must discuss and clear any potential schedule impact with the Tournament Organizer.

The point in the game at which the double game freeze happens has an impact on how the resolution should occur.

Pokémon Remaining in Team	Game Resolution
4–4 (including during Team Preview)	Game void, restart from the beginning
4–3	Tie
4–2	Tie
4–1	Win for competitor with most remaining Pokémon
3–3	Tie

3–2	Tie
3–1	Win for competitor with most remaining Pokémon
2–2	Tie
2–1	Tie
1–1	Tie

4. Team Checks

At all Championship events, team checks must be performed. It is recommended that team checks be performed on at least 10 percent of teams over the course of the tournament. The teams of all competitors advancing to a Single Elimination portion of a tournament should be checked after Swiss rounds have concluded. The team check consists of two parts: a team list check and a legality check.

4.1. Team List Check

Staff must verify that the competitor's Battle Team matches the team list they submitted.

4.2. Legality Check

Staff must verify that the competitor's Battle Team is legal for tournament play, in terms of both the parameters specified by the tournament format and checking for signs of illegal manipulation. This is split into electronic and manual processes.

4.2.1. Electronic Team Check

This involves running a competitor's Battle Team through the Battle Stadium check. To do this, follow the below steps.

1. Enter Battle Stadium and begin to set up a Casual Battle. When prompted to choose a Battle Team, select the team being used in the tournament for the battle.

2. When the message "Searching for an opposing Trainer" appears, press the POWER Button to put the console into Sleep Mode and disconnect the search. At this point, the team has passed. If, instead, a message appears saying that some Pokémon are unable to participate, penalties may need to be applied appropriately.

4.2.2. Manual Team Check

A small number of criteria are not caught by the electronic team check. The team should be viewed in-game and checked using Appendix A: Manual Team Checking.

4.2.3. Rental Team ID Check

Certain tournaments may require that each competitor submits a Rental Team ID that contains a Battle Team that matches their team list. It is the competitor's responsibility to ensure the Rental Team ID is correct.

4.3. Illegally Manipulated Pokémon

The use of external devices, such as a mobile app, to modify or create items or Pokémon in a competitor's Battle Team is expressly forbidden. Competitors found to have Pokémon or items that have been tampered with may receive a Disqualification, regardless of whether the Pokémon or items belong to that competitor or were traded for.

4.4. Reporting Illegal Manipulation

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

5. Pokémon Video Game Penalty Guidelines

5.1. Introduction

Play! Pokémon protocols and procedures are intended to foster a spirit of friendly competition at all Play! Pokémon events. However, situations occasionally arise—whether intentionally or unintentionally—in which competitors and spectators do not abide by the Play! Pokémon rules or the spirit of the game. In these cases, penalties can be earned, ranging from **Cautions** and **Warnings** that do not represent substantial corrective action to more lasting forms of penalties, including **Disqualification** from an event.

This section of the document is intended to provide organizers and Judges with guidelines by which they can assign and report penalties in a fair, even, and logical way.

5.2. Assigning Penalties

Play! Pokémon Professors should 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.

Every time a penalty is assigned, it should be accompanied by an explanation of specifically how the competitor's actions are disallowed by the Play! Pokémon Tournament Rules documents, and by a clear description of what penalty will result from a repeated infraction. The application of penalties should be handled in a way that is positive and that moves the competitor toward a better overall understanding of the rules. To avoid singling competitors out or making a spectacle of an incident, organizers and Judges may want to assign penalties in private.

In some cases, a competitor may choose to drop from the event in an attempt to avoid receiving a serious penalty. This tactic is unacceptable. The Head Judge should notify the competitor that the penalty will still be assessed and reported to Pokémon Organized Play accordingly.

5.2.1. Deviating from Recommended Penalties

The penalties for infractions are simply recommendations and may be increased or decreased in severity based on circumstances. As a general rule, Judges should take an especially easy approach with the Junior age division. Younger competitors are often prone to make mistakes due to lack of experience or from the intimidation of playing in a competitive environment. Pokémon Organized Play recommends starting with a **Caution** for most penalties applied to competitors in the Junior age division. Younger or less-experienced competitors should always be given the benefit of the doubt, as they are often learning the game and most of the mistakes they make are accidental. These competitors may be given additional **Caution** penalties before a **Warning** is issued.

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. The Professor organizing the tournament and other Judges may assign penalties, but they should always check with the Head Judge before assigning a penalty more severe than a **Warning**. All **Cautions** and **Warnings** assigned by any Judge or organizer should be reported to the Head Judge of the event. The Head Judge is required to report any penalty above a **Caution** to Pokémon Organized Play.

5.2.2. Reporting Penalties to Pokémon Organized Play

Simple **Cautions** do not need to be reported to Pokémon Organized Play; however, penalties at the **Warning** level and above must be reported. Pokémon Organized Play tracks each competitor's penalty history to differentiate intentional repetition of infractions from unintentional occurrences and to determine if long-term action is necessary.

Penalties that require reporting must be submitted to playercoordinator@pokemon.com within seven days of the event date. A penalty-reporting form can be found on the Tournament Rules and Resources page for your convenience.

If you cannot access the penalty reporting form, please email the information below to playercoordinator@pokemon.com:

- Tournament sanctioning number

- Player IDs and names of the relevant competitors

- Player ID and name of the Judge issuing the penalty

- A detailed account of the relevant proceedings of the event, up to and including the infraction, the response from the Judges and organizer, and the reaction, if any, of the involved competitors

In the event of a Disqualification, it is also the responsibility of the Head Judge to submit a full and thorough report of the incident to Pokémon Organized Play. 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.

5.3.   Types of Penalties in the Pokémon Video Game

The following list details the various levels of penalty in order of severity. Only Pokémon Organized Play (POP) is authorized to add to or alter any of the penalties below. Organizers and Judges may not issue any penalties other than those listed below. In addition to the below penalties, the Judge or organizer may need to take further corrective action, such as removing an illegal Pokémon from a competitor's team.

5.3.1.   Caution

A **Caution** is the most basic of assigned penalties. In essence, the Judge or Tournament Organizer assigning the **Caution** is merely notifying the competitor that they did something wrong. The **Caution** should be followed with an explanation to the competitor about the correct procedure as well as notification to the competitor that a repeated offense may

result in a higher penalty.

5.3.2. Warning

A **Warning** is similar to a **Caution** in that both are minor penalties. They differ in that **Warnings** must be reported to POP by the Head Judge or organizer of the event in which they occur. If younger or less-experienced competitors commit a second offense that was penalized the first time with a **Caution**, a second **Caution** is a suitable second penalty, but a **Warning** may need to be issued on a third offense. Judges should always use discretion when escalating a penalty in the Junior age division, as this group is often still learning the game.

After a **Warning** has been issued, the issuing TO or Judge should confirm that the erring competitor is aware of the proper rules and procedures as set forth in the Play! Pokémon VG Rules, Formats, and Penalty Guidelines document. The competitor should be informed that a repeat offense may result in an escalated penalty.

5.3.3. Game Loss

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

When issuing a **Game Loss** penalty during an active game, a judge should take note of the discrepancy and play should continue until the game reaches a conclusion. A judge may also have enough information to immediately end that game. After the game concludes, then any penalties or fixes should be applied. Any **Game Loss** penalty issued as a result should be applied to the most recently completed game.

When issuing a **Game Loss** penalty after a completed game during a match, the **Game Loss** penalty issued as a result should be applied to the most recently completed 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. A game terminated in this manner is not a tie; it is recorded as having no winner.

If a **Game Loss** penalty is issued after the match slip has been signed by both competitors, the penalty issued as a result should be applied to the receiving competitor's first game of their next match.

5.3.4. Disqualification

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. It is important that the removal be enacted in such a way so as not to inflame, extend, or call any more attention to the situation than is absolutely necessary.

The timing of a competitor's disqualification has an impact on the remainder of the tournament.

If disqualified after pairings are posted or during an active match, the competitor is given a loss for that round, and then dropped from the event.

If disqualified after their match is completed but before pairings for the next round are posted, the competitor is simply dropped from the event.

If disqualified at any point during a Single Elimination cut, the competitor is dropped from the event, and their opponent receives a win for that round.

If the competitor's actions warrant it, asking the competitor to leave the tournament site may be necessary. The competitor receiving the penalty should be given time to collect their belongings and to make arrangements with any other competitors they may have traveled with.

5.4. Types of Infractions

There are several categories of infraction, and each should be treated slightly differently based on the age and experience level of the involved competitors. Each infraction lists two penalties.

The Tier 1 Penalty is the first penalty that should be assigned to a competitor committing this type of infraction at an event such as a Premier Challenge or Midseason Showdown.

The Tier 2 Penalty should be assigned at events such as Regional Championships, Special Championships, International Championships, or World Championships events, as competitors at these events are held to a higher standard of gameplay.

5.4.1. Gameplay Error

This infraction covers general mistakes made during a game. These mistakes can have very little impact on a game, or they can bring a game to an abrupt halt. This category defines the levels of errors and outlines the appropriate penalties for each.

5.4.1.1. Minor

Recommended Penalty:

Tier 1—**Caution** (first offense); **Warning** (second offense); **Game Loss** (third offense)
Tier 2—**Warning** (first offense); **Game Loss** (second offense)

Examples of **Gameplay Error: Minor** include:

- ⦿ Inducing a fixable frozen match delay

5.4.1.2. Major

Recommended Penalty: **Game Loss**

Examples of **Gameplay Error: Major** include:

- ⦿ Removal of Game Card mid-game

- ⦿ Loss of power to game system

- ⦿ Inducing an unfixable frozen game state*

- ⦿ Attempting to view the opponent's screen to gain an advantage (screen peeking)**

If both competitors are experiencing an unfixable frozen game state, and it is unclear which competitor is at fault, the problem should be resolved as outlined in 3.4.4. Double Game Freeze.

***Game Loss** is recommended as the starting penalty for a first offense. If the competitor is confirmed to have engaged in a second offense, the penalty should be escalated to **Disqualification**.*

5.4.2. Team Error

This infraction encompasses problems found with a competitor's Battle Team.

5.4.2.1. Minor

Recommended Penalty: **Warning**

Examples of **Team Error: Minor** may include:

- A Pokémon or item in the competitor's Battle Team does not match the team list, resulting in <u>no potential competitive advantage</u>. Examples may include the following:

  o A Pokémon is listed without accurate form information, but other information contained on the team list makes it apparent which form is being used.

    - Example #1: Rotom is listed on the team list when Heat Rotom is contained in the Battle Team, but the form-exclusive move Overheat is correctly listed in the move set on the team list.

    - Example #2: Meowth alone is listed on the team list when Galarian Meowth is contained in the Battle Team, but the form-exclusive Tough Claws Ability is correctly listed on the team list.

  o A Pokémon is listed as holding a Power Anklet but is holding a Power Bracer in the Battle Team.

- A Pokémon in the competitor's Battle Team is nicknamed with the name of another Pokémon.

  o If the option to change that Pokémon's nickname is available, the competitor should change this nickname prior to their next game.

  o If the option to change that Pokémon's nickname is not available, that Pokémon should be removed from the competitor's Battle Team for the rest of the tournament.

- A competitor's Battle Team and team list match, but the Rental Team ID is incorrect.

  o The competitor should provide the correct Rental Team ID to a judge prior to their next match.

5.4.2.2. Major

Recommended Penalty: **Game Loss**

Generally, any fixes applied for a **Team Error: Major** will default to the competitor being required to match their Battle Team to the submitted team list. The Head Judge reserves the right to deviate from a recommended penalty or fix at their discretion.

In all cases, the offending Pokémon, Tera Type, move, Ability, or held item should be prohibited from play and the appropriate penalty should be applied. If this results in a competitor having fewer than four usable Pokémon remaining in their team, the infraction should be escalated to **Team Error: Severe**. If the Pokémon, Tera Type, move, Ability, or held

item described on the team list is immediately available, the competitor should be given the opportunity to add the correct one to their team.

If the competitor is unable to immediately present the correct Pokémon, move, Ability, or held item, the offending Pokémon, move, or held item should be removed and not replaced. For instances where a Tera Type or Ability cannot be removed, the offending Pokémon should be removed and not replaced.

Examples of **Team Error: Major** may include:

◉ A Pokémon or item in the competitor's Battle Team does not match the team list, resulting in <u>potential competitive advantage</u>. Examples may include the following:

- o A Pokémon is listed without accurate form information, and no other information contained on the team list makes it apparent which form is being used.

  - Example #1: Rotom is listed on the team list when Wash Rotom is contained in the Battle Team, and the correct association cannot be reasonably made by event staff by considering the move set.

  - Example #2: Meowth alone is listed on the team list when Galarian Meowth is contained in the Battle Team, and the Ability field on the team list has been left blank.

- o There are inconsistencies with a competitor's Battle Team, team list, and/or Rental Team ID. In these cases, the inconsistency can be fixed to match the other two pieces of information. Examples may include the following:

  - Example #1: The competitor's Battle Team and Rental Team ID match but do not match their team list.

  - Example #2: The competitor's team list and Rental Team ID match but do not match their Battle Team.

  - Example #3: The competitor's Battle Team, team list, and Rental Team ID do not match. Any inconsistencies across each should be removed from the Battle Team for the rest of the tournament.

- o A move is listed as "Thunder" on the team list when the move known by the Pokémon in the Battle Team is actually Thunder Wave.

- o A Pokémon's stat is not listed or is listed incorrectly on the team list.

- A Pokémon on the competitor's team also appears in Section 1 of the Manual Team Checking Appendix.

- A Pokémon on the competitor's team has a nickname, OT, or other attribute that deliberately makes reference to matters that go against the Spirit of the Game.

5.4.2.3. Severe

Recommended Penalty: **Disqualification**

Examples of **Team Error: Severe** include:

- A competitor has fewer usable Pokémon remaining than the permitted minimum team size after receiving earlier penalties

- A Pokémon on the competitor's team also appears in Section 2 of the Manual Team Checking Appendix

- Any indication via official tools that a Pokémon has been illegally manipulated, such as a competitor's team failing an electronic team check

5.4.3. Procedural Error

A competitor who causes an error in the operation of an event, such as misreporting a match, playing the wrong opponent, failing to notify a Judge or TO that they are dropping from the event, or other such errors, needs to be reminded of the procedural rules of a Play! Pokémon event. As with Gameplay Errors or other accidental infractions, this reminder is customarily given with a **Caution** penalty. Repeated infractions may result in higher penalties.

5.4.3.1. Minor

Recommended Penalty: **Caution**

This category covers smaller errors that do not have a serious impact on the operation of the event. If the situation can be corrected before any delay or disruption occurs, the correction should always be made and no higher penalty than a **Caution** should be dispensed for a first infraction. If the situation goes unreported until delay or disruption is caused, a **Warning** is a suitable first penalty.

Examples of **Procedural Error: Minor** include:

- Walking away from a match before both competitors' game systems have recognized the results of the final game

- Forgetting to sign the match slip

- Entering marked or announced staff-only areas

- Interrupting staff during announcements to competitors or rulings in progress

5.4.3.2. Major

Recommended Penalty: **Warning**

Occasionally errors are made that have a much larger impact on the tournament's operation. Some can cause a major delay in the timeliness of the event; others can cause a significant inconvenience for other competitors. In some extreme cases, the penalty for this infraction can be escalated to a **Game Loss** for a first offense.

Examples of **Procedural Error: Major** include:

- Filling out a match slip incorrectly

- Showing up late to a match (less than 5 minutes)

5.4.3.3. Severe

Recommended Penalty: **Game Loss**

This category is typically reserved for an infraction that has a significant impact on the event, or that is the result of a breakdown in event protocol.

Examples of **Procedural Error: Severe** include:

- Reporting an incorrect result for a match

- Showing up late to a match (5 minutes or more)

- Failing to report dropping from an event before leaving the venue (this penalty should be issued whether or not the competitor is there to receive it)

- Playing the incorrect opponent (in this case, the competitor sitting at the wrong table receives the penalty)

5.4.4. Unsporting Conduct

This group of penalties covers the inappropriate actions taken by competitors or spectators at an event. This category always assumes that the offending actions are intentional. A competitor does not have to be actively involved in a match to receive an Unsporting Conduct penalty. While competitors and spectators should enjoy their tournament

experience, they also need to remember that their actions can have a negative impact on fellow participants.

5.4.4.1. Minor

Recommended Penalty: **Warning**

Competitors are expected to behave in a respectful manner to all attendees and staff of a Pokémon event. Competitors who don't behave properly need to be reminded with the issuance of a penalty. Infractions in this category have no impact on the event operation itself.

Examples of **Unsporting Conduct: Minor** include:

- Swearing in the tournament area
- Leaving a small amount of garbage in the tournament area
- Roughhousing
- Disturbing a match in progress

5.4.4.2. Major

Recommended Penalty: **Game Loss**

Infractions in this category have a direct impact on event operation or cause a small degree of emotional distress to those around them.

Examples of **Unsporting Conduct: Major** include:

- Leaving a large amount of garbage in the tournament area
- Failure to comply with the instructions of the event staff
- Attempting to manipulate a match through intimidation or distraction
- Refusal to sign a match slip

5.4.4.3. Severe

Recommended Penalty: **Disqualification**

Infractions in this category have a serious impact on event operation or integrity, cause great emotional distress to those around them, or involve a physical altercation.

Examples of **Unsporting Conduct: Severe** include:

- Defacement of tournament area

- Determining the outcome of a match by random means, by the use of bribery or coercion, or by any means other than those set forth in these guidelines

- Assault

- Use of profanity or physical threats to event staff

- Theft

- Use of slurs or insults

- Lying to the event staff

Appendix A. Manual Team Checking

This section outlines known examples of illegal manipulation which may not be caught by the electronic team check.

In the event of non-consensus between event staff regarding whether or not a competitor's Pokémon meets any of the below criteria, the Head Judge is awarded the ultimate determining authority.

Section 1

Any competitors found to have one of the Pokémon described below in their Battle Team have committed a **Team Error: Major** infraction and should be penalized appropriately as outlined in the Pokémon Video Game Penalty Guidelines.

The offending Pokémon should also be removed from the competitor's Battle Team and not replaced. Should this result in the competitor's having fewer than the minimum tournament entry requirement, the competitor must also receive **Disqualification** from the event.

- ⊙ A Pokémon with any attribute that indicates it was not obtained via normal gameplay or official promotions <u>but results in no discernible competitive advantage</u>. Examples may include the following:

    - o A Pokémon that is contained in a Poké Ball in which it cannot be found through normal gameplay or official promotions

    - o A Pokémon that lists it was obtained from an Egg on its summary screen and that is contained in a Master Ball or a Cherish Ball

    - o A Pokémon that is Shiny but is of a species that cannot be found as a Shiny Pokémon through normal gameplay or official promotions

    - o A Pokémon with a nickname or OT that indicates it was not obtained via normal gameplay or official promotions

Section 2

Any competitors found to have one of the Pokémon described below in their Battle Team have committed a **Team Error: Severe** infraction and should be penalized appropriately as outlined in the Pokémon Video Game Penalty Guidelines.

- ⊙ Any Pokémon with an attack, Ability, Nature, stat, or other attribute that results in a <u>potential competitive advantage</u> that cannot be obtained through normal gameplay or official promotions

Appendix B.   Document Updates

TPCi reserves the right to alter these rules, as well as the right to interpret, modify, clarify, or otherwise issue official changes to these rules, with or without prior notice.

Document updates will be made available at The Official Pokémon Website.

Revisions made for latest publication (April 30, 2024)

Section	Revision	Details
All	References to competitors	For consistency across all Play! Pokémon titles, any references to the word *player* have been replaced with the word *competitor*.
1	Regulation Set G	The regulations section has been updated according to Regulation Set G.
5	Game Loss	Clarified when and how a **Game Loss** might be applied at various points during a match.
5	Team Error: Major	Clarified the options that Judges have available to apply fixes for various potential **Team Error: Major** infractions.