

Play! Pokémon League Challenges, Cups, and Prerelease Guide

ENGLISH VERSION

Date of last revision: March 17, 2025

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1 Introduction

Are you ready to bring your fun, fast, and fair tournaments to the next level? One way is by hosting Prerelease tournaments, League Challenges, and League Cups at your local League. These event types give you the opportunity to get new card sets into the hands of your players up to two weeks prior to an official release (Prerelease) and start members in your community on their path toward our World Championships by offering Championship Points (Challenges and Cups).

In this guide, we'll teach you what it takes to earn these event types, how to run them, and the required information to report them accurately.

1.1 Who Is This Guide For?

While we work hard to make our information accessible to anyone who would like to review it, this is **required reading for our League Owners, League Leaders, and Organizers**.

We also recommend this guide for our Pokémon Trading Card Game, video game, and Pokémon GO Judges, as well as business owners for Play! Pokémon Leagues.

1.2 How to Use This Guide

In subsequent sections, we'll go through each event type one by one, providing you all the required information you need per event type. While we suggest reading this guide completely at least once, feel free to jump to the section with the event you're looking for!

All the information in this guide is tournament-related, so review our Tournament Rules Handbook before running any of these events to ensure you're following all our rules and guidelines. Failure to do so can result in your tournament being invalidated.

We recommend checking back every quarter or so to make sure none of the information in this guide has been updated.

1.3 Formats

Prereleases are run using Limited tournament formats.

Pokémon TCG League Challenges and League Cups are run using the Standard format, which means that current card legalities and regulation marks must be followed. You can find more information on the Standard format, card legalities, and regulation marks in our Tournament Rules Handbook.

League Challenges and League Cups for VGC and Pokémon GO should follow the correct regulations and allowable Pokémon as outlined in the Video Game Rules, Formats, and Penalty Guidelines and the Pokémon GO Tournament Rules Handbook.

1.4 Required Lists

League Challenges and League Cups are part of Play! Pokémon's Championship Series, and all Championship Series events require the appropriate deck list or team list based on the game being played.

Organizers must also complete deck checks and team checks as outlined in our Tournament Rules Handbook. Play! Pokémon requires at least 10% of participants receive a legality check, though we suggest completing as many checks as is reasonable for your location and staffing.

1.5 Reporting for League vs. Prerelease, League Challenges, and League Cups

Please remember, as outlined in our League Handbook, participation in Prerelease, League Challenges, and League Cups does not transfer to regular League reporting through your League roster. These types of events are independent of each other for reporting purposes, and players who participate in any of your Prereleases, League Challenges, and League Cups should not be added to your League roster for reporting unless they also participated in one of your League sessions.

Reporting players from Prereleases, League Challenges, and League Cups on your League roster when those players did not participate in any League sessions is considered inaccurate League reporting, which can lead to action being taken on your League, including removal of eligibility for events or removal from the Play! Pokémon program.

2 Determining Eligibility

To determine if a League is eligible to run Prereleases, League Challenges, League Cups, and other programs, Play! Pokémon reviews League reporting during a quarterly eligibility window outlined below:

Eligibility Period	Reporting Required for Eligibility Period	Eligibility Assessment
Jan–Mar	League Reporting: Sept–Nov	Dec
Apr–Jun	League Reporting: Dec–Feb	Mar
Jul–Sept	League Reporting: Mar–May	June
Oct–Dec	League Reporting: Jun–Aug	Sept

Please note: Additional eligibility requirements may also be applied for some programs. Please confirm all eligibility requirements in the appropriate sections below.

If eligibility is granted, it is applied to the following quarter. Make sure to schedule, run, and report your events both to secure your players' Championship Points and participation, and to ensure you maintain eligibility for the following quarter.

Looking for more information for accurate League reporting? See our [League Handbook](#) and [League Maintenance FAQ](#)!

3 Prerelease

Prerelease events allow players the opportunity to play with cards from our newest Pokémon Trading Card Game expansion up to two weeks prior to their official release. Not only can participants get their hands on new products early but they can also earn booster packs from our new set from participating in and winning Prerelease tournaments.

Prereleases are held during certain Pokémon TCG releases and can be scheduled over a designated two-week period. Players will get access to a Build & Battle Box, which contains a 40-card ready-to-play deck, including 1 of 4 alternate-art promo cards, as well as 4 booster packs to supplement their Build & Battle deck.

Are you ready to start hosting Prerelease events at your League location? Read on to find out how!

3.1 Prerelease Requirements

3.1.1 Eligibility

To become eligible to run Prerelease events at your League location, you must do the following:

- Successfully report 2 of the 3 most recent League Seasons. A season begins on the 8th of the month and ends on the 7th of the following month.
- If you are a new League, you will automatically become eligible to run the next Prerelease after your accepted application.
 - Should the ordering window for Prerelease Kits be closed for the upcoming Prerelease, you will automatically be enrolled for the next available Prerelease.

To maintain your League's eligibility to run Prerelease events:

- Report accurately for 2 of the 3 most recent League Seasons.

AND

- Report a Prerelease event for at least 1 of the 2 most recent Prereleases that you were eligible for.

3.1.2 Reservations

To run a Prerelease in your store, you must start by reserving materials and completing a form. This reservation must be completed via the solicitation form on the Retailer Portal. Should you be Prerelease

eligible, you will receive an email from the official Play! Pokémon email account. You will be able to view and complete the reservation form on the Retailer Portal for your eligible League.

If you need to make changes to your reservation, no problem—you can edit your reservation on the Retailer Portal at any time during the reservation window. Only your final entry will be taken into account. Once a reservation has been placed and subsequently approved, eligible Organizers must then place an order for the material with their existing participating Pokémon TCG reseller. Keep in mind that TPCi will not place the order for you, so eligible Leagues must already be customers of their chosen resellers before choosing them in the reservation form.

Play! Pokémon will liaise with resellers to confirm that only the amount of product to which each Organizer is entitled may be ordered. The price, terms, and shipping details for Prerelease material are set at the discretion of each reseller. **A list of current participating resellers can be found in Appendix A of the League Handbook.**

Please keep in mind that new Leagues eligible for Prerelease will have an initial “fixed” allocation, but subsequent allocations can increase based on a League’s reporting. All the more reason to run your tournaments and complete them by uploading them into Play! Tools.

Play! Pokémon does not accept late submissions to the reservation process, so complete your application as soon as possible. While mitigating factors may contribute to us accepting a late submission, it is at Play! Pokémon's discretion. It’s important to note that just because a late submission was accepted, it may not be accepted for a similar situation in the future.

3.1.2.1 Additional Reservation Requirements by Region

For European Leagues that support multiple languages, Prerelease allocations are available in more than one language. You should indicate this in the reservation form on the Retailer Portal.

For Latin American Leagues located in Spanish-speaking countries, Prerelease allocations are available in Spanish only.

Trinidad and Tobago is the only country in the Latin American program that offers Prerelease allocations in English.

3.2 Prerelease Materials

Here’s what you can expect in every Prerelease Kit you receive as part of your allocation:

- 1 Build & Battle Box Display: 10 Pokémon TCG: Build & Battle Boxes
- 1 Booster Display: 36 Pokémon TCG booster packs for prizing and Judge support

Prerelease Kits that remain after the originally sanctioned events are over may be used to host additional Prerelease events, which can be scheduled freely during the Prerelease window. We still strongly encourage you to schedule these events as soon as possible to ensure players can find your events.

All Organizers may freely sell this material on and after the advertised release date of the expansion. Prior to this date, this material may only be sold for the purposes of participation in a sanctioned Prerelease event.

STAFF-stamped promo cards that are not given to Judges or event staff can be given to Judges or event staff at future events. Otherwise, they must be destroyed. These items are provided outside of the Prerelease Kits themselves, so keep an eye out for these promos in separate materials from the Play! Pokémon program.

Any changes to Prerelease dates or conditions will be provided to approved Leagues via email.

3.3 Prizing for Prerelease

It is recommended that all players who complete an event receive 3 additional booster packs from the booster display included in Prerelease Kits as a participation prize after the tournament.

Depending on your participant base, you may want to change the prize structure to suit the style of event. For example, if you and your participants want a more competitive event, a 4-round tournament could be run, with each player earning 1 pack for participating, and then each win earns an additional booster pack.

Other prize structures are possible, but keep in mind that Prerelease events often last fewer rounds than would be necessary to determine a clear winner. Get creative to provide the best experience for your Prerelease competitors!

Please Note

- *Prizes are to be distributed to players as recommended by Play! Pokémon immediately upon the conclusion of an event, or when a player has dropped/been eliminated and their placement is determined.*
- *Additional prizing beyond the boosters provided by Play! Pokémon is at the Organizer's/store's discretion.*
- *While things like store credit are fine prizes, competing products are not to be directly provided as prizes for Play! Pokémon events.*

3.4 Tournament Operations

A part of all Prerelease events is a Prerelease tournament, which must be sanctioned through Play! Tools and run using Tournament Organization Manager (TOM). The results must then be uploaded from TOM into Play! Tools to complete the tournament and fulfill the requirements for the Prerelease event. Use the following information when sanctioning your tournament.

TCG Format	Sealed <i>or</i> Build & Battle Draft	TOM Mode	TCG Prerelease/Draft
Tournament Format	Swiss only <i>or</i> Swiss + Single Elimination	Game Type	Trading Card Game
Match Structure	Single game <i>or</i> best-of-three	Event Series	[Expansion Name] Prerelease

As a reminder, players who participate in your Prerelease tournaments should not be listed on your League roster!

4 League Challenges

League Challenges are small entry-level events that are held monthly by eligible Play! Pokémon League locations. They are the first step in our Championship Series events and offer a small number of Championship Points on your journey to earning an invitation to the World Championships. Because they offer Championship Points, League Challenges tend to be more competitive than Friendly Tournaments and Prerelease tournaments. They also have stricter rules and regulations.

Currently, Play! Pokémon offers League Challenges for the Pokémon TCG, VGC, and Pokémon GO in certain regions. For more information on eligibility by region, see Appendix A.

League Challenges must be scheduled 14 days before the tournament date to ensure that players can find the event through our store finder. While League Challenges may be capped due to space limitations in a location, because League Challenges offer Championship Points, Organizers cannot restrict any demographics from participating (such as holding a League Challenge for Masters Division players only).

However, a player who is ineligible to participate in Play! Pokémon programs is not eligible to participate in your events (Section 7.7 of the Tournament Rules Handbook). If the individual has been removed from your store, you may restrict their ability to participate in your store's event, so long as section 3.3 of the Tournament Rules Handbook is followed.

4.1 League Challenge Requirements

To be eligible to host your first League Challenge, you must have:

- Reported accurately for 2 of the 3 most recent League Seasons.

To maintain eligibility to run League Challenges, you must:

- Continue to report accurately for 2 of the 3 most recent League Seasons.

4.2 Tournament Operations, League Challenges

Tournament Operations for your League Challenge are determined by the game being played. Each of the following tables outlines what settings should be set in TOM and Play! Tools to ensure your tournament is run properly and successfully uploaded.

4.2.1 Tournament Operations Pokémon TCG Format

TCG Format	Standard	TOM Mode	TCG League Challenge
Tournament Format	Swiss only	Game Type	Trading Card Game
Match Structure	Single game <i>or</i> best-of-three	Event Series	League Challenge [Month]

4.2.2 Tournament Operations Pokémon GO Format

GO Format	Standard	TOM Mode	GO Premier Event
Tournament Format	Swiss + Single Elimination	Game Type	Pokémon GO
Match Structure	Best-of-three	Event Series	Challenge/Cup [Month]

4.2.3 Tournament Operations VG Format

VG Format	Standard	TOM Mode	VG Premier Event
Tournament Format	Swiss + Single Elimination	Game Type	VG Scarlet Violet
Match Structure	Single game <i>or</i> Best-of-three	Event Series	VG Challenge/Cup [Month]

5 League Cups

Are you ready to bring an even more competitive experience to your League location? Well then, you may be ready to start running League Cups for Pokémon TCG, VG, and Pokémon GO. With increased CP on the line, competitors will have to test their skills and rules knowledge even further to battle their way to the top.

Much like League Challenges, League Cups must be scheduled at least 14 days in advance of the tournament date. The same eligibility and restrictions for competitor participation outlined in section 4 of this guide applies to section 5.

Currently, Play! Pokémon offers League Cups for the Pokémon TCG, VG, and Pokémon GO in certain regions. For more information on eligibility by region, see Appendix A.

5.1 League Cups Requirements

Because of the higher CP prize pool, and because of their more competitive nature, there are additional requirements to begin hosting League Cups at your location.

To be eligible to host your first League Cup, you must:

- Report accurately for 2 of the 3 most recent League Seasons.
- Report accurately 2 of the 3 most recent eligible League Challenges.

To maintain eligibility to run League Cups, you must:

- Continue to report accurately for 2 of the 3 most recent League Seasons.

5.2 Tournament Operations, League Cups

Running a League Cup has some key differences to running League Challenge. Biggest among them is that League Cups are run using a Swiss + Single Elimination style. You'll want to select the League Cup Mode in TOM to run your events, and your Event Series tag will be based on the quarter instead of the month. Make sure to follow the information present in the tables below to ensure success when setting up your League Cup!

5.2.1 Tournament Operations Pokémon TCG Format

TCG Format	Standard	TOM Mode	TCG League Cup
Tournament Format	Swiss + Single Elimination	Game Type	Trading Card Game
Match Structure	Single game <i>or</i> best-of-three	Event Series	League Cup [Quarter]

5.2.2 Tournament Operations Pokémon GO Format

GO Format	Standard	TOM Mode	GO Premier Event
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Tournament Format	Swiss + Single Elimination	Game Type	Pokémon GO
Match Structure	Best-of-three	Event Series	Challenge/Cup [Quarter]

5.2.3 5.2.3 Tournament Operations VG Format

VG Format	Standard	TOM Mode	VG Premier Event
Tournament Format	Swiss + Single Elimination	Game Type	VG Scarlet Violet
Match Structure	Single game or best-of-three	Event Series	VG Challenge/Cup [Quarter]

6 League Challenges & League Cups Tournament Suggestions

Below are a set of recommendations that we here at Play! Pokémon believe you can use to take your League Challenges and League Cups to the next level. While none of these are required, we suggest working to incorporate these recommendations into your next scheduled event!

6.1 Player IDs

While a unique Player ID must be used for each person to add them to the tournament, competitors do not begin accruing Play! Points or Championship Points until their Player ID is registered to an active Pokémon Trainer Club account. You can quickly and easily generate a unique, personal Player ID through a Pokémon Trainer Club account on Pokemon.com. It's suggested that anyone wishing to participate in a Play! Pokémon event generate a Player ID prior to coming to the event so that they can begin accruing Play! Points and CP on their account.

Players who have not generated a Player ID number before arriving at a tournament may be assigned a Player ID by the Organizer instead. In such cases, the next time the player logs in to their Pokémon Trainer Club account, they should link that account to the Player ID number they have been given. They will then be able to track participation at tournaments and earn associated perks and prizes.

Organizers must use Player IDs to report the attendance of all players during the events.

Please note: Players must use only a single Player ID. It is a violation of the official Pokémon website Terms of Use to knowingly register multiple Player IDs, and any duplicate IDs may be removed or merged without warning.

6.2 Judges

The only required role to run a League Challenge or League Cup is an Organizer with the appropriate Professor roles.

While a Judge is not required at any League event, it is highly recommended that stores have a Judge present at the event to help support the integrity of the tournament.

6.3 Prizing

The main prize of a League Challenge or League Cup, aside from the sense of comradery and spirit of the game, is Championship Points. These are awarded to players who achieve certain ranks in the standings of your tournament. The number of CP awarded for an event and the number of players who receive CP is determined by the total number of players in the tournament.

While the main draw for players at League Challenges and League Cups will be Championship Points, we also recommend additional prizing to entice participation at all your events. While Play! Pokémon only makes recommendations, using prizing supplied by the Play! Pokémon program, such as Pokémon TCG Prize Packs, can add excitement to your event.

Additionally, for Pokémon TCG League Cups, Play! Pokémon provides playmats as prizes to be awarded to the winner in each age division. Playmats will automatically be shipped to the shipping address on your League page. Playmats are intended only to be awarded for Pokémon TCG League Cup events, and usage outside this manner may result in disciplinary action.

6.4 Alternate Venues

Your League Challenges and League Cups may have a higher turnout rate than some of your other events, like your regular League sessions or Prerelease events, and to accommodate the number of participants, you may need to hold your League Challenges and League Cups at an alternate venue. Well, we have a process for applying to use an alternate venue for your League Challenges and League Cups!

The highlights for venue requirements are:

- The event held at the alternate venue cannot exceed 250 players.
- The venue cannot already have a League, nor can it be another retail store.
- The venue must be within the same country as your League store, or within the same state/province/territory/department.

- The venue cannot be part of a fair, convention, or similar event.

For more information on alternate venues and how to apply, [please see our article regarding the topic!](#)

7 Notices of Change and Potential Action

Thank you for reading our League Challenges, League Cups, and Prerelease Guide! As with all our handbooks and guidelines, we highly recommend checking back every quarter to ensure there were no changes or updates to this content. Updates are at the sole discretion of The Pokémon Company International and the Play! Pokémon program.

Failure to follow these guidelines can result in your tournaments being invalidated depending on the discrepancies found within your tournament. Depending upon the incidents and the severity of those incidents, failure to follow these guidelines can also result in disciplinary action, up to and including loss of Professor roles and your League being removed from the Play! Pokémon program.

8 Summary of Changes

Date of previous issue:

Date of current issue: March 17, 2025

1 Introduction		
Section	Page #	Change

2 Determining Eligibility		
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3 Prerelease		
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4 League Challenges		
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6 Challenges and Cups Suggestions		
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7 Disciplinary Action		
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9 Appendix A

Depending on your region, your League may be eligible for League Challenges and League Cups for Pokémon GO and for the Pokémon video games (*Pokémon Scarlet* and *Pokémon Violet*). **We highly recommend checking the chart below at least quarterly to see if any changes in eligibility have occurred.** We are always evaluating our markets, and changes are at the sole discretion of The Pokémon Company International.

Eligibility for VG and Pokémon GO League Challenges / League Cups by Region	
Eligible	Not Eligible
Argentina	Bolivia
Australia	Czech Republic
Austria	Dominican Republic
Belgium	Ecuador
Brazil	El Salvador
Canada	Guatemala
Chile	Hungary
Colombia	Malta
Denmark	Nicaragua
Finland	Panama
France	Paraguay
Germany	Slovakia
Greece	Trinidad and Tobago
Ireland	United Arab Emirates (UAE)
Italy	Uruguay
Luxembourg	
Mexico	
Netherlands	
New Zealand	
Norway	
Peru	
Poland	
Portugal	
South Africa	
Spain	
Sweden	
Switzerland	
United Kingdom	
United States	