

Play! Pokémon Tournament Rules Handbook

ENGLISH VERSION

Date of last revision: March 24, 2025

Contents

1	Using This Handbook	3
1.1	Supporting Material	3
1.2	Recommended Sections & Audiences	3
2	Participation Fundamentals	4
2.1	Introduction	4
2.2	Player IDs.....	4
2.3	Participation Eligibility	4
2.4	Expectations	6
2.5	Role Definitions & Responsibilities	7
2.6	Publishing Tournament Information.....	10
3	Tournament Policies	11
3.1	Introduction	11
3.2	Tournament Scheduling.....	11
3.3	Tournament Entry	12
3.4	Tournament Integrity.....	13
3.5	Reporting Tournament Results	14
3.6	Streamed Matches	15
3.7	Prizing.....	16
4	Tournament Operations & Specifics	17
4.1	Introduction	17
4.2	Age Divisions	18
4.3	Competitor Requirements	18
4.4	Match Records & Ranking.....	19
4.5	Concessions & Intentional Draws	22
4.6	Play! Pokémon Tournament Styles.....	22
4.7	Pairings.....	29
4.8	Dropping from Tournament Play	30
5	Trading Card Game Tournament Rules.....	31
5.1	Introduction	31
5.2	Trading Card Legality.....	31
5.3	Deck Legality	33

5.4	Constructed Tournament Formats	34
5.5	Limited Tournament Formats	38
5.6	Game Area Management.....	40
5.7	Shuffling & Deck Randomization	42
5.8	Tournament Play.....	43
6	Tournament Rules for Other Products.....	48
7	Rules Violations & Penalties	48
7.1	Introduction	48
7.2	Types of Penalty.....	49
7.3	Base Infractions.....	52
7.4	Deviation from Recommended Penalties	60
7.5	Penalty Delivery	62
7.6	Reporting Penalties.....	63
7.7	Disciplinary Action	64
8	Summary of Changes	65

1 Using This Handbook

The **Play! Pokémon Tournament Rules Handbook** is intended to give a thorough and comprehensive overview of the rules and policies in place at Play! Pokémon events.

By entering or remaining at a Play! Pokémon event, all participants agree to adhere to the rules outlined in this handbook. Those who do not may incur penalties, be removed from any tournament in which they are participating, and/or asked to leave the event venue.

1.1 Supporting Material

This handbook should be read in conjunction with the Play! Pokémon Standards of Conduct, Terms of Use, Inclusion Policy, Accessibility Policy, and any appropriate guidelines for the tournament type in which you take part (video game, GO, UNITE, etc.).

1.2 Recommended Sections & Audiences

Audience	Recommended Sections	Page Number
Pokémon Professors: <i>Judges</i>	Please read and familiarize yourself with the entire document.	—
Pokémon Professors: <i>Organizers & Tournament Administrators</i>	2. Participation Fundamentals 3. Tournament Policies 4. Tournament Operations & Specifics 7. Rules Violations & Penalties	4 11 17 47
Competitors	2. Participation Fundamentals 3. Tournament Policies 5. Trading Card Game Tournament Rules <i>or</i> 6. Video Game Tournament Rules 7. Rules Violations & Penalties	4 11 28 43 47
Parents of Competitors	2. Participation Fundamentals 3. Tournament Policies 7. Rules Violations & Penalties	4 11 47
Spectators / General Attendees	2. Participation Fundamentals	4

2 Participation Fundamentals

2.1 Introduction

Everyone who attends Play! Pokémon events, whether as a competitor, spectator, or Professor, should familiarize themselves with the information in this section. In particular, the following topics are covered:

- Who is allowed to participate?
- Behaviors and items that are not allowed at Play! Pokémon events
- Roles, responsibilities, and expectations of event attendees

2.2 Player IDs

All those who wish to participate in a Play! Pokémon tournament must have their own Player ID number. It is quick and easy to generate a unique, personal Player ID through a Pokémon Trainer Club account on the official Pokémon website. For further instructions, [click here!](#)

However, competitors who haven't done this before arriving at a tournament may be assigned a Player ID by the Organizer instead. In this case, the next time the competitor logs in to their Trainer Club account, they should link that account to the Player ID number they have been given. They will then be able to benefit from tracking participation at tournaments and earning associated perks and prizes.

Competitors 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.

2.3 Participation Eligibility

The ability to participate in Play! Pokémon tournaments is open to all who have a Player ID number, with the following exceptions.

2.3.1 All Play! Pokémon Tournaments

- Those who have an active suspension from Play! Pokémon events, issued by Play! Pokémon.
- Tournament staff members, including the Organizer, Judges, and scorekeepers.
 - This includes the store owner where the tournament takes place inside a retail location.

2.3.2 Championship Series Events

The following are ineligible to participate in Play! Pokémon tournaments in which Championship Points can be earned.

- Those listed in section 2.3.1.
- Competitors below 6 years of age.
- Current employees of The Pokémon Company and any of its current subsidiary companies, including but not limited to: The Pokémon Company International, The Pokémon Company International Ireland, Pokémon Korea, Pokémon Singapore, and Pokémon Shanghai.
 - This includes former employees of any of these companies, within 60 days of their final day of employment.
- Current employees of GAME FREAK inc. or Creatures Inc.
 - This includes former employees of GAME FREAK inc. or Creatures Inc., within 60 days of their final day of employment.
- Immediate family members of employees of The Pokémon Company and its subsidiary companies: The Pokémon Company International, The Pokémon Company International Ireland, Pokémon Korea, Pokémon Singapore, and Pokémon Shanghai.
- Contractors of any of the aforementioned companies who are involved in the support and implementation of Play! Pokémon programs or whose role affords them early access to products supported by Play! Pokémon programs.
- Employees of companies that are responsible for the operation or coordination of Play! Pokémon programs in their countries.

2.3.2.1 Video Game Championship Series events

- Those listed in section 2.3.1.
- Current employees of Nintendo.
 - This includes former employees of Nintendo, within 60 days of their final day of employment.
- Program members who are selected to review a Pokémon video game product prior to its official US release date are prohibited from participating in Play! Pokémon Video Game tournaments for 60 days following that product's official US release date.
 - Where the program member elects to compete in tournaments after this date, they may not use any video game product obtained prior to its official US release date.

2.3.2.2 Pokémon GO Championship Series events

- Those listed in section 2.3.1.
- Current employees of Niantic.
 - This includes former employees of Niantic, within 60 days of their final day of employment.

2.3.2.3 Pokémon UNITE Championship Series events

- Those listed in section 2.3.1.
- Current employees of TiMi Studio Group.

- This includes former employees of TiMi Studio Group, within 60 days of their final day of employment.

2.4 Expectations

Attendees at Play! Pokémon events are expected to understand and adhere to the rules outlined in this document, as well as any other accompanying documents that are applicable to their roles.

All attendees are expected to:

- Meet the registration and/or entry requirements of the event, including the purchase of a pass or badge where necessary.
- Be free from the influence of alcohol and/or other mind-altering substance.
- Refrain from the use of inappropriate language and/or the discussion of inflammatory topics.
- Maintain a socially acceptable level of personal hygiene.
- Follow the direction of event staff.
- Be respectful and courteous to all.

Should any attendee's adherence to any of the above fall under question, it is the responsibility of the Organizer to determine whether that attendee should be permitted to remain at the event.

For more information regarding acceptable behavior at Play! Pokémon events, please refer to the Play! Pokémon Standards of Conduct.

2.4.1 Prohibitions

It is important that all participants are made to feel welcome and comfortable within the environment of a Play! Pokémon event. In support of this, Play! Pokémon prohibits the following behaviors:

- The sale or consumption of alcoholic beverages and/or any mind-altering substance.
- Wagering or gambling on the results of a game, portion of a game, match, or number of matches.
- Offering any form of compensation with intent to alter the result of a game, portion of a game, match, or number of matches; bribery.

In addition, the following items are prohibited at Play! Pokémon events:

- All firearms, including mock weapons that could reasonably be mistaken for such.
- Attire and accessories that violate the Play! Pokémon Standards of Conduct or Inclusion Policy or otherwise do not align with Play! Pokémon tournament environments.
 - Should a member of staff request a change in attire, the attendee is responsible for changing into appropriate attire before returning to the venue. Repeated infractions or failure to adhere to staff requests can result in removal from the venue.
- Any attire that may cause confusion regarding an attendee's staffing status (such as wearing a Judge uniform or shirt when not actively on staff).

Any attendee discovered to be in breach of this policy should be removed from the tournament site, and the incident should be reported to Play! Pokémon.

2.4.1.1 During Tournament Play

For competitors who are participating in tournament play, the following behaviors are also disallowed during matches in progress, unless explicit permission is given by event staff:

- Receiving information from an outside source regarding their match or the matches of others.
- Taking a phone call or using a cellular device.
- Wearing ear/headphones, unless the competitor is participating in a Pokémon video game tournament (VGC, Pokémon GO, or Pokémon UNITE), and the ear/headphones are visibly jacked into their own game system. Use of headsets (headphones with an attached mic) is also prohibited, except during Pokémon UNITE tournaments.

In addition, the following items are prohibited from being brought onto the play surface:

- Food and beverages.
- Pre-written notes and/or written aids, both physical and digital.
 - Please note that turn trackers are not considered a pre-written aid and may be used during Tournament Play; however, competitors are responsible for turn tracker use, and any gameplay error infractions that occur from misuse can result in a corresponding penalty.

2.5 Role Definitions & Responsibilities

2.5.1 Competitors

A competitor is any active participant in a Play! Pokémon tournament. Competitors who drop or are eliminated from the tournament become spectators.

2.5.1.1 Competitor Responsibilities

All competitors must:

- Present themselves for play in a timely manner.
- Double-check their match record and standings as pairings are posted each round, and report any discrepancies to the appropriate event staff immediately.

Competitors are also responsible for the provision of the following:

- A valid Player ID.
- A deck or team that meets the format restrictions for the tournament.
- A legible and accurate list of the cards that comprise the competitor's deck (deck list) or the Pokémon on a competitor's team (team list).

- Any implements necessary to play, track, and maintain game information. This includes but is not limited to items such as:
 - Damage counters;
 - Special Condition markers;
 - Randomizer;
 - Video game system in good working order;
 - Genuine Game Card or digital game in good working order;
 - Own device for mobile app tournaments where the Organizer does not provide devices, or any personal device needed for authentication to facilitate logging in to an Organizer-provided device

2.5.2 Spectators

Spectators are those who are present at a Play! Pokémon event but who are not actively participating in the tournament. This includes parents, chaperones, and competitors who have dropped from the tournament.

2.5.2.1 Spectator Responsibilities

All spectators must:

- Not interfere with a match in any way.
- Maintain a reasonable distance from matches in progress to avoid distracting the competitors.
- Refrain from discussing matches in progress within earshot of the table.

Should a disruptive spectator be responsible for a competitor currently engaged in tournament play, that competitor may earn penalties as though they had engaged in disruptive behavior.

This may ultimately result in that competitor being disqualified from the tournament should it become necessary to remove the associated spectator from the event.

2.5.3 Organizer

The Organizer of a tournament is the Professor who originally sanctioned that tournament on the official Pokémon website. They are ultimately responsible for ensuring that the tournament is run according to the Play! Pokémon rules and procedures.

2.5.3.1 Organizer Responsibilities

The Organizer is responsible for all aspects of tournament sanctioning and operation, including arranging an appropriate venue, obtaining and distributing any prizes, reporting results, and staffing the event.

The Organizer is also required to notify competitors of the following information at an appropriate time:

- Tournament type (Swiss, Swiss plus single-elimination top cut, etc.)
- Tournament format (Standard, Expanded, etc.)
- Number of rounds

- Number of minutes per round
- Match format (Single Game or Best of Three)
- Start time for the tournament and any delays that may impact the start time
- Top cut, if applicable
- Tournament staff, especially the Head Judge(s)
- Any breaks during the tournament

The tournament format and type should be announced far enough in advance of the tournament that competitors can prepare for the tournament before arriving.

The number of rounds, minutes per round, top cut, tournament staff, and breaks should be announced prior to the start of the first round.

2.5.4 Judge

Judges are expected to administer impartial rulings and assist the Organizer and Head Judge in running a fun, fast, and fair tournament. Play! Pokémon supports the rulings of its Judges where those rulings are made impartially and are in the best interests of the Spirit of the Game.

2.5.4.1 Judge Responsibilities

All Judges must:

- Be free from bias toward or against any competitor.
- Avoid judging a match where there may be a potential conflict of interest (e.g., matches involving family, close friends, teammates, or business partners), where possible.
- Exemplify and encourage good sporting behavior.

2.5.4.2 Head Judge Responsibilities

In addition to the responsibilities of a Judge, the Head Judge serves as the final arbiter of all rulings and rules interpretations for a tournament, and is ultimately responsible for making sure that all participants abide by the rules set forth in this document.

The Head Judge must:

- Ensure that Judges remain active and on task.
- Complete and submit the Penalty Summary form for the tournament.
- Complete and submit a Disqualification Report for each Disqualification (with the exception of no-shows).

2.5.5 Scorekeeper

The Scorekeeper is a tournament staff member who is responsible for the accurate recording of match results and generation of pairings as a tournament progresses on behalf of the Organizer. The Scorekeeper role is one that can be fulfilled by a Professor, a Judge, the Organizer, or another person

who is tasked specifically with the role, but this person must hold the appropriate certification to operate tournament software.

2.5.5.1 Scorekeeper Responsibilities

- Ensure tournament integrity by generating correct pairings for each round and entering accurate results for each of those rounds.
- Resolve any scorekeeping issues that may occur in coordination with the Organizer. In determining the best course of action, the Organizer will have the final say in how to correct these issues as they arise.
- Generate standings after the final round of Swiss rounds and for any additional preceding rounds as requested by the Head Judge and/or Organizer of the tournament.
- Ensure all information in the tournament file is accurate and finalized for upload by the Organizer after all matches are complete.

2.5.6 Competitor and Professor Eligibility

2.5.6.1 Competitors' Eligibility

It is the responsibility of the Tournament Organizer to confirm that competitors engaging in their events are eligible to participate in Play! Pokémon events. The information on a competitor's eligibility is located in the "Organizer Information" tab in an Organizer's Pokémon Trainer Club account and lists any competitor's eligibility. Allowing competitors to participate in Play! Pokémon events while they are ineligible can result in disruption to the events, invalidation of tournaments, and potential disciplinary action. Please reference this information often to ensure the integrity of your events.

2.5.6.2 Professors' Eligibility

It is the responsibility of the Tournament Organizer to confirm all staff members are also eligible to participate in Play! Pokémon events and have the appropriate Professor roles to engage in their assigned capacity. Organizers should reference the information on a Professor's eligibility, which is located in the "Player Information" tab in their Pokémon Trainer Club account. Allowing ineligible Professors to staff events can result in disruptions, invalidation of tournaments, and potential disciplinary action. Please reference this information often to ensure the integrity of your events.

2.6 Publishing Tournament Information

Play! Pokémon reserves the right to publish tournament information, including but not limited to deck lists, team lists, transcripts, audio and/or video recordings or other recounts, competitor penalties, awards, or any other resultant information from the tournament.

Organizers, Judges, competitors, and spectators are also free to publish details of play and/or the results of a tournament, subject to local, state, and national laws.

Attendance at a Play! Pokémon event may lead to an attendee's image and likeness being photographed and video-recorded by or on behalf of The Pokémon Company International (TPCi).

By entering or remaining at Play! Pokémon events, attendees grant permission for TPCi, its affiliates, and media organizations to publish their name, image, likeness, team or deck composition, methods of play, and written and oral statements in connection with any still photograph, live or recorded video display, or other transmission or reproduction of the event, in whole or in any part.

2.6.1 Publishing Deck/Team Lists

The contents of any competitor's deck or team may be published by the Organizer at any time once the event has begun, provided that this information is publicly accessible, and that the publication of such data is part of an initiative that provides additional value to those attending or watching the event. For example, this includes broadcasting a match via live stream or publishing an article about the event.

Otherwise, this data should be kept confidential throughout the duration of the tournament.

3 Tournament Policies

3.1 Introduction

This section outlines and explains the standards and policies that Play! Pokémon expects Organizers to respect when scheduling and reporting any Play! Pokémon tournament.

- Where tournaments may be held, including scheduling rules and restrictions.
- How results must be reported following a tournament's conclusion.

3.2 Tournament Scheduling

3.2.1 Allowable Venues

Play! Pokémon prefers all sanctioned events to be run at an approved Pokémon League hosted at a game store. However, we acknowledge that these venues may not always be available, and therefore we permit non-League events to be run in other public locations, such as community centers, libraries, or rented event halls. Play! Pokémon League events must be held at their approved League venue. Leagues may request to hold League Challenges and League Cups in a larger venue if needed by completing an alternate venue request form. To learn more about the requirements and restrictions of alternate venues, [please refer to this article](#).

For all events, including both non-League and League events, the Organizer must ensure that any potential tournament venue:

- Is clean, safe, and open to the public, and will remain so throughout the duration of the tournament;
- Welcomes attendees of any background, belief, or personal circumstance;
- Satisfies any applicable local laws.

Play! Pokémon does not consider fairs, conventions, and other similar venue types to be allowable venues for holding Championship Series and Official League events.

3.2.2 Sanctioning

Play! Pokémon requires Professors to sanction their Championship Series Events at least 14 days in advance of the date on which the event is scheduled to take place. This ensures that competitors have adequate opportunity to find the tournament using the Event Locator tool.

Play! Pokémon strongly encourages League sanctioned tournaments that are not a Championship Series Event (such as Friendly Tournaments and Prerelease events) be sanctioned as early as possible to allow competitors the opportunity to participate in the tournament. However, these events are not required to be sanctioned 14 days in advance of the tournament date. For more information on League Tournament Sanctioning, please see section 5.1 of the League Handbook.

3.2.2.1 Championship Series Events

A Championship Series Event is a special type of sanctioned Play! Pokémon tournament that occurs as part of the Play! Pokémon Championship Series, and awards Championship Points to those who place high in the final standings.

Some Championship Series Events may not be sanctioned without the use of a special tool that Organizers must be granted access to use. Sanctioning these tournaments without the use of this tool is likely to result in the invalidation of that tournament.

In addition to this document, Organizers should also pay close attention to any supplementary guidelines they receive when they become eligible to run each type of Championship Series Event.

3.3 Tournament Entry

Play! Pokémon tournaments should be open to all who meet the Participation Eligibility requirements set out by Play! Pokémon, though the following exceptions may be made:

- Organizers may choose to offer prioritized registration to competitors who regularly attend Pokémon League sessions at an associated League location.
- Organizers may choose to completely disallow entry to any competitor they feel to be a threat to the safety or enjoyment of others or whose presence has previously proven detrimental to the event location for any other reason.

3.3.1 Entry Fees

Organizers may charge a fee to participate in tournaments.

Play! Pokémon makes no recommendation regarding entry fees beyond the stipulation that Organizers must follow all local legal requirements that may apply when deciding if, how, and what to charge.

3.4 Tournament Integrity

It is imperative that Championship Series Events are operated to the highest standard, and every effort should be taken to avoid all possible threats to tournament integrity. Although every sanctioned Play! Pokémon tournament is recommended to consider the below, the information described in this section is compulsory for all Championship Series Events.

3.4.1 Legality Checks

Deck lists or team lists must always be collected at Championship Series Events, and checks for legality can be performed at any time during any phase of the tournament.

Play! Pokémon expects that legality checks will be performed on at least 10% of decks or teams but recommends that tournament staff strive to complete as many as is reasonable.

3.4.2 Staffing

3.4.2.1 Organizer Presence

The Organizer is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the tournament is run according to the rules and procedures laid out in this and other core rules documentation. Because of this, the Organizer must be present at the tournament while it is taking place.

In exceptional circumstances, Play! Pokémon may allow for the responsibility of a tournament to be passed from one Organizer to another. Should these circumstances apply, the current Organizer should submit a request through the Play! Pokémon Customer Service team.

Each request is considered individually on a case-by-case basis.

3.4.2.2 Judges

Play! Pokémon strongly recommends that all tournaments—but particularly Championship Series Events—be attended by Professors who hold a relevant Professor certification. A Judge presence helps to ensure that ruling queries are resolved as well as possible, and, if multiple Judges are present, that competitors do not have to wait for an extended period before receiving attention.

Having Judges assist at tournaments also makes it easier for legality checks to be conducted.

3.4.2.3 Remuneration of Staff

Play! Pokémon makes no recommendation regarding the remuneration of tournament staff, beyond the reminder that Judges and other volunteers contribute an added value to the tournament experience and should be made to feel appreciated.

3.4.3 Appeals to the Head Judge

Should a competitor be dissatisfied with a ruling they have received, they may appeal that ruling to the Head Judge. Staff at large Championship Series Events, such as Regional, International, or World Championships, may include additional Assistant Head Judges who are also able to hear appeals.

A competitor may not appeal before the initial ruling is given in full. Competitors are also not permitted to request that a specific Judge hear their appeal.

Rulings made by the Head Judge are always considered final. Rulings made by an Assistant Head Judge following an appeal are also considered final.

If a competitor remains dissatisfied following an appeal, they may contact Play! Pokémon via the Play! Pokémon Customer Support service once the event has concluded. No further appeal path is available on-site.

3.4.4 Paper Records

Paper records, such as standings, pairings, and match slips, may be retained until the end of a tournament to aid with solving any potential discrepancies that may arise. They should then be immediately destroyed.

3.4.4.1 Match Slips

A match slip serves as a written record of the result from any one match. Match slips must always be used at Pokémon TCG and video game Championship Series Events, as well as at Pokémon GO Cups and Challenges.

At the end of each match, the competitors should record the result as appropriate on the slip. Then, both competitors should initial the slip to indicate that they agree with the result.

Once a match slip has been signed, that result is considered final. It is then the responsibility of the winner of the match to turn in the slip as directed by the Organizer.

3.5 Reporting Tournament Results

Tournament results are due to be received by Play! Pokémon within 7 days of that tournament's conclusion and are to be reported online at the official Pokémon website.

Any tournaments that do not have results submitted by this time are considered delinquent and may jeopardize the Organizer's eligibility to host future Championship Series Events.

3.5.1 Player ID Discrepancies

Should they discover that their Player ID has been incorrectly recorded, a competitor should reach out to the Organizer of the relevant tournament. Erroneous Player IDs may be corrected by the Organizer directly, using the “Replace Player ID” tool, for up to 3 months following the upload date.

Any issues discovered after this time should be reported by the Organizer to the Play! Pokémon Customer Service team.

3.6 Streamed Matches

While attending a Play! Pokémon tournament, some competitors may be instructed to play a match that will be featured, projected, or broadcast (streamed) live to a large audience and/or to online viewers. Competitors must comply with the Organizer’s directions regarding the location of the match.

In addition, these matches may require additional equipment or considerations, such as new card sleeves, playmats, apparel, or the use of noise-cancelling headphones. Competitors are expected to abide by these considerations.

3.6.1 Participating in Streamed Matches

Competitors are reminded that, by entering or remaining at a sanctioned Play! Pokémon event, they agree to abide by the information stipulated under the [Publishing Tournament Information](#) section (2.6) of this document. Competitors are not permitted to voluntarily decline participating in a streamed match.

In exceptional circumstances, the Organizer may at their own discretion decide that it is in the best interests of all involved that the chosen match not be streamed. However, it should be noted that this consideration is reserved for truly uncommon circumstances, wherein a serious detriment may occur to the competitors’ ability to participate fully in that match.

Where competitors believe that their individual circumstances may make it prohibitively difficult for them to appear on stream, they should make every effort to inform the Organizer prior to the day of the event.

3.6.2 Rules Infractions in Streamed Matches

Rules infractions committed during streamed matches that are not immediately addressed may be identified and penalized upon subsequent review of match footage.

Additionally, certain kinds of penalties, especially those related to unacceptable behavior or language, may be escalated when the infraction occurs during a streamed match.

3.6.3 Sponsorship & Logo Appearances

Competitors and teams wishing to acquire a sponsorship and wear, use, or otherwise promote a sponsor's logo in appearances at Play! Pokémon events must request approval via our Sponsorship Release Form available via Customer Support.

The approval request must meet our sponsorship requirements below and must be received at least three weeks prior to the event in which the sponsor's logo will be displayed. All approvals are at the sole discretion of TPCi, and TPCi reserves the right to refuse any request.

Full details on the Premier Events Sponsorship Policy can be found here:
<https://www.pokemon.com/us/play-pokemon/about/premier-events-sponsorship-policy>

3.7 Prizing

All prizes provided for use at specific Play! Pokémon tournaments must be used as stipulated wherever possible. Unless otherwise specified, Organizers are always free to supplement any prize support provided by Play! Pokémon.

Play! Pokémon makes no recommendation regarding this supplemental prizing beyond the stipulation that Organizers must follow all local legal requirements that may apply.

3.7.1 Earning Prizes

To be eligible to receive certain prizes, competitors must ensure that they have indicated their intention to participate in Play! Pokémon—thereby accepting all conditions of participation as noted in this document—via their Pokémon Trainer Club account. This option is found under the “Play! Pokémon Settings” heading, located in the left-hand navigation bar underneath “My Profile.”

Competitors who have not selected the option to participate in Play! Pokémon will be ineligible to receive prizes including Championship Points, event invitations, or awards for travel.

3.7.2 Effects of Competitor Disqualification on Prize Distribution

Competitors are ineligible to receive prizes from any Play! Pokémon event from which they have been disqualified.

After any disqualified competitors are removed from standings, other competitors' placements may adjust accordingly. This may mean that new competitors become eligible for prizes.

Should an adjustment like this occur after any physical prizing has been awarded, those competitors with amended final standings will not receive further physical prizing but will be eligible for any increase in Championship Points, awards for travel, and similar non-physical prizes that may be awarded after the tournament's completion.

3.7.3 Promotional Product

Promotional product intended for use at Play! Pokémon events, including as part of the Pokémon League program, must be distributed as directed wherever possible.

Beginning 30 days after the event or final League session at which this material was intended to be distributed, the remainder may be used in conjunction with additional Play! Pokémon events at the Organizer's discretion. Otherwise, it must be destroyed.

Such promotional material may not be sold by any Organizer, in any capacity.

3.7.4 Unclaimed Prizes

Promotional product or other prizing that remains unclaimed after the conclusion of a tournament is considered forfeited by the competitor. Competitors should not expect that they will remain entitled to any prizes should they not be present at the tournament to receive them.

3.7.5 Play! Points

The Play! Pokémon program will track Play! Points as a tiebreaking tool. This tiebreaking tool may be used in exceptional circumstances to break Championship Point ties, for example, when Play! Pokémon is determining Travel Awards. More information can be found on the Play! Points page.

4 Tournament Operations & Specifics

4.1 Introduction

This section outlines and explains the specifics of tournament play. You should read this section if you are interested in:

- Basic rules for all Play! Pokémon tournaments
- Different types of tournament structures
- How competitors are paired and ranked
- How a competitor's final placement is calculated

4.1.1 Definitions

4.1.1.1 Match

A match is defined as a game or series of games played against a single opponent as part of a tournament.

Many matches consist of a single game, but some may be played in a best-of-three (or more) format. If best-of-three (or more) matches will be present at any point of a tournament, the Organizer should state when they will occur before the first round begins.

4.1.1.2 Round

The group of matches being played at any one time during a tournament is referred to as a round. The number of rounds that will be played depends on the number of competitors in attendance as well as the style of tournament that is being run.

4.2 Age Divisions

Play! Pokémon, where applicable, separates competitors into three age divisions: Junior, Senior, and Masters.

The age division that a competitor participates in is set at the beginning of the tournament season, based on that competitor's year of birth, and does not change over the course of that season. This allows competitors to compete against the same pool of opponents over the course of the season.

2025 Championship Season Age Divisions	
Junior Division	Competitors born in 2013 or later
Senior Division	Competitors born in 2009–2012 , inclusive
Masters Division	Competitors born in 2008 or earlier

4.3 Competitor Requirements

4.3.1 Minimum Number of Competitors

A sanctioned Play! Pokémon tournament must abide by the following criteria:

- At least 4 competitors are required to participate in a tournament.
- Competitors must complete 3 full rounds.
- Each competitor must compete against a valid opponent.
 - A valid opponent is defined as any opponent a competitor has not already played before completing round 3.
 - Should a number of competitors drop from the tournament that would not allow a competitor to play a valid opponent before round 3, the tournament will be invalid.

If any of the above criteria are not met, the Organizer should report the tournament as “Cancelled.”

4.3.1.1 Age Combined Play

Age-Modified Swiss is used when there are less than 6 competitors in any age division. Competitors are combined into mixed-age-division pods for the Swiss rounds but are separated by age division for single-elimination rounds. Standings will always be separated by age division even if there is no single-elimination top cut.

The software will first look at Juniors, and if there are less than 6 competitors, they will be combined with Seniors. If there are still less than 6, both Juniors and Seniors will be combined with Masters. If there are at least 6 Juniors but less than 6 Seniors, the Seniors will be combined with Masters. If only the Masters have less than 6 competitors, the Masters will be combined with Seniors.

Tournaments may be run with as few as 4 competitors even though the minimum for an age-separated pod is 6. Combined-age-division pods only share Swiss round pairings. Each age division has its own standings and, if applicable, single-elimination top cut.

4.3.2 **Late Arrivals**

If the Organizer feels that the addition of a late competitor creates a threat to the integrity of the event, they may choose to refuse event entry to that competitor. Otherwise, the competitor may be added to the tournament and will be paired in the following round. That competitor will receive losses for the current round and any round that has already completed.

Competitors who are added to a tournament after the first round has been paired will not contribute to the number of rounds that tournament will feature.

4.3.3 **Late Arrivals at Championship Series Events**

Competitors should not be added to Championship Series Events after the third round is completed.

4.4 **Match Records & Ranking**

4.4.1 **Match Record**

A competitor's match record is the representation of the number of matches they have won, lost, or tied during the tournament. It is presented as a ratio in the format "W/L/T." For example, a competitor who has won 4 games, lost 3 games, and tied 1 game will have a match record of 4/3/1.

Match records are printed and displayed each round on the pairings and match slips alongside each competitor's name and should be checked for accuracy by competitors as soon as they are made available.

4.4.1.1 Match Record Errors

It is at the Organizer's discretion to re-pair a round if a competitor's match record is found to be incorrect.

The Organizer can fix the error before the round starts and re-pair the minimum number of competitors to have a valid pairing or wait until the round starts before fixing the match record. In either case, the competitor's pairing in the next round will be correct.

Match records cannot be altered after the second subsequent round is paired. For example, match records for round 1 cannot be altered after round 3 is paired.

Changing a match record one round after the mistake has occurred affects the tournament similarly to a random pair-up or pair-down. However, changing a match record many rounds later has a much greater effect on the tournament and can result in a competitor facing opponents with lower match records for much of the tournament before a change in their own match record places them in the top standings.

Please note: During Championship Series Events and above, Pokémon GO competitors are responsible for checking their bracket standings before the start of their next match, as round pairings cannot be changed after a new set of matches commences.

4.4.2 Match Points

Match points are accumulated as competitors progress through a tournament. The number of match points a competitor has at any one time is determined by their match record.

Match Point Distribution	
Win	3 Match Points
Loss	0 Match Points
Tie	1 Match Point

Competitors receive 3 match points for a win, 0 for a loss, and 1 for a tie. So, if a competitor's match record is 4/3/1, they have 13 match points. This is the same as a competitor whose match record is 3/1/4.

Match points are printed and displayed each round on the pairings and match slips next to each competitor's match record. They are shown as a number in parentheses; in this case, (13).

4.4.3 (Opponents') Win Percentage

A competitor's opponents' win percentage—abbreviated to Op Win % on tournament documentation—is the average of the win percentages of all opponents played during a given set of rounds.

4.4.3.1 Calculating Win Percentage

Whether an opponent completed the tournament or dropped before it ended can affect how their win percentage is calculated.

If a competitor completed the tournament, their win percentage will be the number of wins divided by the total number of rounds in the tournament, with a minimum win percentage of 25% and a maximum win percentage of 100%. The table below illustrates:

Competitor completed the tournament		
Minimum win percentage: 25%		Maximum win percentage: 100%
Examples		
Total number of wins	Total number of rounds	Win %
1	5	25%
3	5	60%
5	5	100%

If a competitor dropped from the event before it was completed, their win percentage is the number of wins divided by the number of rounds in which they participated, with a minimum win percentage of 25% and a maximum win percentage of 75%. The table below illustrates:

Competitor drops before tournament is complete		
Minimum win percentage: 25%		Maximum win percentage: 75%
Examples		
Total number of wins	Number of rounds completed	Win %
1	5	25%
3	5	60%
5	5	75%

Once a competitor's opponents' win percentages are calculated, they are averaged, resulting in the final figure that is displayed.

4.4.3.2 Win Percentage & Random Byes

In calculating opponents' win percentage, rounds in which a competitor received a random bye do not count as a win for that competitor. Rather, this round is not considered at all for the purposes of this calculation.

4.5 Concessions & Intentional Draws

The result of a match should be decided by gameplay above all else. However, competitors are permitted to concede to their opponent or (in the case of TCG tournaments only) to make a single offer to draw the game.

A competitor may decide to concede for any reason. However, Play! Pokémon does not recognize any informal agreements made between competitors regarding the outcome of a match prior to the signing of the match slip. Competitors should be aware that any such agreements will not be enforced by tournament staff.

Once a match result has been recorded on a signed match slip, that result is considered final and cannot be changed.

Competitors may not:

- Ask their opponent to concede.
- Ask again for an intentional draw once their opponent has made it clear that they do not wish to do so.
- 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 or draw.
- Decide the result of a match through random means (e.g., by coin flip) or through any other choosing method.

4.6 Play! Pokémon Tournament Styles

Sanctioned Pokémon TCG/VG tournaments may be run as Swiss, single elimination, or Swiss-plus-single-elimination events. Sanctioned Pokémon GO events are run as Swiss-plus-single-elimination tournaments, and Pokémon GO Regional Championships, International Championships, and World Championships are run as double-elimination tournaments. Depending on the number of attendees, Pokémon GO events may be run in two phases: a group stage and a finals bracket.

Other tournament styles may be used only with express written permission from Play! Pokémon.

4.6.1 Swiss

Most Championship Series Events use this tournament style, either alone or in conjunction with single-elimination rounds.

The intent of the Swiss pairing method is to determine a single winner by pairing competitors with the same, or similar, match records against each other until there is only one undefeated competitor.

Tournaments run using the Swiss pairing method allow every competitor attending the tournament to play in every round, regardless of how well they do over the course of the event.

Swiss tournaments progress as follows:

Round 1
Competitors are paired randomly for the first round of play. If there is an odd number of participants, the competitor without an opponent is given a bye, which counts as a win but is not included when calculating tiebreakers.
Round 2
Competitors in the 1-0 bracket (1 win, 0 losses) are randomly paired against each other; competitors in the 0-1 bracket (0 wins, 1 loss) are paired in the same manner. If there is an odd number of competitors, one of the competitors in the 1-0 bracket is paired randomly with one of the competitors in the 0-1 bracket (as long as they did not play each other in a previous round). If this leaves an odd number of competitors in the 0-1 bracket, one competitor from this round is assigned a bye, as above.
All Subsequent Rounds
Competitors continue to be paired randomly by match record until the specified number of rounds have concluded. The competitor listed at the top of the standings at this point is the champion. If there is an odd number of competitors, pairings continue as in Round 2, pairing down from the highest bracket (most wins) to the lowest bracket (fewest wins), assigning a bye randomly to one competitor in the lowest bracket.

4.6.1.1 Final Placement in Swiss Standings

After the final round of Swiss, the only undefeated competitor—or competitor with the highest number of match points and the best tiebreakers—is the winner of the tournament. All other competitors are ranked based on their final records at the event.

Because competitors often have a similar number of match points, Play! Pokémon uses tiebreakers to determine the final ranking of each competitor. After competitors are ranked by final match points, tiebreakers are applied in the following order.

Once the criteria for one tiebreaker is met, no further tiebreakers are applied.

First Tiebreaker	Opponents' Win Percentage
Competitors who are tied are ranked in order of their Op Win %, from highest to lowest.	
Second Tiebreaker	Opponents' Opponents' Win Percentage

Competitors who remain tied are now ranked in order of their Op Op Win %, from highest to lowest.	
A competitor's opponents' opponents' win percentage (Op Op Win %) is the average of the Op Win % of all of that competitor's opponents.	
Final Tiebreaker	Head-to-Head
<p>If exactly two competitors are tied in the final standings and those competitors played each other during the tournament, then the winner of that match is ranked higher than the loser.</p> <p>If exactly two competitors are tied in the final standings and those competitors <u>did not</u> play each other during the tournament, then the order in which they appear will be randomly determined.</p> <p>If more than two competitors are tied in the final standings, then the order in which they appear will be randomly determined.</p>	

4.6.2 Single Elimination

Single-elimination tournaments determine the winner of the event by removing competitors from the tournament after they lose one match. The number of competitors in each round will be half of the number of competitors in the previous round (with the possible exception of the first round).

The tournament ends when only one competitor remains undefeated. That competitor is the winner of the tournament.

Single-elimination tournaments progress as follows:

Round 1
Competitors are assigned seeds at random and then paired based on the standard single-elimination brackets. The winner of each match moves on to the next round, while the loser is eliminated from the tournament.
All Subsequent Rounds
<p>Competitors continue to be paired along the brackets, with the winner of a match moving on to the next round and the loser being eliminated from the tournament.</p> <p>Ultimately, only two competitors will remain. The winner of that match becomes the winner of the tournament.</p>

4.6.2.1 Single-Elimination Brackets

If the number of competitors in the event is not a power of 2 (8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, etc.), then the highest-seeded competitors receive byes. The number of competitors that receive byes is based on the difference between the actual attendance and closest power of 2 that is greater than the actual attendance.

For example, if the actual attendance is 53, the closest power of 2 that is greater than 53 is 64. The difference between 64 and 53 is 11, so the top 11 seeded competitors (who were seeded randomly) would receive first-round byes.

4.6.2.2 Final Placement in Single-Elimination Standings

After the final round of single elimination, the only remaining competitor is the winner of the tournament. All other competitors are ranked based on the final record of the opponent who knocked them out of the event.

For example, a competitor who was eliminated in the first round by the winner of that tournament will be ranked higher than any other competitor who was eliminated in the first round.

4.6.2.3 Placement Play-Offs

The Organizer may have the competitors who lose in the Top 4 play off for 3rd and 4th place instead of using tiebreakers to determine the 3rd- and 4th-place final standings. If this will be the case, the Organizer must make this clear at the beginning of the tournament.

4.6.3 **Swiss + Single Elimination**

The purpose of this format is to run a number of Swiss rounds appropriate for the number of competitors in attendance, after which the top-ranked competitors are seeded into single-elimination brackets and play until only one competitor remains. That competitor is the winner of the tournament.

Most Pokémon TCG and video game Championship Series Events use a variation of this tournament style. The following sections illustrate which Championship Series Events use which variant, and the details and differences of each of those variants.

Play! Pokémon reserves the right to approve alterations to the tournament format of an event at any time for any reason.

Organizers should note that competitors who are added to a tournament after the first round has been paired will not contribute to the number of rounds that tournament will feature.

4.6.3.1 Championship Series Event Tournament Structures

Championship Series Event Tournament Structures			
Game	Championship Series Event	Tournament Mode	Tournament Structure
VG	League Challenge	TOM VGC Premier Event	Variant #1: VG Single Day
VG	League Cup		
VG	Regional Championships	TOM TCG Two Day Championship	Variant #5: 2025 Championship Format
VG	International Championships		
TCG	League Challenge	TCG League Challenge	Variant #2: TCG Rounds Swiss Only
TCG	League Cup	TCG League Cup	

Variant #3: TCG Single Day			
TCG	Regional Championships	TOM TCG Two Day Championship	Variant #5: 2025 Championship Format
TCG	International Championships		
GO	League Challenge and Cup	GO Premier Event	Variant #4: GO Single Day
GO	Regional Championships	Challonge Championship	Double Elimination
GO	International Championships	Challonge Championship	Double Elimination

4.6.3.2 Single Day Tournament Structures

The number of competitors participating in the tournament directly affects how many Swiss and single-elimination rounds will be played. The below tables illustrate this relationship:

Variant #1: VG Single Day			
Competitors per Age Division	Swiss Rounds	Single-Elimination Rounds	Total Length (in Rounds)
4–7	3	0	3
8	3	1	4
9–16	4	2	6
17–32	5	3	8
33–64	6	3	9
65–128	7	3	10
129–226	8	3	11
227–256	8	4	12
257–409	9	4	13
410–512	9	5	14
513+	10	5	15

Variant #2: TCG Swiss Rounds Only			
Competitors per Age Division	Swiss Rounds	Single-Elimination Rounds	Total Length (in Rounds)
4–8	3	0	3
9–16	4	0	4
17–32	5	0	5
33–64	6	0	6

65–128	7	0	7
129–256	8	0	8
257–512	9	0	9
513+	10	0	10

Variant #3: TCG Single Day

Competitors per Age Division	Swiss Rounds	Single-Elimination Rounds	Total Length (in Rounds)
4–8	3	0	3
9–12	4	2	6
13–20	5	2	7
21–32	5	3	8
33–64	6	3	9
65–128	7	3	10
129–226	8	3	11
227–409	9	3	12
410+	10	3	13

Variant #4: GO Single Day

Competitors per Age Division	Swiss Rounds	Single-Elimination Rounds	Total Length (in Rounds)
4–7	3	0	3
8	3	1	4
9–16	4	2	6
17–32	5	3	8
33–64	6	3	9
65–128	7	3	10
129–226	8	3	11
227–256	8	4	12
257–409	9	4	13
410–512	9	5	14
513+	10	5	15

4.6.3.3 Two Phase Tournament Structure

Larger Championship Series Events may run over two or three days, with a portion of the highest-ranking competitors advancing to a second phase of Swiss rounds.

Match point thresholds for Swiss Phase Two qualification—as well as the number of Swiss Phase Two rounds to be held—depend on the number of competitors per age division, detailed in the table below. Note that the red line indicates the point at which a second phase of Swiss rounds is required.

Variant #5: 2025 Championship Format						
Competitors per Age Division	Total Swiss Rounds	Swiss Phase 1	Phase 2 Match Point Threshold	Swiss Phase 2	Top Cut	Notes
4–8	3	3	N/A	0	N/A	Natural Swiss
9–16	4	4	N/A	0	Asymmetrical Top 2	Natural Swiss
17–32	6	6	N/A	0	Asymmetrical Top 4	Natural Swiss +1
33–64	7	7	N/A	0	Asymmetrical Top 6	Natural Swiss + 1
65–128	8	6	10	2	Asymmetrical Top 8	Natural Swiss + 1
129–256	9	7	13	2	Asymmetrical Top 8	Natural Swiss + 1
257–512	10	8	16	2	Asymmetrical Top 8	Natural Swiss + 1
513–1024	11	8	16	3	Asymmetrical Top 8	Natural Swiss + 1
1025–2048	12	8	16	4	Asymmetrical Top 8	Natural Swiss + 1
2049–4096	13	9	19	4	Asymmetrical Top 8	Natural Swiss + 1
4097–8192	14	9	19	5	Asymmetrical Top 8	Natural Swiss + 1

4.6.3.4 Championship Series Event Round Structure

Swiss rounds at Championship Series Events may use single-game or best-of-three matches. This decision is at the discretion of the Organizer, though Play! Pokémon strongly recommends that events at the Regional Championships level and above use best-of-three matches. It is strongly suggested that all Pokémon GO events are run best-of-three, regardless of level.

Single-elimination rounds at Championship Series Events using the Swiss + single elimination tournament structure must use best-of-three matches.

Championship Series Event rounds must be allowed the following minimum amount of time to complete:

- Single game: 30 minutes
- Best-of-three: 50 minutes

The time remaining in the round is considered public knowledge for all competitors. Play! Pokémon recommends that round time be publicly displayed at all Championship Series Events.

Competitors may ask Judges to provide a time check, which should be accurate to the nearest minute according to the best information the Judge has available.

4.6.3.5 Final Placement in Swiss + Single-Elimination Standings

Following the completion of Swiss rounds, competitors will be ranked based on their performance and Swiss tiebreakers. A number of the highest-ranking competitors will then be seeded into single-elimination brackets, equal to the number of slots available in the bracket.

Matches are then played according to [single-elimination](#) rules, with the winner moving on to the next bracket and the loser being eliminated. Eventually, only one competitor will remain. This competitor is the winner of the tournament.

The tiebreaker to determine final placement of the competitors in the single-elimination portion of the tournament is simply each competitor's final Swiss ranking.

After each round of single elimination, eliminated competitors are ranked according to their final Swiss ranking, with the highest-seeded competitor taking the highest rank available for that bracket, followed by the second-highest-seeded competitor, and so on.

4.7 Pairings

After each round of the tournament completes, the Organizer should pair the next round and post the pairings. Competitors should be given a reasonable amount of time to report any errors with their standings and find their seats before a scorekeeper clicks the "Start Round" button in TOM. Per 4.4.1.1, Pokémon GO competitors are responsible for checking their bracket before the start of the next round, as Pokémon GO does not use TOM at the Regionals level and up.

Note that once the round is started, no pairings can be changed.

4.7.1 Random Byes

Throughout the course of a tournament, competitors may be assigned byes. This occurs when there is an odd number of competitors.

A bye counts as a win for that competitor's match record but does not count as a round played when calculating that competitor's win percentage.

Where byes are inevitable, they will always be awarded to the competitor with the worst match record if at all possible. However, no competitor will ever receive more than one bye over the course of a tournament.

4.8 Dropping from Tournament Play

Competitors who decide that they no longer wish to continue playing a tournament in progress must drop. Competitors may decide to drop from tournament play for any reason, although competitors may not drop from a match in progress without first conceding or completing that match.

The Organizer may require competitors to complete a form or slip to confirm that they wish to drop, or to report this to a specific member of tournament staff. While this may change from event to event, the following information regarding drops remains true for all Play! Pokémon tournaments.

4.8.1 Incomplete Matches

Competitors who wish to leave the tournament before their current match is complete will receive a loss for all their games that have yet to resolve. If a competitor wishes to avoid receiving these losses, they should ensure that their match is complete and the result has been recorded before they follow the procedure to drop.

Once the current round is complete, the competitor will be dropped from the tournament and will not be paired in any subsequent rounds.

4.8.2 Dropped Competitors' Final Standing

Competitors who drop from a tournament before it is completed will still be recorded in the final standings. Any Pokémon GO competitors who drop from the bracket at Regionals, Internationals, and Worlds will receive Match Losses until they have lost two rounds, at which point they will be removed from the bracket.

4.8.3 Disqualified Competitors' Final Standing

If a competitor is disqualified from a tournament, they are removed from the standings completely and are ineligible to receive any prizes their match record may otherwise have entitled them to.

5 Trading Card Game Tournament Rules

5.1 Introduction

This section outlines and explains rules that are specific to Pokémon Trading Card Game tournaments. You should read this section if you are interested in:

- Basic rules for all Play! Pokémon TCG tournaments.
- Which cards and randomizers are (not) legal for play.
- Resolutions and tiebreakers for TCG games and matches.

This section assumes readers are familiar with the information presented in the basic Pokémon Trading Card Game Rulebook.

5.2 Trading Card Legality

Only genuine Pokémon Trading Card Game cards may be used at Play! Pokémon events.

Competitors must ensure that all cards they wish to use during each tournament are:

- Legal for the format in which the tournament is held;
- The correct language with respect to the region in which the tournament is held;
- Not marked or altered in any way.

5.2.1 Disallowed Cards

The card should be in much the same state as it was when obtained from its original Pokémon TCG product. A certain amount of wear is acceptable. However, the following types of cards may not be played at Play! Pokémon tournaments:

- Marked cards;
 - A card is considered marked if some aspect of the card makes it possible to identify it without seeing its face, including scratches, tears, discoloration, bends, etc.
- Cards that have undergone post-production alteration;
 - Examples of alterations include autographs, artwork, or other such amendments to the surface of the card, not including any official stamps applied by TPCi.

5.2.2 Card Sleeves

Card sleeves must satisfy the same criteria as the cards themselves with regard to markings and wear. In addition, to be legal for tournament play, all card sleeves within each competitor's deck must:

- Enclose a single card in its entirety;

- Be the same color/design, condition, size, and texture;
- Have all edges be a single, solid color (i.e., artwork should not extend to the very edge of the sleeve);
- Be either a single, solid color or an officially licensed Pokémon design;
- Not be reflective to the extent that the faces of cards may be clearly determined from looking at their surface.

Competitors may use inner sleeves or over sleeves provided that the above criteria remain satisfied and that this does not affect the competitor's ability to shuffle their deck.

Play! Pokémon strongly recommends the use of sleeves with an opaque back. Using clear sleeves, or declining to use sleeves at all, may expose imperfections on the back of the card itself.

5.2.3 Legal Languages

Pokémon Trading Card Game cards are available around the world in a variety of languages.

To ease the linguistic complexity of tournament interactions, Play! Pokémon limits which languages are legal for play at Championship Series Events according to the rating zone in which that Championship Series Event is held.

For all other tournaments and League sessions, the decision regarding which languages are legal for play is at the discretion of the Organizer or League staff.

5.2.3.1 Legal Languages for Championship Series Events, by Rating Zone

Rating Zone	Legal Languages
North America	English
Latin America	English, Spanish
Europe	English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish
Oceania	English
Russia	English, Russian
Middle East and South Africa	English

5.2.3.2 Additional Legal Languages for Championship Series Events, by Country or Region

Country or Region	Additional Legal Language
Canada	French
Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Paraguay, Peru	Portuguese
Puerto Rico	English, Spanish

5.2.3.3 Exceptions

For the Pokémon TCG World Championships, International Championships, Regional and Special Championships, and for side events held at these events, regardless of which country they are hosted in, competitors are always permitted to use English cards as well as cards in any language that is legal in the competitor's home country.

While alternate languages are allowed at all Regional Championships and above, translation teams are only guaranteed at the Pokémon World Championships. Players should not expect translation resources outside of card language translations at any other Championship Series Event.

In exceptional circumstances, the Head Judge or Organizer of any tournament may also choose to make an exception to rules regarding the legal languages. This is at their sole discretion and should only be considered where there would be no operational detriment to the tournament in doing so.

Competitors who believe their personal circumstances would make it difficult for them to fully comply with rules regarding legal card languages should make every effort to contact the event Organizer prior to the event itself.

5.2.4 Proxies

If a card becomes damaged during a tournament in such a way that results in the card becoming marked, a Judge may create a proxy of that card to act as the damaged card in all ways for the remainder of the tournament.

Alternately, if the competitor has another copy of that card that is available for use, the competitor can simply replace the damaged card with an undamaged copy.

In some cases, a card is damaged due to a production error. Competitors should do their best to avoid playing with these cards, though sometimes that is not possible. If the Head Judge feels that this creates a marked-card situation, the Judge may create a proxy card to act as the damaged card in all ways for the remainder of the tournament.

In all cases, the damaged card must be retained to use as a reference when the proxy card is played.

Proxies may not be used at Play! Pokémon tournaments for any other reason and should be treated as any other counterfeit card if discovered.

5.3 Deck Legality

5.3.1 Deck Registration

All Play! Pokémon Championship Series Events require that participants complete a deck list detailing the exact contents of the deck they wish to use during the tournament.

These deck lists can later be used by Organizers and Judges to verify that a deck has not been altered since the outset of a tournament, so competitors should take care to ensure the clarity and accuracy of their deck lists.

5.3.2 Deck Checks

Deck checks are required to be performed at all Championship Series Events. Play! Pokémon expects that deck checks will be performed on at least 10% of decks but recommends that tournament staff strive to complete as many as is reasonable.

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

Although competitors may be required to put the cards in their decks in the same order as the cards on their deck lists, they should not assume this and should always await direction from tournament staff before reordering their deck.

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

- The list is complete and legible;
- The deck described is legal for tournament play;
- The contents of the deck match the list exactly;
- The cards and sleeves are free of features that could cause them to be classified as marked.

5.4 Constructed Tournament Formats

The deck construction rules for Constructed formats are as follows:

- The deck must contain exactly **60 cards**.
- Decks may not contain more than **4 copies** of a single card, as defined by the card's English language translation, except for Basic Energy cards.
- Matches are played for **6 Prize cards**.

Play! Pokémon allows the use of three Constructed formats for its sanctioned tournaments, all of which are detailed below.

5.4.1 Standard Format & Expanded Format

5.4.1.1 Legal Expansions

<i>Legal Regulation Marks</i>			
Legality Date	Regulation Mark	Standard	Expanded
September 10, 2021	<i>D</i>		✓
September 10, 2021	<i>E</i>		✓
March 12, 2022	<i>F</i>		✓
April 14, 2023	<i>G</i>	✓	✓

April 5, 2024	<i>H</i>	✓	✓
April 11, 2025	<i>I</i>	✓	✓

Expanded Format Black & White Expansions			
Legality Date	Set Name	Standard	Expanded
	<i>Black & White</i>		✓
	<i>Black & White—Emerging Powers</i>		✓
	<i>Black & White—Noble Victories</i>		✓
	<i>Black & White—Next Destinies</i>		✓
	<i>Black & White—Dark Explorers</i>		✓
	<i>Dragon Vault</i>		✓
	<i>Black & White—Dragons Exalted</i>		✓
	<i>Black & White—Boundaries Crossed</i>		✓
	<i>Black & White—Plasma Storm</i>		✓
	<i>Black & White—Plasma Freeze</i>		✓
	<i>Black & White—Plasma Blast</i>		✓
	<i>Black & White—Legendary Treasures</i>		✓

Expanded Format XY Expansions			
Legality Date	Set Name	Standard	Expanded
	<i>XY—Kalos Starter Set</i>		✓
	<i>XY</i>		✓
	<i>XY—Flashfire</i>		✓
	<i>XY—Furious Fists</i>		✓
	<i>XY—Phantom Forces</i>		✓
	<i>XY—Primal Clash</i>		✓
	<i>Double Crisis</i>		✓
	<i>XY—Roaring Skies</i>		✓
	<i>XY—Ancient Origins</i>		✓
	<i>XY—BREAKthrough</i>		✓
	<i>XY—BREAKpoint</i>		✓
	<i>Generations</i>		✓
	<i>XY—Fates Collide</i>		✓
	<i>XY—Steam Siege</i>		✓
	<i>XY—Evolutions</i>		✓

Expanded Format Sun & Moon Expansions			
Legality Date	Set Name	Standard	Expanded
	<i>Sun & Moon</i>		✓
	<i>Sun & Moon—Guardians Rising</i>		✓
	<i>Sun & Moon—Burning Shadows</i>		✓
	<i>Shining Legends</i>		✓

	<i>Sun & Moon—Crimson Invasion</i>		✓
	<i>Sun & Moon—Ultra Prism</i>		✓
	<i>Sun & Moon—Forbidden Light</i>		✓
	<i>Sun & Moon—Celestial Storm</i>		✓
	<i>Sun & Moon—Lost Thunder</i>		✓
	<i>Sun & Moon—Team Up</i>		✓
	<i>Dragon Majesty</i>		✓
	<i>Sun & Moon—Unbroken Bonds</i>		✓
	<i>Sun & Moon—Unified Minds</i>		✓
	<i>Hidden Fates</i>		✓
	<i>Sun & Moon—Cosmic Eclipse</i>		✓

Additional Releases		
Product Name	Standard	Expanded
McDonald's Collection 2011–2021		✓
<i>Black & White</i> Trainer Kit		✓
XY Trainer Kit		✓
XY Trainer Kit—Bisharp and Wigglytuff		✓
XY Trainer Kit—Latias and Latios		✓
XY Trainer Kit—Pikachu Libre and Suicune		✓
<i>Sun & Moon</i> Trainer Kit—Lycanroc & Alolan Raichu		✓
<i>Sun & Moon</i> Trainer Kit—Alolan Sandslash & Alolan Ninetales		✓
<i>Detective Pikachu</i>		✓

“Black Star” Promo Cards			
Prefix	Numbered	Standard	Expanded
BW	01 and higher		✓
XY	01 and higher		✓
SM	158 and higher		✓

5.4.1.2 Release & Legality Schedule

Expansions are expected to be released on a regular schedule, averaging four new expansions per calendar year. Newly released cards will become legal on the second Friday following that product or expansion's US market release date.

The release and subsequent tournament legal date for promo cards can be confirmed by visiting [the Pokémon TCG Promo Card Legality Status page](#), which is updated monthly.

5.4.1.3 Reprinted Cards in the Standard & Expanded Formats

Cards that have previously existed in the format are occasionally reprinted in newer expansions. In these cases, the older version of the card may be played if:

- The name of the new card is identical to that of the older card;
- All text printed on the new card is functionally identical to that of the older card.

In addition, provided it meets the criteria above, a newer version of a card that is currently playable in the Standard or Expanded format may be played immediately in that format upon its release.

Consider the following examples when determining whether any two cards are functionally identical:

- Copycat (CES, 127) and Copycat (TRR, 83) are functionally identical. Although the wording has been altered, the effect described remains unchanged.
- Rainbow Energy (CES, 151) and Rainbow Energy (TR, 17) are *not* functionally identical, as the former “put[s] 1 damage counter” while the latter “does 10 damage”—damage counters and damage are separate mechanics in the Pokémon TCG and cannot be referenced interchangeably.

5.4.1.4 Banned Cards

The list of cards banned in tournament play can be found [here](#).

Tournament results and community feedback will continue to be analyzed to maintain a healthy play environment. In particular, the Expanded format will be aggressively monitored because there are so many cards and potential combinations available to use.

5.4.2 Unlimited Format

Unlimited decks may contain cards from any Pokémon Trading Card Game expansions and promotional cards that have been released in the United States.

5.4.2.1 Release & Legality Schedule

Cards from each new expansion will become legal on the second Friday following that expansion’s US market release date. Expansions are expected to be released on a regular schedule, averaging four new expansions per calendar year.

Promo cards such as those found in Pokémon TCG Boxes and Collections will be legal on either the first or third Friday following the expansion’s US market release date. This tournament legal date is consistent worldwide and can be confirmed by visiting the Pokémon TCG Promo Card Legality Status page, which is updated monthly.

5.4.2.2 Reprinted Cards in the Unlimited Format

As there is no restriction on the number of expansions legal for play in the Unlimited format, competitors will occasionally come across Trainer cards from older expansions that have the same name as newer cards but completely different effects.

Competitors may still include those older versions of the card in their decks, provided that the wording of the most recent version is used wherever that card is concerned.

5.4.2.3 Banned Cards

There are currently no banned cards in the Unlimited format.

5.5 Limited Tournament Formats

The deck construction rules for Limited formats are as follows:

- The deck must contain exactly **40 cards**.
- There is **no limit** to the number of cards with the same name that can be included, provided there is no restriction detailed in the card text itself.
- Matches are played for **4 Prize cards**.

Play! Pokémon allows the use of three Limited formats for its sanctioned tournaments, all of which are detailed below.

5.5.1 Sealed

In a Sealed event, competitors receive either a Build & Battle Box or a predetermined number of booster packs (usually between four and six) from the Organizer at the beginning of the event.

5.5.1.1 Deck Construction

Competitors open their booster packs at a signal from the Organizer and construct a 40-card deck using only those cards (including any cards in their Build & Battle Box) and any Basic Energy cards provided by the Organizer.

Competitors have 30 minutes to construct their decks.

5.5.2 Booster Draft

In a Booster Draft event, competitors receive booster packs from the Organizer at the beginning of the event (recommended four to six boosters per competitor). Competitors split into equal-sized groups, which should not exceed eight competitors per group, and are seated in a circle.

5.5.2.1 Drafting Process

At a signal from the Organizer, each competitor opens one booster pack without revealing its contents to the other competitors. Each competitor then selects one card from their booster pack and lays it face down in front of them.

Once a card has been placed in a competitor's stack, it is considered selected and cannot be returned to the pack in exchange for another card. Competitors then pass the remaining cards, face down, to the person on their left. The cards selected by each competitor should remain private knowledge during the drafting process.

Each competitor continues to select one card from among the cards handed to them until all the cards have been selected. This process repeats for each remaining booster pack, with the passing pattern alternating from left to right as each new pack is opened.

5.5.2.2 Deck Construction

After all the booster packs have been opened and all the cards have been selected, each competitor constructs a 40-card deck using only the cards they selected and any Basic Energy cards provided by the Organizer.

Competitors have 30 minutes to construct their decks.

5.5.3 **Build & Battle Draft**

In a Build & Battle Draft event, each competitor receives a Build & Battle Box from the Organizer at the beginning of the event. Competitors split into groups of four and are seated in a circle.

At a signal from the Organizer, each competitor opens their 40-card Build & Battle deck first, without revealing its contents to the other competitors. Competitors can take a few minutes to look through these cards, which can be used to build their deck at the end. When they're finished, the competitors will put these cards back into their Build & Battle Box.

5.5.3.1 Drafting Process

When everyone is ready, the Organizer will signal the competitors to begin drafting. Each competitor opens one booster pack without revealing its contents to the other competitors. Each competitor then selects one card from their booster pack and puts it into their box, along with the Pokémon TCG Online code card and the non-foil Basic Energy card.

Once a card has been placed in a competitor's box, it is considered selected and cannot be returned to the pack in exchange for another card. Competitors then pass the remaining cards, face down, to the person on their left. The cards selected by each competitor should remain private knowledge during the drafting process.

Each competitor continues to select one card from among the cards handed to them until all the cards have been selected. After all cards from a booster pack have been taken, competitors will have one minute to review the cards they have so far. This process repeats for each remaining booster pack, with the passing pattern alternating from left to right as each new pack is opened.

5.5.3.2 Deck Construction

After all the booster packs have been opened and all the cards have been selected, each competitor constructs a 40-card deck using only the cards in their box and any Basic Energy cards provided by the Organizer.

Competitors have 20 minutes to construct their decks.

5.6 Game Area Management

The Game Area is the space that competitors utilize during their match. It is each competitor's responsibility to keep the space clear and easily utilized for the match in progress.

So long as there is no hinderance to the match, competitors are permitted to have good luck charms or objects in the play space but must keep the space neat for both competitors. As noted in above sections, no food or drinks are permitted on the play table.

5.6.1 The Play Area

Cards in play should be managed in such a way that they are organized, neat, and easy for opponents and Judges to interpret.

Cards that are placed into the play area from the hand without the effect of another card, Ability, or effect are considered played at the point the competitor physically releases the card from their hand. If a competitor does not wish to play a card, they should not place it into the play area. The boundaries of the play area are defined according to the image overleaf.



Image A: The Pokémon TCG play area

A: Each deck should be oriented in a north/south direction, with the short sides of the cards facing each competitor. Card sleeve openings should face the opponent.

B: Each competitor may have only one discard pile, though certain cards in the discard pile may be rotated slightly to make them more visible.

C: Prize cards must be spaced out in a way that ensures that both competitors and the tournament staff can see at a glance how many Prize cards each competitor has remaining. Prize cards must be on the opposite side of the play space from that competitor's deck and discard pile.

D: Keep all Energy cards aligned in the same direction under the Pokémon in play, and make sure each card is kept visible.

E: Make sure Benched Pokémon are separated enough from each other and from the Active Pokémon so that it is clear which Pokémon have cards attached to them.

F: Put Stadium cards between both competitors' Active Pokémon so that the card is visible to all competitors.

5.6.1.1 The Lost Zone

A competitor's Lost Zone should be located directly above their Prize cards and should be neatly stacked to ensure that it does not interfere with any other cards in play.

5.6.2 Randomizers

Competitors are permitted to use two types of randomizers during a Pokémon TCG match: coins or dice. Competitors are always permitted to use their opponent's randomizer.

5.6.2.1 Coins

Coins can be obtained from preconstructed theme decks, Trainer Kits, and other special Pokémon TCG products.

Competitors should consider the following when choosing to use a coin as a randomizer:

- When flipped, a coin should be held at shoulder height and fully rotate at least three times before landing on the table.
- Coins should land as flat on the table as possible.
- If both competitors cannot agree on the result of the flip, a Judge may be called to determine whether the result is conclusive or if the coin must be flipped again.
 - Once a Judge has ruled that a result is conclusive, it cannot be redone.
- Coin flips that land outside the play area are considered invalid and must be flipped again.
 - Everything contained inside the blue and white mat shown in Image A is the play area for your game.

Any coin released with any official Pokémon product from *EX Ruby & Sapphire* on should be considered fair and impartial.

5.6.2.2 Dice

Dice can be obtained from Pokémon TCG Elite Trainer Boxes. Any six-sided die is permitted for use as a randomizer, so long as the die is a cube, where each side has the same surface area.

Competitors should consider the following when choosing to use a die as a randomizer:

- Dice used as randomizers must be transparent or translucent.
- Dice must have well-rounded corners to ensure that they roll on the playing surface.
- Dice should be of an appropriate size so that the result can easily be understood by both the competitors and the Judges.
 - This includes size and lettering or numbering on the die.
- One side may have custom-precision etching in place of the 1 or the 6 as long as all custom dice being used by that competitor have the same side customized and both competitors approve the use of the die.
- The numbers or pips on the opposite sides of the die must add up to 7 (i.e., 1 must be opposite 6). A custom-etched side uses the number replaced when determining if the opposite sides add up to 7.
- Even numbers (2, 4, 6) on the dice should be treated as heads. Odd numbers (1, 3, 5) should be treated as tails.

5.7 Shuffling & Deck Randomization

Each competitor's deck is expected to be fully randomized at the start of each game and during the game, as card effects require. Randomization must be done in the presence of the competitor's opponent and must be done in a reasonable amount of time. Care should also be taken to ensure that the cards in the deck are not harmed or revealed during the shuffle.

Once the deck is shuffled, it must be offered to the competitor's opponent to be cut once. Cutting the deck consists of creating two separate stacks of cards by removing a portion of the top of the deck, and then placing it under the remaining portion. Competitors should take care to not reveal any of their opponent's cards while cutting.

Instead of cutting, the opponent may choose to shuffle the deck. This shuffle should be brief, and when it concludes, the deck's owner may cut the deck once as described above. Cutting into more than two stacks is considered a shuffle.

5.7.1 Judge Intervention

If either competitor does not feel that either deck is sufficiently randomized immediately following a shuffle, or if a competitor prefers not to offer their deck to an opponent for randomization, a Judge must be called over to shuffle the deck(s) in question. No competitor may shuffle or cut after the Judge's shuffle.

5.7.2 Insufficient Randomization

Insufficiently randomizing the deck is a rules violation that may carry a penalty. It is therefore in the interest of each competitor to become comfortable with a shuffling technique that is both quick and thorough.

5.8 Tournament Play

5.8.1 Definitions

5.8.1.1 Match

A Pokémon TCG match begins when the time allotted for play begins to count down. The match ends when both competitors have agreed upon the result and signed the accompanying match slip.

5.8.1.2 Game

A Pokémon TCG game begins at the time the competitor who will take the first turn is determined.

In best-of-three match play, after a game has been completed, the loser of that game decides who goes first in the next game instead of determining it by a coin flip. This decision is made at the same point during setup that the coin flip would take place.

The game ends when any single competitor achieves the number of win conditions required to be declared the winner.

In best-of-three match play, a game may also end:

- If any single competitor loses two games. In this scenario, their opponent will be declared the winner.
- If each competitor has already lost a game and then receives simultaneous Game Loss penalties:
 - In Swiss formats/rounds, this match will be recorded as a tie.
 - In single elimination or in a match that requires a winner, the competitors must then play a tiebreaker game to determine the winner.

5.8.1.3 Turn

A turn in the Pokémon TCG begins when the active competitor draws a card into their hand as their first action. The turn ends when the active competitor completes a valid attack, indicates that their opponent may proceed to the turn that follows, or completes any other action that carries the stipulation that the end of that competitor's turn must immediately follow (*for example, Steven's Resolve, CES 145*).

5.8.2 Beginning the Game

5.8.2.1 Mulligans

If either competitor has no Basic Pokémon in their opening hand, that competitor must take a mulligan.

The opposing competitor may draw a card for each extra mulligan their opponent took. For example, if both competitors took 2 mulligans, and then Competitor A took 3 additional mulligans, Competitor B may draw up to 3 cards. These cards may be drawn only once Competitor A has placed an Active Pokémon, and Competitor B must announce how many cards they will draw before doing so.

If any of those cards are Basic Pokémon, they may be put onto the Bench. The Active Pokémon must remain unchanged.

5.8.2.2 Judge-Enforced Progression

On extremely rare occasions, a situation may occur where one competitor is unable to draw a Basic Pokémon despite completing an unprecedented number of mulligans—for example, this may occur if that competitor has a very low number of Basic Pokémon in their deck.

In the interest of preserving a lively tempo of play, the following process may be initiated by the Head Judge once any one competitor has completed 8 mulligans without drawing a Basic Pokémon:

1. Shuffle the competitor's deck.
2. Reveal cards from the top of the competitor's deck until a Basic Pokémon is found.
 - a. Place that Basic Pokémon aside.
3. Shuffle the competitor's deck once more.
4. The competitor then draws 6 cards from the top of their deck.
 - a. Add the previously revealed Basic Pokémon to create a hand of 7 cards.
5. Indicate that the game may now proceed as normal.
 - a. A time extension should be issued for the time taken to complete this process.

5.8.3 **Game Resolution**

Once time is called, games still in progress do not end immediately. Instead, the active competitor must complete their turn. Afterward, the competitors must play an additional three full turns (+3 turns).

If time is called during Pokémon Checkup, there is no currently active competitor, so the next turn will be turn one of three.

Depending on the format of the tournament, it may or may not be necessary for each game within a match to resolve with a declared winner. For example, single-elimination tournaments require each game to have a winner, as only one competitor from each match may advance to the next round. However, Swiss tournaments have no such requirement, and games may remain unresolved while the match is recorded as a tie.

The following practices are used to help games resolve when they remain incomplete after time is called, +3 turns have elapsed, and the tournament format demands that a winner must be declared.

5.8.3.1 Tiebreaker Games

If time elapses on an incomplete game that requires a winner, if both competitors take their last Prize card (or Knock Out their opponent's last Pokémon) at the same time, or both competitors simultaneously receive their second Game Loss, and no other win conditions have been met, competitors must determine the winner of that game by engaging in a tiebreaker game.

The competitors should set up as though they were playing a normal game, including setting up 6 Prize cards and flipping a coin to decide who goes first. The winner of the tiebreaker game is the first

competitor to gain a Prize card advantage over their opponent or to win the game outright by any other method.

When time is called, a tiebreaker game should end after +3 turns. If a tiebreaker game is unresolved at this time, the game (1, 2, or 3 of the match) remains incomplete.

5.8.3.2 Resolving a Game That Cannot Otherwise Reach a Natural End

On extremely rare occasions, competitors may encounter a situation in which it is impossible for a game to reach a natural conclusion without outside assistance—for example, when it is impossible for either competitor's deck to take any further Prize cards.

In these cases, the following process may be initiated by the Head Judge:

1. The match time must have elapsed, +3 turns have been completed, and the Head Judge must be satisfied:
 - a. That the loop entered is infinite and unbreakable by either competitor;
 - b. That the intention of both competitors is to avoid their own loss and not simply to prolong the game by not advancing the game state;
 - c. That continuing play without a concession from either competitor would result in a game without end.
2. From the point at which this decision is made, the Head Judge informs both competitors of their observation. A further +3 turns will then be played, with the current turn being Turn 0.
3. If the game remains unresolved after this point, the competitors must play a tiebreaker game to determine the winner of that unresolved game.*
4. If the Head Judge observes the situation to repeat during the tiebreaker game, then the game is resolved as follows.
 - a. From the point at which this decision is made, the Head Judge informs both competitors of their observation. A further +3 turns will then be played, with the current turn being Turn 0.
 - b. After this point, the competitor who was seeded highest in Swiss rounds will be declared the winner of that game.

** If the Head Judge determines that the loop will inevitably reoccur during any tiebreaker game played, they should forgo this step and proceed immediately to step 4b.*

5.8.4 Match Resolution

5.8.4.1 Tardiness Clause

To prevent delays to the tournament, competitors are expected to present themselves for play in a timely manner. The Tardiness Clause serves as the primary tiebreaker for any match that remains unresolved after time has been called and is applied in addition to any penalties a competitor may earn for their absence from a match in progress.

If one competitor was late to the match or was away from the match without a Judge's permission at any time during the round, that competitor loses the match immediately after time is called and the allowed +3 turns have elapsed.

5.8.4.2 Swiss Tournament Rounds

These results should be applied only if no single competitor satisfies the Tardiness Clause.

Tournament Type: Swiss Rounds	Match Type: Single Game
Time Called	Match Result
During game 1	Tie

Tournament Type: Swiss Rounds	Match Type: Best of Three
Time Called	Match Result
During game 1	Tie
Between games 1 & 2	Winner of game 1 wins the match
During game 2	Winner of game 1 wins the match
Between games 2 & 3	Tie
During game 3	Tie

5.8.4.3 Single-Elimination Tournament Rounds

Matches during single-elimination tournaments may not result in a tie, and so additional tiebreaker criteria are used to determine the outcome of a match.

Should neither competitor satisfy the tiebreaker—both competitors have the same number of Prize cards remaining, for example—the game must continue until one competitor either satisfies this tiebreaker or wins the game outright, whichever occurs first.

These results should be applied only if no single competitor satisfies the Tardiness Clause.

Tournament Type: Single Elimination	Match Type: Single Game
Time Called	Match Result
During game 1	Competitor with the fewest Prize cards remaining wins the match

Tournament Type: Single Elimination	Match Type: Best of Three
Time Called	Match Result
During game 1	Competitor with the fewest Prize cards remaining wins the match
Between games 1 & 2	Winner of game 1 wins the match
During game 2	Winner of game 1 wins the match
Between games 2 & 3	Winner of tiebreaker game wins the match
During game 3	Competitor with the fewest Prize cards remaining wins the match

5.8.5 Tempo of Play

The pace of a Pokémon TCG match should be lively without being excessively fast, and each competitor should receive approximately half of the allotted time for the game.

Play! Pokémon has set forth the below guidelines by which to assess whether a game action is completed in a reasonable time frame.

- Shuffling and setup, game start: 2 minutes
- Shuffling and deck search, mid-game: 15 seconds
- Performing the actions of a card or attack: 15 seconds
- Considering the game position before playing a card: 10 seconds
- Starting the turn after opponent's "end of turn" announcement: 5 seconds

These are guidelines only and should be considered within the context of normal gameplay.

Competitors attempting to compartmentalize their turn in order to consistently use every second of the time allowed for these actions will be subject to penalties associated with stalling.

5.8.6 Time Extensions

Judges may issue time extensions of a length corresponding to the time taken to resolve any issue. The extra time allotted must be clearly communicated to both competitors and recorded immediately by the Judge.

5.8.7 Note-Taking

Competitors may take written notes during a match and may refer to those notes at any time during that match. Competitors may choose not to share these notes with other competitors, but a Judge may ask to see a competitor's notes and request an explanation if needed.

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.

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.

6 Tournament Rules for Other Products

Rules, Formats & Penalty Guidelines for other games are currently separate from this document.

The VG and Pokémon GO documents can be accessed from the [Rules & Resources section](#) of the official Pokémon website.

The Pokémon UNITE Championship Series documentation can be found on the [Pokémon UNITE Championship Series microsite](#).

7 Rules Violations & Penalties

7.1 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 they or their opponents have earned. For example, if a Game Loss penalty is given to either competitor, competitors cannot concede the game to avoid the Game Loss penalty being applied.

7.2 Types of Penalty

Though the ways in which penalties may be earned differ upon whether it is the TCG or video game 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.

7.2.1 Caution (C)

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

7.2.2 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.

7.2.3 Double Prize Card (DPC)

7.2.3.1 Definition

The Double Prize Card penalty is exclusive to the Pokémon Trading Card Game and is used when a mistake has been made that significantly affects the game state and there is no clear way to resolve the issue, or when a Warning has been given and a Quadruple Prize Card penalty would be too harsh.

7.2.3.2 Application

After a competitor receives a Double Prize Card penalty, the offending competitor's opponent is informed that in order to win that game, they must take two fewer Prize cards than would normally be necessary according to the format (that is, they will win the game when they have two Prize cards remaining).

Should the opponent have only one or two Prize cards remaining at the time, the game is over immediately, and the opponent wins the game.

7.2.4 Quadruple Prize Card (QPC)

7.2.4.1 Definition

The Quadruple Prize Card penalty is used when a mistake has been made that has a severe impact on the game state and there is no clear way to resolve the issue, but a Game Loss penalty would be too harsh.

7.2.4.2 Application

After a competitor receives a Quadruple Prize Card penalty, the offending competitor's opponent is informed that in order to win that game, they must take four fewer Prize cards than would normally be necessary according to the format (that is, they will win the game when they have four Prize cards remaining).

Should the opponent have four or fewer Prize cards remaining at the time, the game is over immediately, and the opponent wins the game.

7.2.5 Game Loss (GL)

7.2.5.1 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.

7.2.5.2 Application

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.

7.2.6 Match Loss (ML)

7.2.6.1 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.

7.2.6.2 Application

When issuing a Match 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 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.

7.2.7 **Disqualification (DQ)**

7.2.7.1 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.

7.2.7.2 Application (Swiss)

If a competitor is disqualified during Swiss rounds while their match is still ongoing, that competitor should also receive a Match Loss for their current match that has yet to complete. The Disqualification penalty is then applied.

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

7.2.7.3 Application (Single Elimination)

During single-elimination rounds, competitors receiving a Disqualification will also receive a Match Loss for 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.

7.2.8 **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 competitor that advanced as the winner.

7.3 Base Infractions

7.3.1 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.

7.3.1.1 A.1. Procedural Error

Minor: Caution	Major: Warning	Severe: Game Loss
----------------	----------------	-------------------

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 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 cannot provide the appropriate Special Condition markers for the effects of the cards in their deck.
- A competitor forgets to sign a match slip upon leaving the play area, causing a delay to tournament proceedings while staff attempt to locate them.

c. **Severe Procedural Errors** not only cause disruption to the tournament but 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 upon leaving the play area and cannot be located before the next round begins.

d. **Tardiness (10 or more minutes)** causes a major disruption to the tournament and qualifies for its own level of disciplinary action.

- The tardy competitor receives a Match Loss for their round.
- The tardy competitor is dropped from the event.
- The present competitor receives a Match Win for their round.

Please note: A competitor is able to reenter the tournament so long as the subsequent round has not been paired and the competitor confirms their participation with the Tournament Organizer. Once the subsequent round is paired, the dropped competitor is unable to reenter the tournament, and their match record is updated accordingly.

7.3.1.2 A.2. Unsporting Conduct

Minor: Warning	Major: Match Loss	Severe: Disqualification
----------------	-------------------	--------------------------

Unsporting Conduct infractions are caused when poor personal conduct on behalf of a tournament attendee results in a detraction 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.
- During a match, a competitor makes legal plays that have no effect on the game in progress or plays unreasonably slowly in order to manipulate the time remaining in that match (*TCG*).
- Attempting to view the opponent's screen to gain an advantage (screen peeking) (*VG*).

c. **Severe Unsportsing 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.

7.3.1.3 A.3. Cheating

		Severe: Disqualification
--	--	--------------------------

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

Because of this severity, the following must be considered fully before applying a Disqualification for Cheating:

- The action taken during the game or match was, in fact, a rule violation, and
- The determined rule violation was committed with the intent to gain a competitive advantage

If both criteria are not met, Cheating is not the appropriate infraction and an alternate penalty should be considered for the violation. If both criteria are met, the infraction is Cheating and the appropriate penalty should be applied.

Examples may include:

- Soliciting and acting upon private game information, such as the contents of an opponent's hand, from an external source during a game in progress.
- Intentionally drawing extra cards or taking cards from the discard pile and adding them to the deck or hand (*TCG*).
- Arbitrarily adjusting the Special Conditions or damage counters on Pokémon in play (*TCG*).
- Stacking or deliberately randomizing the deck insufficiently to engineer greater access to a card or cards (*TCG*).
- Using a game console with custom firmware (*VG*).
- Account sharing (*VG, Pokémon GO, and Pokémon UNITE*), GPS manipulation, multi-accounting (*GO and UNITE*)

7.3.2 Trading Card Game Penalty Guidelines (Category B)

7.3.2.1 B.1. Gameplay Error

Minor: Warning	Major: Double Prize Card	Severe: Game Loss
----------------	--------------------------	-------------------

TCG Gameplay Errors are so called because they are infractions committed during the context of a game in progress. They often come about because of missed or ill-executed game mechanics.

a. Minor Gameplay Errors have little to no effect on the progress of the game and can be fixed or rewind completely with little effort. Many genuine mistakes made during a TCG match begin life as Minor Gameplay Errors and may be reclassified as Major Gameplay Errors if they are not caught and rectified immediately.

Examples may include:

- Putting a card into the hand without revealing it to the opponent when an effect specifies you must do so.
- Declaring an attack without having the required Energy attached.
- Failing to set up Prize cards at the beginning of the game.
- Contributing to an opponent's Gameplay Error by failing to keep track of game actions and mechanics.

b. Major Gameplay Errors result in some irreversible confusion to the game state that cannot be completely rewind or otherwise offset through corrective action. Errors that result in a competitor gaining illicit access to knowledge or cards, that require a substantial level of involvement by a Judge to rectify, or that have remained unnoticed for long enough to have influenced gameplay may be classified as major.

Examples include:

- Drawing an extra card.
- Taking a Prize card without Knocking Out a Pokémon, or taking too many Prize cards after Knocking Out a Pokémon.
- Using and completing all effects of an Ability when a card in play prevents its use.
- Attaching more than one Energy card in a turn without the use of an effect that allows this.
- Failing to set up Prize cards at the beginning of the game, resulting in potential access to six additional cards throughout one or two deck searches.

c. Severe Gameplay Errors result in an irretrievably broken game state, such that a Judge cannot reasonably be expected to restore it to a point where it can continue without compromising the integrity of that game to an unacceptable extent.

Examples may include:

- Shuffling the hand, Prize cards, or discard pile into the deck without the use of a card effect.
- Retrieving or putting away cards from a game in progress before the match slip is signed to show that both competitors agree on the outcome.
- Failing to set up Prize cards at the beginning of the game, resulting in potential access to six additional cards for three or more deck searches.

7.3.2.2 B.2. Deck Legality

Minor: Warning		Severe: Game Loss
----------------	--	-------------------

Infractions that fall under the category of Deck Legality include all problems identified due to cards in the deck that are not legal for tournament play, either for reasons of condition, language, or format restriction. In addition to the penalty assessed, the offending card or cards should be replaced in all cases.

Problems may be caused by the cards themselves, the sleeves, or the corresponding deck list. In cases concerning the latter, the contents of the deck list always take priority over the contents of the physical deck. Any discrepancy between the two should therefore always be rectified by modifying the physical deck.

In the case that a deck list contains fewer than 60 cards, cards that are not legal for play, or cards that cannot be reasonably identified from the information provided, the deck list should be made legal by adding an appropriate number of Basic Energy cards of the competitor's choice. Then, the physical deck should be updated accordingly.

a. Minor Deck Legality infractions are so classified because they offer little to no opportunity for a competitor to gain an advantage as a result.

Examples may include:

- A competitor's sleeves have standard wear and tear that translates to many distinct scratches and markings over all the cards in the deck.
- A handful of cards in a competitor's deck have factory defects on the back of the sleeves. However, the combination of cards does not create a pattern that would provide the competitor with significant advantage.
- The deck contains four copies of Pikachu, but the deck list does not list the collector number. However, there is only one card with the name Pikachu in the set, so the intended card remains identifiable.
- The deck contains an illustration rare variant of Pikachu, but the deck list specifies the collector number of a common rarity variant of the same card.
 - This Minor Deck Legality issue does not require a proxy card or Basic Energy replacement.

b. Severe Deck Legality infractions result in an opportunity for a competitor to gain an advantage, usually through ambiguity or discrepancy caused by dissimilarity between the deck list and the physical deck or by a pattern of marked cards.

If a Judge can reasonably establish that this issue was caused by a competitor's intentional act, this infraction should be recategorized to A.3. Cheating.

Examples include:

- The deck list and/or the deck do not contain 60 cards.
- A competitor's deck contains three Ultra Ball cards and two Max Elixir cards, but the deck list contains two Ultra Ball cards and three Max Elixir cards.
- The sleeves on the Special Energy cards in a competitor's deck are slightly longer than the rest.
- In a Standard format tournament, the deck list and/or the deck contain five copies of Double Colorless Energy.
- The deck list contains two copies of Electivire (*Sun & Moon—Lost Thunder*, 72/214), but the deck contains two copies of Electivire (*XY—Furious Fists*, 30/111).
- A card in the competitor's deck is damaged and has created a visible wear mark on the back of the sleeve along the damaged area, allowing the card to easily be identified while face down.

7.3.2.3 B.3. Pace of Play

Minor: Warning		Severe: Double Prize Card
----------------	--	---------------------------

Competitors should take care to play in a manner that keeps the game pace lively, regardless of the complexity of the situation. Pace of Play infractions occur when a competitor's actions (or lack thereof) affect the game pace to an extent that puts their opponent at a disadvantage. In addition to the recommended penalty, the Judge may issue a time extension to offset this disadvantage.

Refer to the guidelines in [Section 5.8.5](#) to determine what constitutes a reasonable length of time to complete a game action.

a. **Minor Pace of Play** infractions are isolated incidents that may occur due to slow decision-making or tense, complex scenarios.

Examples include:

- Repeatedly searching the deck, hand, or discard pile while executing a card effect.
- Counting or searching your (or your opponent's) deck or discard pile more than once in a short time period.
- Taking an unreasonable length of time to decide where to attach an Energy card.
- Rushing through your opponent's attack step by putting damage on your Pokémon before your opponent announces which attack they are using.
- Utilizing excessive or repeated card text translation requests or Judge calls based on alternate language card texts.

b. **Severe Pace of Play** infractions may be assessed when there is a sustained or repeated ill effect on the pace of one or more subsequent games.

Examples include:

- Habitual slowness in choosing targets for receiving or resolving effects and/or damage.
- Poor pace of play that does not improve following a prior penalty.

7.3.3 Video Game Penalty Guidelines (Category C)

7.3.3.1 C.1. Gameplay Error

Minor: Warning		Severe: Game Loss
----------------	--	-------------------

VG Gameplay Errors are infractions committed during a game in progress. These infractions are most often caused by a competitor improperly handling their game system (or other equipment) while playing a game.

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

Examples include:

- Holding or moving the game system in a way that results in a fixable frozen game state (resulting in a match delay).
- 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:

- Holding or moving the game system in a way that results in an unfixable frozen game state (and for which one party can be determined responsible).
- Removal of a Game Card mid-game or a loss of power to the game system.

7.3.3.2 C.2. Team Legality

Minor: Warning	Major: Game Loss	Severe: Disqualification
----------------	------------------	--------------------------

Infractions that fall under the Team Legality category include all problems found with a competitor's Battle Team. Such problems are usually caused due to a discrepancy between the Pokémon or held items in the Battle Team and those detailed on the team list.

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

Afterward, if the Pokémon or held items described on the team list are immediately available, the competitor should then be given the opportunity to add the correct ones to their team. If the competitor is not able to comply, the slots previously occupied by the offending Pokémon or held items should remain vacant.

If this results in a competitor having fewer than four usable Pokémon remaining in their Battle Team, the infraction should be escalated.

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

Examples include:

- The Battle Team contains West Sea Gastrodon, but the team list lists "East Sea Gastrodon."
- A genderless Pokémon is listed as male or female on the team list.
- A Pokémon is listed without accurate form information, but other information on the team list makes it apparent which form is being used.
 - Example #1: The Battle Team contains Heat Rotom, but the team list lists simply "Rotom" but with the form-exclusive move Overheat on its move set.
 - Example #2: The Battle Team contains Therian Forme Landorus, but the team list lists simply "Landorus" but with the form-exclusive Ability Intimidate.

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

Examples include:

- A Pokémon that can be either gender is male in the Battle Team but is listed as female on the team list (or vice versa).
- A Pokémon in the Battle Team knows the move Thunder Wave, but that move is listed as “Thunder” on the team list.
- A Pokémon’s stat 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 #1: The Battle Team contains Wash Rotom, but only “Rotom” is listed on the team list, and the event staff cannot determine the correct form by looking at the move set.
 - Example #2: The Battle Team contains Therian Forme Landorus, but only “Landorus” is listed on the team list, and the Ability field on the team list has been left blank or lists “Sheer Force.”

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 on in the tournament.

Examples include:

- A competitor has fewer than four usable Pokémon remaining after receiving earlier penalties.
- Any indication via official tools that a Pokémon has been illegally manipulated, such as a competitor’s Battle Team failing an electronic team check.

7.4 Deviation from Recommended Penalties

Play! Pokémon acknowledges the myriad 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.

7.4.1 Reversibility

By way of example, consider the act of mistakenly playing two Supporter cards in a single turn. In many such cases, it may not be possible to mitigate that impact without assessing a penalty that offsets any potential advantage gained, as the scenario below illustrates.

Situation: Brendan plays Lillie (UPR, 125). Later in the same turn, Brendan also plays Mars (UPR, 128) and draws two cards. He also discards a random card from his opponent's hand. Brendan then realizes his error and calls a Judge.

Game State Correction: The Judge, Professor Elm, is able to restore the correct card to the opponent's hand, since this card is known to both competitors. However, the opponent cannot verify which cards in Brendan's hand were those drawn due to Mars. Therefore, Professor Elm must select two cards at random to return to the deck. After the game state has been restored as far as possible, Mars is returned to Brendan's hand.

Penalty Assessed: Brendan receives a Double Prize Card penalty to offset the potential advantage gained by having access to two new cards from his deck and having knowledge of one of the cards in his opponent's hand.

However, if the action can be reversed such that the game state mirrors one in which the second Supporter card had never been played, this may be grounds to de-escalate (decrease in severity) the penalty.

Situation: Brendan plays Lillie (UPR, 125). Later in the same turn, Brendan also plays Guzma (BUS, 115) and switches his opponent's Active Pokémon with one of their Benched Pokémon. He then does the same himself. Brendan then realizes his error and calls a Judge.

Game State Correction: The Judge, Professor Elm, is able to determine which Pokémon were in the Active Spot prior to Guzma being played and moves them back. After the game state has been restored, Guzma is returned to Brendan's hand.

Penalty Assessed: Brendan receives a Warning to remind him of the requirement to carefully track his play and to record the incident in the tournament's penalty summary.

Finally, if the action results in a game state that is irreparably broken, the most appropriate course may be to escalate (increase the severity) of the penalty.

Situation: Brendan plays Lillie (UPR, 125). Later in the same turn, Brendan also plays Cynthia (UPR, 119) and shuffles his hand into his deck. Brendan then realizes his error and calls a Judge.

Game State Correction: The Judge, Professor Elm, is unable to determine which cards were in Brendan's hand prior to Cynthia being played. No corrective action can be taken.

Penalty Assessed: Brendan receives a Game Loss. No other penalty can satisfactorily mitigate the damage done to the game state by his action in playing the second Supporter and shuffling away the cards in his hand.

Further factors that may influence the decision to escalate or de-escalate a penalty include the point at which the mistake is caught. If the action is not yet fully completed, for instance, there may be greater opportunity to reverse any impact made.

7.4.2 Repeated Infractions

Part of the purpose 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.

7.4.3 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.

7.5 Penalty Delivery

Play! Pokémon Professors seek to create fun, safe, and nonstressful 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.

7.5.1 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.

7.6 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 to Play! Pokémon via the Play! Pokémon Customer Support service upon completion of a tournament.

7.6.1 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 within seven (7) days of an event concluding. 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.

7.6.2 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 IDs 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 within seven (7) days of an event concluding. 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.

7.7 Disciplinary Action

Play! Pokémon reserves the right to take disciplinary action against any competitor for rules infractions. The disciplinary action is determined by severity and occurrence. 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.

8 Summary of Changes

Date of previous issue: December 5, 2024

Date of current issue: March 24, 2025

1 Using This Handbook		
Section	Page #	Change

2 Participation Fundamentals		
Section	Page #	Change

3 Tournament Policies		
Section	Page #	Change
3.2.1	11	Play! Pokémon League events must be held at their approved League venue. Leagues may request to hold League Challenges and League Cups in a larger venue if needed by completing an alternate venue request form. To learn more about the requirements and restrictions of alternate venues, please refer to this article .

4 Tournament Operations & Specifics		
Section	Page #	Change

5 Trading Card Game Tournament Rules		
Section	Page #	Change

6 Tournament Rules for Other Products		
Section	Page #	Change

7 Rules Violations & Penalties		
Section	Page #	Change