



---

# Trading Card Game Penalty Guidelines

Date of last revision: February 7, 2018

---

*NOTE: In the case of a discrepancy between the content of the English-language version of this document and that of any other version of this document, the English-language version shall take priority.*

# Play! Pokémon TCG Penalty Guidelines

## Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Assigning Penalties .....	3
2.1. Deviating from Recommended Penalties .....	4
3. Repeated Infractions .....	4
4. Multiple Infractions .....	5
5. Unreported Infractions.....	5
6. Reporting Penalties to Pokémon Organized Play.....	5
7. Types of Penalties .....	6
7.1. Caution .....	6
7.2. Warning.....	6
7.3. Prize Card.....	7
7.4. Multi-Prize Card.....	7
7.5. Game Loss.....	7
7.6. Disqualification .....	8
8. Types of Infractions .....	8
8.1. Gameplay Error.....	9
8.1.1. Minor .....	9
8.1.2. Major .....	9
8.1.3. Severe .....	10
8.2. Marked Cards .....	11
8.2.1. Minor.....	12
8.2.2. Major .....	12
8.3. Deck Problems.....	13
8.3.1. Illegal Deck List, Legal Deck.....	14
8.3.2. Legal Deck List, Illegal Deck.....	14
8.3.3. Illegal Deck List, Illegal Deck .....	15
8.3.4. Legal Deck List, Legal Deck.....	16
8.4. Game Tempo .....	17
8.4.1. Slow Play.....	18
8.4.2. Rushing .....	18

8.5. Procedural Error .....	19
8.5.1. Minor .....	19
8.5.2. Major .....	20
8.5.3. Severe .....	20
8.6. Unsporting Conduct.....	21
8.6.1. Minor .....	21
8.6.2. Major .....	22
8.6.3. Severe .....	22
8.6.4. Cheating.....	23
9. Lasting Consequences .....	24
10. Suspension.....	24
Appendix A. Document Updates.....	25
Revisions made for latest publication (February 7, 2018) .....	25

# 1. Introduction

Play! Pokémon protocols and procedures are intended to foster a spirit of friendly competition at all Play! Pokémon events. However, occasional situations arise, whether intentionally or unintentionally, in which players and spectators do not abide by the Play! Pokémon rules or the Spirit of the Game. In these cases, Organizers and judges may need to issue penalties to the players, ranging from **Cautions** and **Warnings** that do not represent substantial corrective action to more lasting forms of penalties, including disqualification from an event.

This document is intended to provide Pokémon Professors with guidelines by which they can assign and report penalties in a fair, even, and logical way.

## 2. Assigning Penalties

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

Every time a penalty is assigned, it should be accompanied by an explanation of specifically how the player's actions are disallowed by the Play! Pokémon Tournament Rules documents, and by a clear description of what penalty will result from a repeated infraction.

Pokémon Organized Play believes that grassroots-level events are a learning environment for new players, as well as for players practicing for Premier Events. Therefore, the application of penalties should be handled in a way that is positive and that moves the player toward a better overall understanding of the rules. To avoid singling players out or making a spectacle of an incident, Professors may want to assign penalties in private.

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

With the exception of the Unsporting Conduct penalties, the penalties outlined in this document assume that all rules violations are unintentional. If a judge deems that a rules violation has been made intentionally, the Unsporting Conduct: Cheating penalty should be applied. Pokémon Organized Play feels that cheating is among the worst offenses that a player can commit at an event and that it should be dealt with swiftly.

## 2.1. Deviating from Recommended Penalties

---

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

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

The Head Judge is required to report any penalty above a **Caution** to Pokémon Organized Play.

## 3. Repeated Infractions

In the case where a player repeats an infraction or fails to correct their behavior after receiving a penalty, the judge or Organizer should escalate the level of penalty for each subsequent infraction to further reinforce the need for the erring player to play within the rules. This will result in a higher-than-usual penalty being issued for a particular offense.

Generally speaking, escalating the penalty by one step per repetition of an infraction is satisfactory. This means that for the fourth penalty, an error that was originally penalized with a **Caution** will often receive a **Game Loss**. In some cases, increasing the penalty by more than one step may be appropriate. In the case of Slow Play penalties, it may also be appropriate to escalate the penalty earlier than with other issues.

Judges and Organizers should understand that a tournament is not an isolated incident. If a player has a history of excessively committing the same infractions at your events, starting with a penalty higher than the one recommended in this document is appropriate. For example, a player who has a history of Unsporting Conduct: Minor at past events could be issued a **Warning** or **Prize Card** penalty, instead of a **Caution**, for the first instance of the penalty at an event.

## 4. Multiple Infractions

Players who commit more than one type of infraction during the course of an event 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 players, and they should be given every chance to learn about the game and the Play! Pokémon system.

That being said, it is also important to recognize that some players attempt to gain extra leverage at an event by committing several different errors “accidentally,” and these players should be encouraged to discontinue this type of behavior.

Simply put, the decision as to whether to increase the penalty assigned to a player who has previously committed a different infraction is left to the assigning Professor. Younger and less experienced players deserve a little extra consideration, and, unless recommended in this document, **Game Loss** penalties should rarely be assigned to first offenses, even if the player has made other mistakes during the same event.

## 5. Unreported Infractions

It is each player’s responsibility to ensure that both they and their opponent are playing by both the game and tournament rules. If a player makes a gameplay error, procedural error, or other error, and both that player and their opponent miss the error, the judge and Organizer cannot be expected to rewind the gameplay decisions made after the error or adjust the outcome of a resolved game.

## 6. Reporting Penalties to Pokémon Organized Play

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

Penalties that require reporting must be submitted to [policyadministrator@pokemon.com](mailto:policyadministrator@pokemon.com) within 7 days of the event date. A penalty reporting form can be found on the Tournament Rules and Resources page for your convenience.

If you cannot access the penalty reporting form, please email the following information to [policyadministrator@pokemon.com](mailto:policyadministrator@pokemon.com):

- ❖ Tournament sanctioning number
- ❖ Player IDs and names of the relevant players
- ❖ Player ID and name of the judge issuing the penalty
- ❖ A detailed account of the relevant proceedings of the event, up to and including the infraction, the response from the judges and Organizer of the event, and the reaction, if any, of the involved players

In the event of a disqualification, it is also the responsibility of the Head Judge to submit a full and thorough report of the incident to Pokémon Organized Play. This report should detail all factors that contributed to the decision to issue this penalty, as well as the names and Player ID numbers of all Professors who were present at the time of the incident.

## 7. Types of Penalties

The following list details the various levels of penalty in order of severity. Only Pokémon Organized Play is authorized to add to or alter any of the penalties below.

It is important to note that actions taken by a judge in an attempt to correct the game state are separate and distinct from any penalties earned.

Organizers and judges may not issue any penalty other than those listed below.

### 7.1. Caution

---

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

### 7.2. Warning

---

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

After a **Warning** has been issued, the issuing Professor should confirm that the erring player is aware of the proper rules and procedures as set forth in the Play! Pokémon Tournament Rules documents. The player should be informed that a repeat offense may result in an escalated penalty, such as a **Prize Card** penalty or a **Game Loss**.

### 7.3. Prize Card

---

The **Prize Card** penalty 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 **Multi-Prize Card** penalty would be too harsh. When issuing a **Prize Card** penalty, a judge gives the player who did not commit the penalty the option to take one of their Prize cards into their hand. The penalty is still recorded even if the player chooses not to take the Prize card.

If this Prize card happens to be the last Prize card, the game is over, and the player who took their last Prize card is given the game win.

### 7.4. Multi-Prize Card

---

The **Multi-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** is too harsh of a penalty. When issuing a **Multi-Prize Card** penalty, a judge gives the player who did not commit the penalty the option to take up to three of their Prize cards into their hand. The player may choose to take fewer than three Prize cards if they wish, and must announce how many they will take before doing so. The penalty is still recorded, even if the player chooses not to take any Prize cards.

If one of these Prize cards is the last Prize card, the game is over, and the player who took their last Prize card is given the game win.

### 7.5. Game Loss

---

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.

When issuing a **Game Loss** penalty during an active game, the game is recorded as a loss for the player receiving the penalty. In extreme cases where significant errors have been made by both players in a game, a **Game Loss** penalty may be issued to both players



simultaneously. A game 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 player's next game.

## 7.6. Disqualification

---

**Disqualification** is the most serious penalty that can be issued at a tournament. Its use should be strictly reserved for the most extreme cases, where a player's actions (whether intentional or unintentional) have significantly and negatively impacted the integrity or operation of the entire event. Players who receive this penalty are removed from the tournament and become ineligible to receive any prizes. It is important that the removal be enacted in such a way so as not to inflame, extend, or call attention to the situation any more than is absolutely necessary.

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

- ❖ If disqualified after pairings are posted or during an active match, the player is given a loss for that round and then dropped from the event.
- ❖ If disqualified after their match is completed but before pairings for the next round are posted, the player is simply dropped from the event.
- ❖ If disqualified at any point during a single-elimination top cut, the player is dropped from the event, and their opponent receives a win for that round.

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

## 8. Types of Infractions

There are several categories of infraction, and each should be treated slightly differently based on the age and experience level of the involved players.

Each infraction lists two penalties. The Tier 1 Penalty is the first penalty that should be assigned to a player committing this type of infraction at an event such as a store-level tournament, League Challenge, League Cup, or Prerelease event. The Tier 2 Penalty should be assigned at events such as Regional Championships, Special Events, International Championships, or World Championships, as players at these events are held to a higher standard of gameplay.

## 8.1. Gameplay Error

---

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

### 8.1.1. *Minor*

---

These errors have very little effect on gameplay and can usually be fixed with little effort. In many cases, players should be given multiple starting penalties before escalating the penalty, and the maximum penalty given should be a **Prize Card** penalty.

Examples of Gameplay Error: Minor include:

- ❖ Putting a card in your hand without revealing it to your opponent when a card tells you to do so.
- ❖ Failing to set up Prize cards at the beginning of the game. Discovered after play starts but before any searches of the deck.
- ❖ Forgetting to put a Supporter card into the discard pile after it has been played.
- ❖ Declaring an attack without having the proper Energy attached.
- ❖ Forgetting to flip a coin for a Burned Pokémon between turns.
- ❖ Inadvertently revealing the top card of your deck or one of your Prize cards.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

Tier 1: **Caution**

Tier 2: **Warning**

### 8.1.2. *Major*

---

When the game state has become irreversibly confused due to gameplay errors, it is appropriate for the judge to issue a higher-level penalty. Major gameplay error penalties are also appropriate for minor gameplay errors that have left the game too confused to reset.

In addition to the assigned penalty to the offending player, a **Caution** should be issued to the player's opponent for not properly keeping track of game state and rules.

Examples of Gameplay Error: Major include:

- ❖ Playing more than one Energy card in a turn without the use of an effect that allows you to.
- ❖ Drawing an extra card.\*
- ❖ Shuffling your deck mid-game without the use of a card effect.
- ❖ Insufficiently randomizing your deck.
- ❖ Failing to set up Prize cards at the beginning of the game. Discovered after a search of the deck.\*\*
- ❖ Taking a Prize card without Knocking Out a Pokémon.
- ❖ Taking too many Prize cards after Knocking Out a Pokémon.
- ❖ Forgetting to put damage counters on a Pokémon from a mandatory effect, such as Poisoned.
- ❖ Using an Ability when a card prevents its use.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

Tier 1: **Warning**

Tier 2: **Prize Card**

\*The recommended fix for this error is to reveal the card(s) in question to the opponent and shuffle it into the deck. If multiple extra cards are drawn, it may be appropriate to escalate the penalty.

\*\*If two searches have been made, the starting penalty can be escalated one step.

### 8.1.3. *Severe*

---

In some cases, a gameplay error occurs that irreparably breaks the game state. In these cases, there is no way that either player or a judge can reset the game to the point where it can be continued.

In addition to the assigned penalty to the offending player, a **Warning** may be issued to the player's opponent for not properly keeping track of game state and rules.

Examples of Gameplay Error: Severe include:

- ❖ Failing to set up Prize cards at the beginning of the game. Discovered after three or more searches of the deck.
- ❖ Shuffling your hand into your deck without the use of a card effect.
- ❖ Shuffling your Prize cards into your deck without the use of a card effect.
- ❖ Shuffling your discard pile into your deck without the use of a card effect.
- ❖ Picking up your cards before both players agree on the game winner.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

Tier 1: **Game Loss**

Tier 2: **Game Loss**

## 8.2. Marked Cards

---

Cards in a player's deck that are clearly distinguishable from other cards in the deck during play are called marked. A variety of conditions can cause the cards in a player's deck to become marked. Because marked cards can give a player foresight into the next card that they will draw, the contents of their deck, or the location of a specific card in their deck, marked cards cannot be allowed in a player's deck at a sanctioned Pokémon TCG event. If the problem is caught during deck checks prior to the start of the event, these errors can be corrected without issuing a penalty.

While considering the severity of penalty to be assessed based on advantage, the tournament staff should take into account both the markings on the cards or sleeves and the variety of cards that have these markings. For example, if five different cards in a player's deck are marked due to sleeve length, it is reasonable to assume that little advantage was gained, as knowledge of which cards are in those sleeves provides very little advantage. However, in the same example, if the cards all have a similar mechanic, such as allowing the player to search the deck for a Pokémon, significant advantage could have been gained, so a stronger penalty should be applied.

If a player is required to re-sleeve a deck due to deck problems, the player should be strongly encouraged to randomize the deck prior to re-sleeving. In the event that there is a flaw in the new sleeves that goes undetected initially, randomizing the deck will reduce the likelihood of a pattern occurring. Players are always responsible for the condition of their cards and card

sleeves, even if any problems were missed by the event staff during a previous deck check.

### 8.2.1. *Minor*

---

This penalty should be used when marked cards exist but there is no discernable pattern to which cards are marked. If there appears to be some pattern to which cards are marked, escalating to the next penalty tier is appropriate.

Placing the deck in card sleeves (if unsleeved) or replacing the damaged sleeves (if sleeved) usually solves the problem. Marked cards or sleeves should be replaced as soon as possible without disrupting gameplay.

Examples of Marked Cards: Minor include:

- ❖ Two basic Energy, a Pikachu, a Rare Candy, and a Potion have a thumbnail mark along the lower edge of the sleeve. The combination of cards does not create a pattern that would provide the player with significant advantage.
- ❖ The player's sleeves have standard wear and tear in different areas of the sleeves, which could allow the player to determine which cards are which at a cursory glance.
- ❖ Several of the player's cards are parallel holo versions of the card, causing a slight bend down the center of the card. However, while the cards are identifiable as parallel holo cards, there is enough variety in which cards bend that no pattern can be determined.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

Tier 1: **Caution**

Tier 2: **Warning**

### 8.2.2. *Major*

---

This penalty applies to a player who has marked cards or sleeves and there is a discernable pattern to which cards are marked. Because the possibility for a player to gain an advantage is high, the penalties associated with this category are more severe. Further investigation may be required to determine if the markings are intentional, or if the player is using accidental markings to intentionally gain an advantage. If either of these proves to be the case, the penalty should be escalated to Unsporting Conduct: Cheating, and the appropriate action should be taken.

Placing the deck in card sleeves (if unsleeved) or replacing the damaged sleeves (if sleeved) usually solves the problem. Marked cards or sleeves should be replaced as soon as possible without disrupting gameplay.

Examples of Marked Cards: Major include:

- ❖ All of the Basic Pokémon in a player's deck are parallel holo, causing a slight bend down the center of the card. This creates a pattern that allows the player to identify Basic Pokémon when the cards are face-down, at rest.
- ❖ A card in the player's deck was 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.
- ❖ The sleeves on all of the Special Energy cards in a player's deck are slightly longer than the rest of the sleeves.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

Tier 1: **Multi-Prize Card**

Tier 2: **Game Loss**

## 8.3. Deck Problems

---

This section serves as a catchall for problems involving illegal decks and deck lists discovered during an event. A player's deck list is the roadmap to their deck. It is important that each player's deck matches their deck list at all times over the course of the tournament. There are four general categories for deck problems, which are outlined below.

The timing of when a deck list or deck problem is discovered dictates what penalty should be assigned.

If deck list or deck problems are caught during deck checks prior to the start of the event, these errors can be corrected without issuing a penalty. As the deck has not been officially registered at this time, the player may make any changes to the deck list or deck to make it legal.

If deck list or deck problems are caught during a match, a **Game Loss** should be issued. The player is restricted as to what changes can be made, as outlined below.

If a deck list does not clearly communicate the cards in the deck (using an unclear abbreviation with no collection number, for example) then the appropriate penalty below will

be chosen once the judges are able to determine which cards should have been listed. If this is caught during a match, the rules regarding timing listed above will apply.

In all cases, it is important that the illegal deck or deck list be corrected as soon as possible. The player should be reminded why their deck or deck list was illegal, and that player should be the individual who actually changes the cards in their deck. These changes must be verified by the Head Judge or Organizer of the event.

Players are always responsible for ensuring that the contents of their deck and deck list are legal for the event, even if any deck problems were missed by the event staff during a previous deck check.

Sections 8.3.1 through 8.3.4 assume that the deck problems are caught after the event has begun.

### *8.3.1. Illegal Deck List, Legal Deck*

---

If a player's deck meets the format restrictions and deck construction rules but the deck list does not, the deck list should be made legal by replacing the illegal cards with basic Energy cards of the player's choosing, if necessary. The deck should then be modified to reflect the changes.

Examples of Deck Problems: Illegal Deck List, Legal Deck include:

- ❖ The deck list contains five copies of Plasma Energy, but the deck contains four copies of Plasma Energy. The fifth copy of Plasma Energy would be replaced by a basic Energy card.
- ❖ The deck list contains more or less than 60 cards, but the deck contains exactly 60 cards. In this case, any cards not listed on the deck list must be removed from the deck.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

Tier 1: **Game Loss**

Tier 2: **Game Loss**

### *8.3.2. Legal Deck List, Illegal Deck*

---

If a player's deck list meets the format restrictions and deck construction rules but the deck does not, the illegal cards must be removed from the deck, and the deck must be modified to

match the deck list. The Head Judge should carefully consider what advantage, if any, was gained by the illegal deck. If the Head Judge feels that there was a significant advantage, elevating the penalty may be necessary.

The exception to this is if cards are simply missing from the deck. This usually happens if the player and a previous opponent are using similar sleeves, if cards get stuck in the player's deck box, or if cards are dropped on the floor. If the card is found, or the player can provide an identical card to replace the missing one, the player should be allowed to continue the event without further modifying the deck or the deck list. If the card cannot be found and the player cannot provide an identical card, the missing card should be replaced with a basic Energy card of the player's choice, and the deck list should be modified to reflect the new contents of the deck. Either way, the penalty should still be issued.

Examples of Deck Problems: Legal Deck List, Illegal Deck include:

- ❖ The deck list contains 60 cards, including four copies of Professor Kukui, but the deck contains 59 cards and only three copies of Professor Kukui. In this case, the player may add one Professor Kukui to their deck. If that player cannot provide one, they must add a basic Energy card. The deck list is then modified to reflect the change.
- ❖ In a Standard event, the deck list contains two copies of Electivire (*XY—BREAKpoint*, 43/122), but the deck contains two copies of Electivire (*XY—Furious Fists*, 30/111). In this case, the illegal cards must be removed from the deck, and the deck must be modified to match the deck list. If that player cannot provide the legal cards, they must add basic Energy cards instead. The deck list is then modified to reflect the change.
- ❖ The player's deck contains foreign cards as defined by the Pokémon Tournament Rules. In this case, any foreign cards should be replaced with a local-language version if possible. If this is not possible, the cards should be replaced with basic Energy cards. The deck list is then modified to reflect the change.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

Tier 1: **Game Loss**

Tier 2: **Game Loss**

### 8.3.3. *Illegal Deck List, Illegal Deck*

---

Occasionally, a player will simply show up with an illegal deck list and deck that do not meet the format restrictions or the deck construction rules. When this is the case, both the deck



and the deck list must be modified to make the deck legal for the event. Any illegal cards should be replaced with basic Energy cards of the player's choice, and the changes should be reflected on the deck list.

As with the previous category, the Head Judge should carefully consider what advantage, if any, was gained by the illegal deck. If the Head Judge feels that there was a significant advantage or the error cannot be easily fixed during the match, elevating the penalty may be necessary.

Examples of Deck Problems: Illegal Deck List, Illegal Deck include:

- ❖ Both the deck list and the deck contain five copies of Double Colorless Energy, violating the four-card limit rule.
- ❖ Both the deck list and the deck contain more or less than 60 cards.
- ❖ In a Standard event, both the deck list and the deck contain four Dark Ampharos (*EX Team Rocket Returns*, 2/109).

Recommended Starting Penalty:

Tier 1: **Game Loss**

Tier 2: **Game Loss**

### 8.3.4. *Legal Deck List, Legal Deck*

---

Occasionally a player's deck list and deck meet the format restrictions and the deck construction rules but do not match. As the contents of the deck list always take priority over the contents of the deck itself, the player must modify their deck so that it matches the deck list. If the player is unable to provide the cards listed on the deck list, missing cards should be replaced with basic Energy cards of the player's choice, and the deck list should be updated to reflect these changes.

As with previous categories, the Head Judge should carefully consider what advantage, if any, was gained by this error. If the Head Judge feels that there was a significant advantage or the error cannot be easily fixed during the match, elevating the penalty may be necessary.

Examples of Deck Problems: Legal Deck List, Legal Deck include:

- ❖ A player's deck contains 4 Fighting Energy cards, but the deck list contains 4 Strong Energy cards.

- ❖ A player's deck contains 4 Snorlax (*XY—Fates Collide*, 77/124), but the deck list contains 2 Snorlax (*XY—Fates Collide*, 77/124) and 2 Snorlax (*Generations*, 58/83)
- ❖ A player's deck contains 3 Ultra Ball cards and 2 Max Elixir cards, but the deck list contains 2 Ultra Ball cards and 3 Max Elixir cards.
- ❖ In an Unlimited event, the deck list contains four copies of Torchic (*EX Ruby & Sapphire*, 73/109), but the deck contains four copies of Torchic (*EX Ruby & Sapphire*, 74/109).

Recommended Starting Penalty:

Tier 1: **Prize Card**

Tier 2: **Prize Card**

## 8.4. Game Tempo

---

The pace of a Pokémon TCG match should be lively without being excessively fast, and each player should receive approximately half of the allotted time for the game. However, the way players react to pressure can have an impact on the tempo at which they take their turns. Judges should watch for changes in tempo and make corrections if needed.

In general, the following time limits for various game actions should be appropriate.

The times given below are general guidelines; players attempting to compartmentalize their turn in order to use every second of the time allowed for the items below are almost certainly stalling and should be subject to Unsporting Conduct penalties.

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

Notes during a game should be taken using the same time limits listed above. For example, a player making a note about a mid-game deck search must do so in the same 15 seconds allowed for the action.

### 8.4.1. *Slow Play*

---

Players should take care to play in a manner that keeps the game pace lively, regardless of the complexity of the situation. A player who takes too long to make decisions about gameplay runs the risk of putting their opponent at a disadvantage due to the round's time limit. In addition to the recommended penalty, the judge may issue a time extension to offset this disadvantage.

Slow play penalties should escalate to **Prize Card** penalties after the first **Warning**, but should not exceed a **Prize Card** penalty.

Examples of Game Tempo: Slow Play include:

- ❖ You are excessively slow when deciding which Pokémon to attach an Energy card to.
- ❖ You take an unreasonable amount of time deciding which Basic Pokémon to take from your deck after playing a Poké Ball card.
- ❖ Counting or searching your (or your opponent's) deck or discard pile more than once in a short time period.
- ❖ Repeatedly searching your deck, hand, or discard pile while performing a card effect.
- ❖ Attempting to engage in extraneous conversation that interferes with timely play.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

Tier 1: **Caution**

Tier 2: **Warning**

### 8.4.2. *Rushing*

---

Rushing involves a player trying to get their opponent to play faster. This can cause the opponent to lose their concentration, making them more likely to make a mistake. Rushing is often a symptom of an opponent's Slow Play, but it can also occur when a player is excited to get to their next turn. Continually rushing your opponent may result in this action being treated as Unsporting Conduct, should the judge determine that a player is using this method to intimidate or distract their opponent.

Examples of Game Tempo: Rushing include:

- ❖ Placing your hand near your deck to draw a card during an opponent's turn, indicating that you are ready to start your turn.
- ❖ Making exasperated noises or comments regarding your opponent's actions.
- ❖ Rushing through your opponent's attack step by putting damage on your Pokémon before your opponent announces which attack is being used, or the total damage being done to your Pokémon.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

Tier 1: **Caution**

Tier 2: **Warning**

## 8.5. Procedural Error

---

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

### 8.5.1. *Minor*

---

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

Examples of Procedural Error: Minor include:

- ❖ Forgetting to sign the match slip.
- ❖ Entering marked or announced staff-only areas.
- ❖ Interrupting staff during announcements to players or rulings in progress.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

Tier 1: **Caution**

Tier 2: **Caution**

### 8.5.2. *Major*

---

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

Examples of Procedural Error: Major include:

- ❖ Incorrectly filling out a match slip.
- ❖ Showing up to a match late (less than 5 minutes).
- ❖ Failure to provide a reference card as required by the Standard-Legal Reprint List.
- ❖ Failure to provide condition markers if cards in your deck use those Special Conditions.
- ❖ Failure to provide damage counters to track damage on your Pokémon.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

Tier 1: **Warning**

Tier 2: **Warning**

### 8.5.3. *Severe*

---

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

Examples of Procedural Error: Severe include:

- ❖ Reporting the incorrect result of a match.
- ❖ Showing up late to a match (5 minutes or more).

- ❖ Failure to report that you are dropping from an event before leaving the venue. (This penalty should still be issued, regardless of whether the player is there to receive it or not.)
- ❖ Playing the incorrect opponent. (In this case, the player sitting at the wrong table receives the penalty.)

Recommended Starting Penalty:

Tier 1: **Game Loss**

Tier 2: **Game Loss**

## 8.6. Unsporting Conduct

---

This group of penalties covers the inappropriate actions taken by players or spectators at an event. This category always assumes that the offending actions are intentional. A player does not have to be actively involved in a match to receive an Unsporting Conduct penalty. While players and spectators should enjoy their tournament experience, they also need to remember that their actions can have a negative impact on fellow participants.

### 8.6.1. *Minor*

---

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

Examples of Unsporting Conduct: Minor include:

- ❖ Swearing in the tournament area.
- ❖ Leaving a small amount of garbage in the tournament area.
- ❖ Roughhousing.
- ❖ Repeatedly touching or moving an opponent's cards without permission.
- ❖ Disturbing a match in progress.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

Tier 1: **Warning**

Tier 2: **Warning**

### 8.6.2. *Major*

---

Players are expected to behave in a respectful manner to all attendees and staff of a Pokémon event. Players who don't behave properly need to be reminded with the issuance of a penalty. Infractions in this category have a direct impact on event operation or cause a small degree of emotional distress to those around them.

Examples of Unsporting Conduct: Major include:

- ❖ Leaving a large amount of garbage in the tournament area.
- ❖ Failure to comply with the instructions of the event staff.
- ❖ Engaging in gamesmanship or rules lawyering.
- ❖ Attempting to manipulate a match through intimidation or distraction.
- ❖ Refusal to sign a match slip.
- ❖ Making legal plays that have no effect on the game in progress to manipulate the time remaining in a match.
- ❖ Playing slowly to manipulate the time remaining in a match.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

Tier 1: **Game Loss**

Tier 2: **Game Loss**

### 8.6.3. *Severe*

---

Players are expected to behave in a respectful manner to all attendees and staff of a Pokémon event. Players who don't behave properly need to be reminded with the issuance of a penalty. Infractions in this category have a serious impact on event operation or integrity, cause great emotional distress to those around them, or involve a physical altercation.

Examples of Unsporting Conduct: Severe include:

- ❖ Defacement of tournament area.
- ❖ Determining the outcome of a match by random means, through the use of bribery or coercion, or via other choosing methods/games.
- ❖ Assault.
- ❖ Use of profanity or physical threats to event staff.
- ❖ Theft.
- ❖ Use of slurs or insults.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

Tier 1: **Disqualification**

Tier 2: **Disqualification**

#### *8.6.4. Cheating*

---

Players who intentionally commit infractions are looking to gain an unfair advantage over other players at the event. The Head Judge should carefully consider whether an infraction was intentional or not before applying this penalty. If the Head Judge feels that an infraction was unintentional, this penalty should not be applied.

Examples of Unsporting Conduct: Cheating include:

- ❖ Drawing extra cards.
- ❖ Taking cards from the discard pile and adding them to your hand or deck.
- ❖ Offering some form of compensation to an opponent for a concession.
- ❖ Altering match results after the conclusion of the match.
- ❖ Playing with marked cards.
- ❖ Lying to event staff.
- ❖ Arbitrarily adjusting the Special Conditions or damage counters put on any Pokémon in play.



- ❖ Use of dubious game actions intended to deceive your opponent into making misplays.
- ❖ Attempting to manipulate a random result.
- ❖ Stacking your deck.

Recommended Starting Penalty:

Tier 1: **Disqualification**

Tier 2: **Disqualification**

## 9. Lasting Consequences

Players who commit repeated infractions over a series of events, or commit enough infractions at a single event to result in disqualification, may require a lasting penalty to be assigned to them.

Pokémon Organized Play is the only body authorized to penalize players with penalties that extend over multiple events. Pokémon Organized Play requires the reporting of all penalty assignments of **Warning** level or higher in order to ensure that these penalties are made fairly and only when warranted.

## 10. Suspension

Pokémon Organized Play may issue suspensions to players who disrupt other players or the events they attend. In these cases, the players will be notified, and their names and Player IDs will be made available to Organizers.

A suspended player should not be allowed to participate in or attend any Play! Pokémon events as a spectator, player, judge, Organizer, or volunteer. If a suspended player disrupts an event by trying to participate and then refusing to leave, the incident should be reported to Pokémon Organized Play and may result in an extension of the existing suspension.

## Appendix A. Document Updates

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

Document updates will be made available at [the official Pokémon website](#).

### *Revisions made for latest publication (February 7, 2018)*

---

#### Section 6. Reporting Penalties to Pokémon Organized Play

##### *Procedure Change*

- ❖ Penalties that require reporting must be submitted to [policyadministrator@pokemon.com](mailto:policyadministrator@pokemon.com) within 7 days of the event date.