

Play! Pokémon League Handbook

ENGLISH VERSION

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1 Using This Handbook

This handbook contains valuable information to aid Pokémon Professors in successfully managing their League, while also outlining the various policies that Pokémon Organized Play has put in place to help standardize the experience of League attendees around the world.

If you have outstanding questions after reading through this handbook, please contact the [Pokémon Organized Play Customer Service](#) team by selecting the Play! Pokémon option, then clicking “Contact Us” and using the drop-down menu to select the “League” option under “What can we help you with?”

1.1 What is Pokémon League?

Pokémon League is a great, accessible way for Pokémon fans to get together and have some fun!

League events are open to all Pokémon TCG and video game players regardless of experience level or skill. Using their own cards and Pokémon video games, attendees can play, trade, and even earn cool prizes. The best part is they can do all this with other Pokémon players who love collecting and playing just as much as they do.

Pokémon League events are a great way to learn game basics and get a feel for Pokémon competitive play before beginning to compete in Pokémon tournaments. In fact, many Pokémon League locations also run Pokémon Championship Series competitions designed for Pokémon fans who are just getting started in competitive play.

All Pokémon League events are held in public locations, such as game stores, and are run by official League Leaders.

1.2 Applying for Pokémon League

The information contained in this handbook assumes the reader runs or helps to run a currently active Pokémon League.

Pokémon Organized Play welcomes applications for new Pokémon League locations! For details regarding how to apply, those interested should visit the below links.

[Start a League in Europe or South Africa](#) | [Start a League in the United States, Canada, Latin America, Australia, or New Zealand](#).

1.3 Supporting Material

This handbook should be read in conjunction with the **Play! Pokémon Standards of Conduct**.

Leagues eligible for [Retail Program opportunities](#) should also consult the **Play! Pokémon Tournament Rules Handbook** for expanded information on the rules and policies that may apply to those events.

2 League Administration

To keep a Pokémon League location active and open, several brief administrative tasks should be performed both at the beginning of the League’s launch and then repeatedly throughout each League Season that follows.

This section outlines the information needed to understand the various aspects of managing a League, as well as the administrative tools that are available.

2.1 League Details Page



The bulk of League administration takes place through the League Details page.

The page has a layout roughly corresponding to the example shown here.

Where this section references a specific tool, its location on the League Details page will be noted accordingly.

2.2 Definitions

2.2.1 League Owner

The League Owner is ultimately responsible for the League's upkeep and its adherence to the Play! Pokémon League Rules. This is the individual who submitted the original application for the League and remains the primary contact for Pokémon Organized Play in all matters related to the League.

When the League is held in a retail location, Pokémon Organized Play prefers that the League Owner be the owner of the store. This ensures that the League remains active without interruption should store employees or volunteers who may have had some responsibility for the League move on.

Once the League Owner is determined, the role may not be assigned to anyone else without the assistance of the Play! Pokémon Customer Service team.

2.2.2 League Leader

5 League Leaders

A League Leader is a trustworthy and responsible volunteer who has been granted the ability by the League Owner to perform administrative tasks for the League, such as submit activity reports, order promotional material, and schedule tournaments in association with the League.

The League Leader may also assume the responsibility of the League Owner for successful play sessions, should the League Owner be unable to attend. When the League Owner is present, the League Leader's role at play sessions should be to work alongside the League Owner to ensure players get the attention and inspiration they need to participate in an enjoyable League experience.

Each League may be assigned up to three League Leaders, and their specific responsibilities can be set by the League Owner at any time.

2.2.3 League Season

A League Season refers to a period of one calendar month, at the end of which the League Owner or Leaders must submit an activity report and order new promotional material for their players.

League Seasons are usually named after the most recently released Pokémon TCG expansion, as are the Premier Events that may be run during this time.

2.2.4 League Cycle

Each League cycle corresponds to a period of 12 League Seasons.

2.3 Store Finder

2 Edit Retail Details

The Edit Retail Details option may be used in order to provide or amend the information shown in relation to this League location when a visitor uses the Store Finder tool.

This option is only available to Play! Pokémon Store Leagues, and allows information such as the store website, contact details, and order or delivery options to be made visible.

If this information is not provided, the location will not appear in searches made using the Store Finder tool.

2.4 Play Times

8 Upcoming Play Times

9 League Calendar

The League Details page contains a calendar tool that can be used to customize and display upcoming play sessions over the next six months.

A League that has play times scheduled for the future is considered open and active. A League without scheduled play times is considered inactive and will not appear in website searches to prevent players from mistakenly attending a League that is no longer running.

Play times should be scheduled as soon as possible after a League is approved, so it can begin showing up in searches immediately.

2.5 Reporting & Ordering

As each League Season draws to a close, League Owners and Leaders can submit an activity report detailing the total number of players who attended that month, and order an appropriate amount of promotional material to support those players during the next upcoming Season.

2.5.1 Player Registration

7 League Administration Tools

Each time a new player attends a League play session, their name, Player ID, and date of birth should be recorded in the League player roster using the “Add Player” tool.

That player will then remain in the roster until the current Play! Pokémon League cycle ends—so they do not need to be entered anew each month—and is automatically registered as having participated in the current League Season.

Please Note

It is important that players who attend League are encouraged to activate their Pokémon Trainer Club accounts, as players who have not activated their accounts will not contribute toward the amount of League material the League is entitled to.

2.5.1.1 Cycle-End Player Roster Erasure

The League player roster is erased at the end of each annual League cycle. All players must then be registered again by the League Owner or Leader.

This practice is in place to keep the roster from accumulating past players who may no longer attend League sessions.

2.5.2 Current Season Activity Report

7 League Administration Tools

Each month, League Owners and Leaders are prompted to submit an activity report detailing the total number of players who attended, using the “Add Report” tool.

Because players who have attended past League Seasons remain in the roster until the end of the League cycle, the person responsible for submitting the report simply needs to indicate which of these players attended sessions in the current League Season.

Please Note

The number of players in each report directly influences the amount of promotional material that a League may order for the next season. For this reason, it is important to ensure that the information provided in this report is accurate.

It is not permitted to artificially inflate attendance numbers by including past attendees who were not present at any of the sessions in the current League Season.

2.5.3 Upcoming Season Material Order

7 League Administration Tools

Once the activity report for the current Season has been submitted, the opportunity to order promotional material for the next Season becomes available. An order may be submitted using the “Enter Order” tool.

2.5.3.1 League Material Allocation

The very first order available to each League contains material for 10 players. The amount of material that is then allocated to the League each month is based on the number of players with active Pokémon Trainer Club accounts who attended that League over the last reported Season within the last two months, rounded up to the nearest 10.

2.6 League Statuses

3 League Overview

2.6.1 Active

Leagues that are functioning normally and are up to date with administration are “Active.”

2.6.2 Overdue

A League is given “Overdue” status when an activity report for the most recent completed Season has not been submitted within the usual window.

Overdue Leagues may not be able to place an order for more League material until this report is complete. League Owners may find that, if their League is left Overdue for an extended period, they forfeit the opportunity to order League material for each Season that occurs during this time.

2.6.2.1 Removing an Overdue League Status

7 League Administration Tools

To remove the Overdue status, an activity report must be placed. This report will automatically be associated with the Season that originally required it, and the quantity of League material available for the next order placed will be based on this report.

However, the order will always be for League material for the next upcoming Season.

2.6.3 Inactive

Leagues become “Inactive” when no play times are scheduled.

Inactive Leagues do not appear in website searches, as there is nothing to tell potential players when they should attend.

2.6.3.1 Removing an Inactive League Status

7 League Administration Tools

9 League Calendar

To remove the Inactive status, two steps must be taken.

1. Schedule play times for the current month, and as far into the future as is practical.
2. If not already done, place an order for League material.

2.6.4 Closed

“Closed” Leagues no longer operate. They do not show up in website searches, and no reports or orders may be placed on their behalf.

Only Pokémon Organized Play may apply the Closed League status. If you wish to close your League, or if you believe that your League has been closed in error, please contact the [Pokémon Organized Play Customer Service](#) team by selecting the Play! Pokémon option, then clicking “Contact Us” and using the drop-down menu to select the “League” option under “What can we help you with?”

3 League Material

League material is shipped monthly and comprises exclusive promotional items that can be earned only by those who attend and play. The amount of material due is informed by Season Material orders placed on behalf of the League by the League Owner or League Leader.

8 Venue & Shipping Addresses

Please ensure that the shipping address listed on the League Details page is kept accurate, using the “Edit Address” option when necessary.

3.1 Contents

League material includes (subject to availability):

- Promotional Pokémon TCG Online code card (1 per player, delivered in packs of 10)
- Special Pokémon TCG promo card (4 per player, delivered in packs of 40)

Each Season, players will be able to earn one of their four promo cards or their Pokémon TCG Online code card by showing up to play each week.

If the schedule does not support this style, League Owners are encouraged to reward actual League participation in a way that ultimately promotes both the League and the Spirit of the Game.

3.2 Leftover League Material

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

Such promotional material may not be sold by any League Owner or League Leader, in any capacity.

Beginning 30 days after the final League session at which these cards were intended to be distributed, the remainder may be used in conjunction with additional Play! Pokémon events at the League Owner’s discretion. Otherwise, they must be destroyed.

Pokémon Organized Play suggests that leftover League material be distributed in any of the following ways:

- Allowing newer players the opportunity to earn older rewards they may not have seen before.

- Including it in prizes for tournaments associated with the League.
- Creating giveaways to advertise the League.
- Sharing with other Leagues in an active market who may have seen recent growth, and therefore have more players for the current League Season than materials to support them.

4 Individual League Policies

4.1 League Entry

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

- League Owners may choose to offer prioritized tournament registration to players who regularly attend their Pokémon League sessions.
- League Owners may choose to completely disallow entry to any player they feel to be a threat to the safety or enjoyment of others.

4.1.1 Entry Fees

League Owners may charge a fee to participate in League sessions.

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

4.2 Trading

League locations with high recruitment and retention rates report success in implementing some sort of trading policy for the members of their League.

These policies go a long way toward making parents feel confident about their children interacting with more experienced, potentially savvier League members, while also setting clear expectations for all players that the League is a fair and fun place for everyone.

The details of these policies and how they are administered varies among these Leagues, but the key theme is that trades are ultimately reviewed by a League official before they can be completed. In the case of younger members, the League Leader often also includes a parent in the discussion.

5 League Play

5.1 League Sessions

A typical Pokémon League session is not run as a sanctioned tournament. Players are usually responsible for coordinating games among themselves, though the League Leader may help them to find someone to play against.

If there is demand for tournament-style play among attendees, tournaments may be sanctioned during League sessions on Pokemon.com and run using the most current version of the TOM software. This allows Swiss rounds to be paired with minimal effort.

5.2 Card & Video Game Pokémon Legality

Attendees are only permitted to play and trade with genuine Pokémon Trading Card Game cards at all League sessions and associated tournaments.

Similarly, attendees participating with video games must use legitimate software and consoles, and they may only play and trade with Pokémon that have been legitimately obtained through regular gameplay (including the Pokémon Global Link and related functions of games released by The Pokémon Company and Nintendo) or that have been awarded as part of a distribution or special event.

Please Note

Any player knowingly using counterfeit cards or illegitimately obtained Pokémon may not be eligible to earn any promotional items for their participation during this time.

5.2.1 Counterfeit Cards

The use of counterfeit cards is strictly prohibited. However, newer players may not be aware that any of their cards fall under this category.

It is preferred that League Leaders be versed in the detection of counterfeit cards, and that those who unintentionally bring counterfeit cards to League can be assisted and educated in the same way.

6 Retail Program Opportunities

Leagues that meet the criteria required to be recognized as being held in a retail location may qualify for select opportunities offered by the Play! Pokémon Retail Program. This section outlines those opportunities, as well as the operation policies for each.

7 League Administration Tools

Leagues that are eligible to run the events listed below must take care to sanction each event using the corresponding button located in the League Administration Tools section of the League Details page.

Each button will be available only after that League meets the eligibility criteria.

Details of how to become eligible for each opportunity may be found by visiting the official Pokémon website and navigating to the “Organize Events” section.

6.1 League Challenge

Pokémon Trading Card Game League Challenge tournaments are designed to provide players with small, entry-level events on a local scale. These events are a great way for players to ease themselves into the world of Premier Events.

6.1.1 Tournament Operations

TCG Format	Standard <i>or</i> Expanded	TOM Mode	TCG League Challenge
Tournament Format	Swiss only	Game Type	Trading Card Game
Match Structure	Single game <i>or</i> best-of-three	Event Tag	(2021) League Challenge

6.1.2 Prizes

League Challenge events offer special promo cards for 1st–4th place in each age division. These promo cards will be automatically added to the next League material order to be placed.

8 Venue & Shipping Addresses

Please ensure that the shipping address listed on the League Details page is kept accurate, using the “Edit Address” option when necessary.

6.2 League Cup

Leagues with a recent history of success in running League Challenges may be invited to schedule quarterly League Cups. League Cups are the next step up the Pokémon TCG Championship Series ladder.

They offer players the chance to earn a greater number of Championship Points than League Challenges, so the competition tends to be a little more challenging.

6.2.1 Tournament Operations

TCG Format	Standard <i>or</i> Expanded	TOM Mode	TCG One Day Championship
Tournament Format	Swiss plus Single Elimination	Game Type	Trading Card Game
Match Structure	Single game <i>or</i> best-of-three	Event Tag	(2021) League Cup

6.2.2 Prizes

League Cups offer participation promo cards to all players, as well as special STAFF-stamped variants that should be used to thank the Professors and other staff members who have dedicated their time to helping the tournament run smoothly. In addition, the Champion of each age division will receive an exclusive playmat.

8 Venue & Shipping Addresses

Please ensure that the shipping address listed on the League Details page is kept accurate, using the “Edit Address” option when necessary.

6.3 Prerelease Events

Pokémon TCG Prerelease tournaments allow players to get their hands on the newest expansion and try out the latest cards in action ahead of that expansion’s official release date.

Please Note

Prerelease events work quite differently than League Challenges and Cups. The below steps must be completed fully and within a specific window of time. Organizers who fail to do so may lose the opportunity to host a Prerelease event.

6.3.1 Reservations

Prerelease material must be reserved by completing an application to run an event. This reservation must be completed via a special form that Organizers receive directly.

Only 1 one reservation per eligible location may be placed. Duplicate reservations will be disregarded.

6.3.2 Orders

Once a reservation has been placed and subsequently approved, eligible Organizers must then place an order for the material with a participating Pokémon TCG reseller.

Pokémon Organized Play will liaise with resellers to confirm that only the amount of product to which each Organizer is entitled may be ordered. The price, terms, and shipping details for Prerelease material are set at the discretion of each reseller.

A list of current participating resellers can be found in Appendix B.

6.3.3 Tournament Operations

TCG Format	Sealed <i>or</i> Build & Battle Draft	TOM Mode	TCG Prerelease
Tournament Format	Swiss only <i>or</i> Swiss plus Single Elimination	Game Type	Trading Card
Match Structure	Single game <i>or</i> best-of-three	Event Tag	(2021) Prerelease

6.3.4 Prerelease Material

6.3.4.1 Prerelease Kit Contents

Each Prerelease Kit includes:

- 1 Build & Battle Box Display: 10 Pokémon TCG: Build & Battle Boxes*;
- 1 Booster Display: 36 Pokémon TCG booster packs for prizing and Judge support;
- 1 Basic Energy Box: 450 Pokémon TCG Energy cards.

*Each Build & Battle Box includes:

- 23-card Evolution pack featuring key cards from current and prior expansions, including 1 of 4 alternate-art promo cards;
- 4 Pokémon TCG booster packs;
- 1 deck-building tip sheet.

6.3.4.2 Prerelease Material Allocation

The amount of material allocated to each Prerelease location is determined by the attendance of its past Prerelease events, as the below chart details.

Players at Last Prerelease	Max. Kits	Players at Last Prerelease	Max. Kits
0 to 9	2 (20 players)	124 to 131	21 (210 players)
10 to 15	3 (30 players)	132 to 139	22 (220 players)
16 to 23	4 (40 players)	140 to 147	23 (230 players)
24 to 31	6 (60 players)	148 to 155	25 (250 players)
32 to 39	7 (70 players)	156 to 163	26 (260 players)
40 to 47	8 (80 players)	164 to 171	27 (270 players)
48 to 55	9 (90 players)	172 to 179	28 (280 players)
56 to 63	11 (110 players)	180 to 187	29 (290 players)
64 to 71	12 (120 players)	188 to 195	30 (300 players)
72 to 79	13 (130 players)	196 to 203	31 (310 players)
80 to 87	15 (150 players)	204 to 217	32 (320 players)
88 to 95	16 (160 players)	218 to 225	33 (330 players)

96 to 103	17 (170 players)	226 to 233	34 (340 players)
104 to 115	19 (190 players)	234 to 241	35 (350 players)
116 to 123	20 (200 players)	242 to 249	36 (360 players)

6.3.4.3 STAFF-Stamped Promo Cards

Additional sets of alternate-art promo cards with a STAFF stamp in the corner of the artwork, intended as tokens of gratitude for judges and other event staff, will be sent to approved Prerelease Leagues. These are shipping independently of Prerelease Kits, and the number due to be received will vary according to the Kit allocation. These STAFF promos may not be sold by any Play! Pokémon Store or Organizer in any capacity.

6.3.4.4 Leftover Prerelease Material & Early Release Program

Prerelease Kits that remain after the originally sanctioned events are over may be used to host additional Prerelease events. All Organizers may freely sell this material on and after the advertised release date of the expansion.

STAFF-stamped promo cards that are not given to judges or event staff can be given to judges or event staff at future events. Otherwise, they must be destroyed.

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

Organizers in North America and Mexico territories:

Organizers in these markets are eligible for the Play! Pokémon Early Release Program. These Organizers may freely sell leftover material beginning the Monday prior to the advertised US release date of the expansion. If this policy applies in your market, it will be noted in our solicitation and approval communications.

6.3.5 Prizes

It is recommended that all players who completed the event receive 3 additional booster packs as a participation prize after the tournament.

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

Other prize structures are possible, but keep in mind that Prerelease events often last fewer rounds than would be necessary to determine a clear winner.

Please Note

- *Do not reduce the total number of boosters in the prize pool below 3 packs per player.*
- *Prizes are to be distributed to players as outlined by Play! Pokémon immediately upon the conclusion of an event, or when a player has dropped/been eliminated and their placement is determined.*

- *Additional prizing beyond the boosters provided by Pokémon Organized Play is at the Organizer's/store's discretion.*
- *Competing products are not to be provided as prizes for Play! Pokémon events.*

7 Summary of Changes

Date of previous issue: October 28, 2020

Date of current issue: March 31, 2021

1 Using This Handbook		
Section	Page #	Change
1.1.1	2	Updated list of markets administrated by Bellevue Office, expanded hyperlinks.
1.1-1.3	2, 3	Updated the topic order of sections 1.1, 1.2, 1.3.

2 League Administration		
Section	Page #	Change
2.5.3	7	Clarification on which reports inform order allocations.

3 League Material		
Section	Page #	Change
3.2	9	Restricts the sharing of Play! materials to other markets active in the Play! Program.

4 Individual League Policies		
Section	Page #	Change

5 League Play		
Section	Page #	Change
5.2.1	11	Added language to indicate that involuntary use of counterfeit cards merits assistance over punitive action.

6 Retail Program Opportunities		
Section	Page #	Change
6.3.4.4	15	Clarification on when leftover Prerelease product can be sold and how STAFF promo cards are never to be sold.
6.3.4.4	15	Added note: Markets eligible for the Early Release Program will be notified that this applies to them.

6.3.4.5	15	Added notes on when prizes should be distributed and restrictions on using competing products as prize support.
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Appendix A

League Administration Checklist

On Launch

Some items require attention only while the League is being set up or shortly after creation.

Assign League Leaders	2.2.2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set Play Times	2.4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Submit Order for Upcoming Season	2.5.3	<input type="checkbox"/>

Monthly

Items requiring monthly attention usually contribute toward the League receiving the correct amount of support for the number of attendees during each League Season.

Register Players	2.5.1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Submit League Activity Report	2.5.2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Submit Order for Upcoming Season	2.5.3	<input type="checkbox"/>

Quarterly

Items requiring quarterly attention usually involve the relationship between Pokémon League and the standard Pokémon TCG expansion release schedule.

Respond to Play! Pokémon TCG Prerelease Solicitation	6.3	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Appendix B

Prerelease Program—Participating Resellers

United States	
Reseller Name	Languages Available
ACD	English
Aladdin Distribution	English
Alliance	English
All Sports Mktg.	English
Great American Distribution	English
Gold River Distribution	English
GTS Distribution	English
HAMPS Distribution	English
Mad AI Distribution	English
Magazine Exchange Inc.	English
Peachstate Hobby Distribution	English
Southern Hobby	English
Sweet Deal Distribution	English

Canada	
Reseller Name	Languages Available
Grosnor Distribution	English
Prince Distribution	English
Universal Distribution	English

Mexico	
Reseller Name	Languages Available
Big Bang Entertainment	Spanish
Coqui Hobby Distribution	Spanish
Devir Americas	Spanish
Gamesmart	Spanish

Europe	
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Reseller Name	Languages Available
AMIGO	German
Asmodee Benelux	English, French
Asmodee France	French
Asmodee Nordics	English
Asmodee The Netherlands	English
Asmodee UK	English
Bandai España	Spanish
Blackfire Entertainment	English
Carletto AG	English, French, German
Gedis Edizione	Italian
Kaissa S/A	English

South Africa

Reseller Name	Languages Available
Solarpop	English

Australia & New Zealand

Reseller Name	Languages Available
Banter	English

Appendix C

Local Language Resources

Customer Service Contacts

Language	Customer Service Portal
English	https://support.pokemon.com/hc/en-us
French (Français)	https://support.pokemon.com/hc/fr
German (Deutsch)	https://support.pokemon.com/hc/de
Italian (Italiano)	https://support.pokemon.com/hc/it
Spanish (Español)	https://support.pokemon.com/hc/es

Retail Program Information

Language	Customer Service Portal
English—UK	www.pokemon.co.uk/play-store
English—USA	https://www.pokemon.com/us/play-pokemon/organize/host-play-pokemon-events/
French (Français)	www.pokemon.fr/play-store
German (Deutsch)	www.pokemon.de/play-store
Italian (Italiano)	www.pokemon.it/play-store
Spanish (Español)	www.pokemon.es/play-store
