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# League Rules & Guidance

Date of last revision: October 30, 2018

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*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 League Rules & Guidance

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# 1. Introduction

Welcome to the 2019 League cycle! We are very happy that you have elected to run this new League cycle. Pokémon League is a great way for players to get together in a casual setting and make new friends, tune decks, and earn cool prizes.

Pokémon Leagues must be run in a clean, safe, public location. While we prefer Leagues to be run in game stores, we realize that it is not always possible. Libraries, community centers, and malls all make great alternate locations. The most important thing to ask yourself when selecting a League location is, “Will my players feel comfortable playing here?”

## 2. Applying for a League

If there is a need for a League in your area, and you decide to organize one yourself, there are a few things you will want to know first.

### 2.1. Store Leagues and Club Leagues

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Whether your intended location is a game store or another community space, the Pokémon League program can be available to you. However, events associated with Leagues, such as League Challenges and League Cups, may only be available to you if your League is hosted by, or is otherwise associated with, a store. For the sake of differentiation, we refer to Leagues held in conjunction with a store as “Store Leagues,” while Leagues held in all other spaces are called “Club Leagues.”

Your venue must meet the following criteria\* to be classified as a store for the benefit of the Pokémon League program:

- ☉ Must be a “brick-and-mortar” establishment with a storefront, a visible point of sale, and regular daytime opening hours.
- ☉ Must sell the Pokémon Trading Card Game.
- ☉ Must provide accessibility to all potential attendees, regardless of age.
- ☉ Must have space for at least 8 players either inside or directly adjacent to your store.
- ☉ For events such as League Challenges and League Cups, you will be required to provide access to a clean, safe, and suitable tournament space within walking distance of the venue.

*\*These criteria are subject to change.*

If you meet the above criteria and are based in Europe, please get in touch through [retailereurope@pokemon.com](mailto:retailereurope@pokemon.com) and use the subject “Enable Store” to help expedite your application!

## 2.2. Create Your Trainer Club Account

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Of course, the very first thing anyone who is going to take part in the Play! Pokémon program will need is a Pokémon Trainer Club account. Setting up an account is as easy as going to [Pokemon.com](https://pokemon.com), clicking the “Join” message in the upper-left corner of the page, and following the subsequent instructions. If you need a Player ID, follow these steps:

- 🕒 Log in to your Pokémon Trainer Club account
- 🕒 Select “Play! Pokémon Settings” from the menu on the left
- 🕒 Select “Please assign me a new Player ID number”

## 2.3. Become a Pokémon Professor

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Specifically, you will want to be a Professor with the Organizer certification in order to sanction Leagues or tournaments. Instructions for how to become a Professor can be found [here](#). When you are ready, visit [this page](#) to begin!

### TIP

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*The best Professor applications have details about the applicant’s plans as a Pokémon Professor. This is your chance to impress us with your communication skills and ability to plan—make the most of it!*

## 2.4. League Application

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The application itself may be one of the easiest parts of the whole process!

The League application process can be found [here](#).

## 2.5. League Leaders

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As League Owner, you may find that you are not always able to be present during your League sessions, or may find that you have too many players to dedicate attention to them on your own. Because of this, you are able to name three trusted individuals as League Leaders. They could be store employees, local Professors, helpful players, or interested

parents, and their role is to work alongside you to ensure that your players are getting the most out of their League experience.

If your League Leader is a volunteer, please thank them for their efforts so they feel appreciated for taking on this additional responsibility!

## 3. Setting Up Your First League Session

Once your League application is approved, you will be notified via the email address you used to create your Trainer Club account. Once that happens, head to your “OP Tools Dashboard” and use it to get to your League page.

### TIP

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*You will find the OP Tools Dashboard on the same menu you used to apply for your League. Through the course of managing your League, you’ll use the OP Tools Dashboard often, so we recommend that you bookmark it or add it to your favorites for quick and easy access later.*

From your League page, you will see options to first add your play times, and then place your first order.

### NOTE

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*It is important to note that until you take those first two steps, no one will be able to find your League using the “Event Locator” tool. In fact, any League without upcoming League sessions scheduled cannot be found for the same reason, so it’s important to always keep your schedule up to date!*

*In addition, until these steps are completed, your League will be recorded as “Inactive,” a status that tells Pokémon Organized Play that no activity is taking place at your League.*

### 3.1. Scheduling Play Times

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Picking appropriate dates and times is critical. It is important to make your League sessions accessible to as many players as possible. Weekday evenings or weekends are generally ideal for running your League sessions. We recommend at least one 2- to 4-hour session per week.

If another location in your area is also running a Pokémon League, we suggest getting together with that League Owner or Leader to ensure that your League sessions don’t conflict. Remember, the idea is to provide a fun place for people to play and build a shared community, not to “compete” with other League locations.

We encourage players to participate at more than one League location so they can earn more rewards for playing Pokémon. You never know—working with other League locations in your area may even increase your attendance. Some of our largest and most enthusiastic player bases exist in areas where multiple Leagues cooperate to promote Pokémon!

## 3.2. Placing Your First Order for League Materials

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If this is your first Season, your maximum kit will contain enough materials for 10 players.

You'll want to make sure the shipping address you have listed includes all necessary information needed for delivery. Note that the shipping address doesn't have to be the same as the venue address. In that case, you may want to save the shipping address as one of your favorite addresses.

We understand that some Leagues will see rapid growth even in their first Season. If you do not have enough materials to take care of all your players, please make sure you add the players to your roster so we can see your League's growth.

Ordering and reporting is only available during the last week of the Season; you will be unable to report for a League Season that has not had an order placed for it.

### NOTE

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*Do not use the "Add Report" tool until your final League session for the season is over, and you are ready to report the final results!*

## 3.3. Advertising Your League

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Be sure to post the date and time of each League session so your players know when to show up. If your League is held at a location that does not allow you to put up flyers or clings, you can find a downloadable League flyer in the Judge and Organizer Resources section of the official Pokémon website's [Rules and Resources page](#). We recommend making copies of this flyer and, with your location's permission, leaving them where potential League members can find them.

Many Leagues also have web pages or even groups using social networking sites to coordinate with players and keep them in the loop about current League news. Be creative, and make sure you keep the lines of communication open with your players to keep your League healthy and growing.

## 4. League Materials

### 4.1. Quantities

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Every month, new League materials become available. If you've run any previous League Seasons, your maximum kit order will be based on the number of players at your venue with fully active Pokémon Trainer Club accounts. If the last Season you ordered for has not been reported, you will be unable to place an order until that Season's attendance has been submitted, and then only if the order window is still open. It is in the best interest of your League to report promptly so you don't miss the opportunity to order supplies.

A League will always receive enough materials for all players with fully active PTC accounts, but there are two other factors that can affect the amount of materials that a League can receive.

#### 4.1.1. Rounding Up

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When calculating the amount of materials to send to a League, we will always round up to cover the number of players with fully active PTC accounts. Because League supplies are shipped in increments of 10, a League with a total of 11 players who all have fully active PTC accounts would receive enough materials for 20 players.

#### 4.1.2. Players Without Fully Active PTC Accounts

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We understand that new players will not always activate their accounts in time for them to affect your League materials orders. In an effort to help you keep up with a growing player base, we will also send up to 50% more materials (rounded up) than we would send if we only counted players with active PTC accounts. It is important to note that these extra supplies will never result in having more materials than you need to cover your total players reported.

This means that if you report 70 players at the end of the first Season, and only 32 of those players have active PTC accounts, you will be shipped supplies for 50 players.

It also means that if you report 80 players at the end of the first Season, and 70 of those players have active PTC accounts, you will only be shipped supplies for 80 players.

## 4.2. Kit Contents

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Lay out all of the League materials you received to familiarize yourself with them. This will make the rest of this document much easier to understand.

Each Season features items themed for that Season. Some are intended as marketing materials, and some are prizes for your players. In most regions (except Russia), these items are\*:

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

\*Availability of kit contents is subject to change.

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 a way that promotes the League and the Spirit of the Game.

Additionally, a League roster can be found in the Judge and Organizer Resources section of the official Pokémon website's [Rules and Resources page](#). This downloadable PDF will help you track your players during a Season and will assist greatly in speeding up your reporting.

### NOTE

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*These kits are offered with the understanding that they will be used as directed. League Owners and Leaders who are found to be misusing League kits will lose the ability to host future Play! Pokémon events and may be suspended from the Play! Pokémon program entirely.*

*Promo cards 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 Organizer, in any capacity.*

*Starting 30 days after the event or 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 Organizer's discretion. Otherwise, they must be destroyed.*

## 5. Tracking Players

### 5.1. Player Registration

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When a player comes to your League for the first time, ask for permission to record their name, Player ID, and year of birth for your records. If that player has never added a Player ID to their Pokémon Trainer Club account, assign them a Player ID card (available to download from the Organizer Information menu of your OP Tools Dashboard by selecting the [“Print More Player IDs” option](#)). Write the player’s name on the Player ID card, remove the card, and give it to the player.

If the player is under the age of 13, their parents will need to consent to provide this information and follow the link on the Player ID card before that player’s account can be fully activated.

If the player is 13 or older, they should follow the link on their Player ID card to register for a PTC account online.

#### **TIP**

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*If you do not have any Player ID cards to issue to new players, you can find the “Order More Player IDs” section of the Organizer Information menu.*

Should you decide that you would like to participate in the Pokémon League as a player, you may play in your own League. If you choose to do this, your Organizer responsibilities must take priority over your role as a player.

Once a player has been entered on your roster and has had a name of their choice added to the Leaderboard, that player is ready to play!

It’s a good idea to add players to your online League roster using the “Add Players” tool on your League page in order to save time later.

## 5.2. League Fees

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In some cases, it will be necessary to charge players a small fee to participate in your League. Whether you collect this fee on a weekly basis or up front is entirely up to you—however, you must follow all legal requirements that may apply in your area. This fee should go toward covering the cost of venue fees or any additional prize support that you want to provide for your League. Since fees will vary from location to location, we recommend informing players what their money is going toward to aid in heading off complaints.

## 6. League Play

Pokémon League is not necessarily run like a sanctioned tournament. Typically, players are responsible for finding someone to play, as they will not be paired by the person running the event.

- ⦿ There are no rounds like in a tournament.
- ⦿ Players can play as many or as few matches as they want, though Leagues may limit how soon players are able to earn League prizes.
- ⦿ Players may not play the same opponent twice in a row, if attendance allows.
- ⦿ Prizes are based on the number of games that are played, not the number of games that a player wins.

If there is a demand for tournament-style League play, then you may sanction tournaments during League sessions on Pokemon.com and run these using the most current version of the TOM software. This allows you to automatically pair Swiss rounds with minimal effort. Although the results of these tournaments should be reported, this does not replace the requirement to report your League activity Season by Season as outlined in Section 8.

### 6.1. Pokémon Trading Card Game Play

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League Seasons can be run using any format you choose, though players' decks must meet normal deck construction rules.

It's a good idea to survey your players to determine their interest in formats before deciding.

You should choose a format that is interesting to your players. If you have mostly new players, you should run your League using the Standard format, which allows decks to contain only cards from recent Pokémon TCG expansions.

For more information on different formats, check the [Play! Pokémon TCG Rules and Formats](#) document in the "Rules and Resources" section of your Player Information menu.

#### NOTE

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*The use of counterfeit cards is strictly prohibited when participating in a Pokémon League. Counterfeit cards are never allowed at Play! Pokémon events. If you find a player using counterfeit cards during a League session, that player is not to receive credit for the games they play while using those cards.*

## TIP

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*In many cases, new players won't even know that their cards are counterfeit. New players should never feel as though they are in trouble for showing up to your League with counterfeit cards. Take the time to explain that counterfeit cards are not allowed in official events, and help them learn how to spot and avoid counterfeit cards in the future.*

## 6.2. Pokémon Video Game Play

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Pokémon Leagues also allow a player to track games played vs. other players using Pokémon video games such as *Pokémon Ultra Sun* and *Pokémon Ultra Moon*.

When battling using one of the Pokémon video games, players should agree ahead of time what rules they will play by.

Solo video game play is not rewarded at League—only battles against other players count.

## NOTE

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*Any player known to be using hacked Pokémon in League play is not to receive credit for the games they play using those Pokémon.*

## 7. Season Prizes from Previous Seasons

As new players join your League, they should be given the opportunity to earn awards from previous Seasons, should you still have prizes remaining. Additionally, any of your regular players who have not earned all of their prizes for previous Seasons should be given the opportunity to earn them. Be sure to keep previous Seasons' prizes in a safe place so they can be awarded to new players who earn them.

Any leftover awards from previous Seasons should be earned on a first-come, first-served basis by players earning previous Seasons' prizes.

## 8. Reporting Season Activity and Ordering for the Upcoming Season

You will be able to report your current Season and order materials for your next League Season from about a week before the current Season ends until about a week after the new Season starts.

## NOTE

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*If you do not report and order in that time, the option to do so may no longer be available.*

## 8.1. Reporting

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If you've been keeping up with your League growth and adding new players to the roster on your League page after every League session, reporting your League will be as simple as reviewing your League roster and using the "Add Report" tool to confirm your League activity for the Season. Don't get caught entering your entire roster the night before the League reporting window closes—the "Add Player" tool is there to help you!

## TIP

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*Players who have been entered in your roster in the past will be available on a list of past players that can be sorted by column. All you have to do to add them to the current Season is select them and update your roster. This list will reset annually at the start of a new cycle, but that means you will only have to enter the details for your regular players once a year.*

Pokémon Organized Play is always looking at ways to improve our programs. To this end, we require a certain degree of reporting at the end of each Season. The only mandatory information that we request is a Player ID, a name provided by the player, and year of birth for each player participating in your League, as well as which Seasons those players have participated in.

Reporting is done online through the League page. You cannot order League kits for an upcoming Season until you have reported the current Season's results. This means you need to report each Season's results one week prior to the end of that Season if you want to receive your kits in time for the start of the following League Season.

As noted previously, the amount of materials that are sent is primarily based on the number of players who have fully active Pokémon Trainer Club accounts. To ensure that you have enough supplies for your League attendees, be sure that you accurately report the results of each Season and that as many of your players as possible sign up for active Pokémon Trainer Club accounts.

## NOTE

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*Please be aware that League Challenges and League Cups, as with Prereleases and all Premier Events, should not count as League sessions, and we do not consider players at these events to be eligible to be reported on your League roster unless they have attended a League session. Please bear this in mind when reporting attendance at your League each Season, and be mindful to include only those players who have participated in a League session during that*

*month.*

## 8.2. Ordering for the Upcoming Season

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Ordering for each new Season will open one week before the start of that Season. To ensure that you get your kits in time for the new Season, be sure to use the “Enter Order” tool as early as possible.

### NOTE

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*Failure to report previous Seasons’ results may have adverse effects on your ability to order future Seasons.*

## 9. League Challenges

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 to get your feet wet in the world of Premier Events.

In League Challenge tournaments, players in each of three age divisions can work toward earning Championship Points, which may eventually contribute to an invitation to the World Championships!

### 9.1. Qualification Criteria for League Challenges

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Should you wish to apply to host a League Challenge, please take note of the following criteria that must be met:

*If your League is located in the United States or Canada*

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- ⦿ You must have your League for at least six months.
- ⦿ You must have consistent and accurate reporting for a minimum of three months.

*If your League is located in Europe, Russia, or South Africa*

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- ⦿ Your League must be based in or associated with a store.
- ⦿ Additional Club Leagues may be approved at TPCi’s sole discretion.
- ⦿ You must have consistent and accurate reporting for a minimum of three months.

When your League has met these requirements, please submit a [Customer Support ticket](#) to request that your League be reviewed for eligibility. Should your League be located outside of these regions, please contact your local reseller.

## 9.2. Sanctioning a League Challenge

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All League Owners who are connected to an approved League will find a “Create League Challenges” button for each Season on their League page. Each League is only allowed to sanction one League Challenge event per League Season.

If you are a League Owner or Leader for a selected League, and you also have the Organizer certification, please work together to determine who will be the one to sanction your League Challenge tournament each Season. A League that creates multiple League Challenges in the same Season may lose its ability to run such events in the future. Anyone who attempts to sanction League Challenges for a League that is not approved to hold such events may lose the ability to organize Pokémon events in the future.

If your League has the “Create League Challenge” button, and you are the League Owner or a League Leader with an active Organizer certification and the correct sanctioning permissions, you may simply click that button and fill in the required fields. Note that your League will not be able to sanction a League Challenge if you have not yet ordered for the current Season.

## 9.3. Tournament Structure of League Challenges

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These tournaments are run using the Standard or Expanded format and Age-Separated Swiss pairings. See the [Play! Pokémon TCG Rules and Formats](#) for further information about the Standard and Expanded formats.

- ⦿ The number of Swiss rounds to be run will depend on total attendance at the event.
- ⦿ The Organizer may choose to operate these events using single-game or best-of-three (Bo3) round formats. Either way, this must be announced far enough in advance so players can prepare.
- ⦿ The minimum time limit for single-game rounds is 30 minutes.
- ⦿ The minimum time limit for Bo3 rounds is 45 minutes.
- ⦿ League Challenge tournaments do not include a single-elimination portion; placement in the event is determined by final Swiss standings.
- ⦿ As always, please be sure the name you choose for your event is family-friendly and accurate.

## 9.4. League Challenge Prizes

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In addition to Play! Points and Championship Points, in most regions (except Russia), League Challenge events offer special promo cards for 1st–4th place in each age division. These promo cards will be shipped with League materials for that Season.

### NOTE

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*Please note that the rules regarding prize kit usage as detailed in Section 4.2 apply to League Challenges as Premier Events.*

## 10. 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.

League Cups are offered as a quarterly series as outlined below, and qualifying Leagues may run one League Cup per series.

- 🕒 Winter Series: November through January
- 🕒 Spring Series: February through April
- 🕒 Summer Series: May through June
- 🕒 Autumn Series: July through October

The specific date on which each series will begin corresponds to the sanctioned tournament legality date of the most recent TCG expansion.

### 10.1. Qualification Criteria for League Cups

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League Cups are only available to Store Leagues. In order to determine which Store Leagues qualify, Pokémon Organized Play looks at a combination of factors that may include tenure, consistent and accurate reporting, and previous success with League Challenges and Prereleases.

Should your store be located in the following regions, specific criteria must be met:

*If your League is located in Europe, Russia, or South Africa*

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- ⦿ You must have a Season Active League, with at least 2 reported Seasons in the last 6 months.
- ⦿ Your League must currently run League Challenges, must have completed at least one League Challenge within the last 3 months.
- ⦿ Your League Owner, or at least one of the League Leaders, must have the TCG Judge certification.

If your League meets the above criteria, please submit a [Customer Support ticket](#) entitled 'Enable League Cups – Europe' to request that your League be reviewed for eligibility.

*If your League is located in the United States or Canada*

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- ⦿ Your League must currently run League Challenges, and must have maintained 4–6 months of consistent and successful League Challenge activity.
- ⦿ Your League must currently run Prereleases, and must have completed all such events successfully.

If your League meets the above criteria, you do not need to take any additional steps—you will be informed of your eligibility via the contact email address listed on your League Details page.

Should your League be located outside the United States, Canada, Europe, Russia, or South Africa, please instead contact your local reseller.

## 10.2. Sanctioning a League Cup

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The procedure for sanctioning a League Cup is the same as for sanctioning League Challenges: all League Owners who are connected to an approved League will find a “Create League Cup” button for each Season on their League page.

Please refer to Section 9.2 for further information.

## 10.3. Tournament Structure of League Cups

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These tournaments are run using the Standard or Expanded format and Age-Separated Swiss pairings. See the [Play! Pokémon TCG Rules and Formats](#) for further information about the Standard and Expanded formats.

- ⦿ The number of Swiss rounds to be run will depend on total attendance at the event.

- 🕒 The Organizer may choose to operate these events using single-game or best-of-three (Bo3) round formats. Either way, this must be announced far enough in advance so players can prepare.
- 🕒 The minimum time limit for single-game rounds is 30 minutes.
- 🕒 The minimum time limit for Bo3 rounds is 45 minutes.
- 🕒 League Cup tournaments must include a single-elimination top cut. This top cut must be run using the Bo3 round format.
- 🕒 As always, please be sure the name you choose for your event is family-friendly and accurate.

## 10.4. League Cup Prizes

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In most regions (except Russia), 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 your tournament run smoothly. In addition, the champion of each age division will receive an exclusive playmat.

Starting February 16, 2018, these prize items will be automatically added to the first League order you place within a given quarter.

### NOTE

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*Please note that the rules regarding prize kit usage as detailed in Section 4.2 apply to League Cups as Premier Events.*

## 11. Advice for Running League Challenges and League Cups

For more comprehensive information regarding running Pokémon Premier Events, please see our [General Event Rules](#) and [Tournament Operation Procedures](#) documents.

### 11.1. General Tips

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These tournaments must be run until completion. Ending an event early by submitting rounds with false information, such as three rounds of everyone earning tie games, will result in the tournament being invalidated.

## NOTE

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*As these tournaments are Premier Events that offer Championship Points, the ability to manually upload a League Challenge or League Cup is not available.*

Our software is designed to calculate pairings based off registered participants. If there are lower numbers in one age division, the tournament may be converted into an “Age Modified” tournament, meaning players from different age divisions will play together; this is not an error. In this event, please award prizes to the winners of each age division appropriately (one Junior, one Senior, and one Masters Division champion).

## 11.2. Judges

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As League Challenges and League Cups form part of the Play! Pokémon Championship Series, we strongly recommend that you seek help from Professors who hold the TCG Judge certification to help players get the best experience possible at your events. A judge presence will help to ensure that the TCG Rules are adhered to, that card ruling queries are resolved as well as possible, and, if multiple judges are present, that players do not have to wait for an extended period of time before receiving attention.

Please feel free to make use of the [Organized Play forum](#) to help source judges for your events.

## 11.3. Event Reporting

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League Challenge and League Cup event results must be reported within 7 days of the day the tournament was held.

Please note that due to the number of these events being held, the Pokémon Organized Play team will not be able to dedicate any significant amount of time attempting to fix TOM files; please submit all upload issues to our [Customer Support](#) team.

In the event of an issue that makes it impossible to upload accurate event results, it will be your responsibility to explain to your players why they will not be receiving Championship Points for your event.

## NOTE

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*Please be aware that League Challenges and League Cups, as with Prereleases and all Premier Events, should not count as League sessions, and we do not consider players at these events to be eligible for inclusion on your League roster unless they have attended a League session. Please bear this in mind when reporting attendance at your League each Season, and be*

*mindful to include only those players who have participated in a League session during that month.*

## 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 (October 30, 2018)*

Section	Revision	Details
–	Language update	The document may have undergone general revision of language or structure where this contributes to accuracy and/or clarity.