



Video Game Rules, Formats & Penalty Guidelines

Date of last revision: January 25, 2021

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 VG Rules, Formats, & Penalty Guidelines

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1. Team Construction

Players are responsible for ensuring that their team adheres to any restrictions set forth by the tournament format and this document. The rules and restrictions that follow are considered the Standard format.

1.1. Battle Team Setup

A player must designate a Battle Team and keep the Battle Team unchanged from the beginning to the end of the event. Note: Event staff may alter a Battle Team to apply a penalty earned by the player.

Teams must have between four and six Pokémon, depending on the event format.

1.2. Series Changes

With each new Ranked Battle series in the Battle Stadium, adjustments may be made to the list of permitted Pokémon. See below for details.

- 🕒 Series 7 start date: November 1, 2020.
- 🕒 Series 8 start date: February 1, 2021.
- 🕒 Series 9 start date: May 1, 2021.

Organizers must ensure they download the appropriate ruleset for their event from the Battle Stadium.

Sometimes, a new series may come into effect midway through a tournament that spans multiple days (for example, a Regional Championship). If this happens, the tournament will continue with the format it started with until the end of the event. Single-day Premier Events held as side events at such locations should use the format that is live on the day they occur.

1.2.1. Series 7

- 🕒 Players may use Pokémon with the following Pokédex numbers, provided the Pokémon were obtained in *Pokémon Sword* or *Pokémon Shield* or were received at an official event or distribution.
 - Galar Pokédex numbers:
 - #001–397
 - Isle of Armor Pokédex numbers:

- #001–210
- Crown Tundra Pokédex numbers:
 - #001–209
- National Pokédex numbers:

▪ #243–245	▪ #252–260	▪ #380–381
▪ #480–482	▪ #485	▪ #488
▪ #638–642	▪ #645	▪ #722–730
▪ #785–788	▪ #793–799	▪ #803–806

1.2.2. Series 8

- ⊕ In addition to the Pokémon permitted in Series 7, players may have one Pokémon from the Restricted List in their Battle Team.
 - The Restricted List consists of the Pokémon with the following National Pokédex numbers:

▪ #150	▪ #249–250	▪ #382–384
▪ #483–484	▪ #487	▪ #643–644
▪ #646	▪ #716–718	▪ #789–792
▪ #800	▪ #888–890	▪ #898

1.3. Items

- ⊕ Each Pokémon may hold an item, though no two Pokémon may hold the same item.
- ⊕ Players may only use items that can be obtained through regular gameplay (including—but not limited to—rewards earned through participation in online battles and other functions of games released by The Pokémon Company and Nintendo) or items that have been awarded as part of a distribution or special event.

1.4. Pokémon

- ⊕ A player's team cannot contain two Pokémon with the same National Pokédex number.
- ⊕ Pokémon must have either:

- The black Galar symbol on their summary screen to signify that they originated in the Galar region
- The battle-ready symbol
- ⊕ Pokémon may make use of any move or Ability available to that Pokémon through normal gameplay. This includes:
 - Hidden Abilities, if available
 - Moves and Abilities passed via the Pokémon Nursery by a Pokémon brought in using Pokémon HOME
 - Moves and Abilities made available through an official Pokémon event or promotion
- ⊕ Pokémon above and below Lv. 50 are permitted but will be auto-leveled to Lv. 50 during battle.
- ⊕ Any regional Pokémon form that meets the above criteria may be used.
- ⊕ Pokémon may have the Gigantamax Factor.

2. Equipment Rules

2.1. Game Cards

- ⊕ Only legitimate versions of *Pokémon Sword* or *Pokémon Shield* can be used in Play! Pokémon tournaments. This includes Game Cards and downloadable versions of *Pokémon Sword* or *Pokémon Shield*.
- ⊕ Players are responsible for ensuring that their Game Card or downloadable game is fully functional.
- ⊕ Under certain circumstances, players may be asked by event staff to modify their League Cards. Players must comply with the instructions of event staff in this regard if they wish to play in the tournament. Players must avoid the use of potentially offensive League Card designs, and any player found to be in breach of this during an event may be subject to penalties up to and including Disqualification.

2.2. Game Systems

Players may use any system in the Nintendo Switch™ family of systems during the competition. This includes—but is not restricted to—the Nintendo Switch™ and Nintendo Switch Lite™

systems. Players are responsible for bringing an AC adapter that is compatible with their system.

- ⦿ Players are responsible for keeping their system charged for the duration of the tournament.
- ⦿ At a Judge’s discretion, a match may be moved to the designated charging station. Players must not move to the charging station without receiving permission from a Judge. A match may only be moved between games, and never while a game is in progress.
- ⦿ Players are responsible for ensuring that their game system is fully functional.
- ⦿ Players should ensure that game systems with which they enter Play! Pokémon tournaments are unmodified—that is, free from both custom software and firmware as well as any physical technological modification to the console itself. Players found to be using modified systems may be subject to penalties up to and including Disqualification.
- ⦿ Players may be unable to continue to play in a tournament if Parental Controls prevent their system from performing actions that are necessary for tournament play.
- ⦿ An active Nintendo Switch Online membership (paid) is required for participation in Video Game Championship Series events for the purposes of performing online team checks.

2.3. Game Patches, Updates, and Firmware

Players are responsible for ensuring their version of *Pokémon Sword* or *Pokémon Shield* has the latest game update downloaded prior to the start of the tournament and that the latest software update has been performed on their system. Players may be penalized, including Disqualification, if their game is found to be missing the latest update, or if their system is not running on the latest firmware at any time during the tournament.

2.4. Tournament Systems

Two styles of tournament system communication exist for Championship Series events:

- Wireless Mode
 - This is recommended for local events, but the risk of unstable communication at higher player numbers means it is not recommended for larger events.
- LAN Mode

- This wired tournament setup consists of players connecting over small local networks. It is recommended for all larger events, though Organizers are permitted to utilize it at events of any size. The following equipment is recommended:
 - Nintendo Switch USB stand (for example, the licensed product by HORI)
 - USB-to-ethernet adapter
 - Ethernet cable (patch, not crossover)
 - Network hub with 4–8 ports (plus power supply)
- Joy-Con controllers must remain attached to the Nintendo Switch at all times during match play.
- Players are permitted to bring their own officially licensed wired controller. Wireless controllers are not permitted.

All tournaments must run over the appropriate Battle Stadium “Ranked Battle” ruleset.

Match IDs are utilized to facilitate players finding the correct opponent in-game. These are three-digit numbers, constructed as follows:

- The first two digits make up the Station Number and communicate the game to be joined. Station Numbers must be unique within the network at the moment the game begins but can be reused if necessary once a game has started.
- The third digit is the Participant Number and communicates the role the participant will take (player or spectator). For the players, one of them must enter “1” and the other must enter “2” in order to be paired.
- If a game is being streamed, the streaming device enters the same Station Number as the game being streamed and enters “3” as the Participant Number. If multiple streaming devices are being used, they each use subsequent Participant Numbers (for example, “4,” “5,” and so on).

Organizers are free to devise their own method for match ID assignment so long as it is clearly communicated to the players. Organized Play provides a recommended procedure:

- Station Number: The first two digits of the match ID are the last two digits of the table number the game is taking place at, including a leading zero if necessary (for example, players at table 1 enter “01” as the first two digits).

- Participant Number: The third digit is “1” for Player 1 and “2” for Player 2, as determined by the match slip. If the match slip is not on the table when the game starts, players should decide between themselves.
- Example: A game taking place at table 789 is being streamed from two separate streaming devices. Participants would enter the following match IDs:
 - Player 1: 891
 - Player 2: 892
 - Streaming device 1: 893
 - Streaming device 2: 894

2.5. Headphone Use

Headphones may be worn by players only if they are wired and plugged directly into their game system. The headphone wire must be clearly visible.

2.6. Notes

Players may take notes at any time during their match, including during Team Preview, but must begin each round with a blank sheet. Lined, ruled, or grid paper is permitted. No written or printed aids, including type charts, are permitted in the play space.

2.7. Objects in Play Area

Players are permitted to have good luck charms or objects in the play space but must keep the play space neat.

2.8. Team Lists

Players are required to provide a legible and accurate list of the Pokémon that comprise their team. It is recommended that players make use of the official Play! Pokémon Team List document for this purpose.

Team lists should be completed using the language to which the player’s game is set.

As long as the team list records the player’s name, Player ID, and date of birth, alongside the following information for each Pokémon, it will be accepted:

- 🌀 Pokémon species, including whether that Pokémon is a regional variant (such as Galarian) or a specific named form (such as Wash Rotom instead of Rotom)

- Form name is required in the case of a form with any changes to stats, types, Ability, move pool, weight, or any other battle statistic. Examples include Gougeist, Oricorio, and Toxtricity.
 - If the gender of the Pokémon affects any battle statistics, the gender should be listed as a form. Examples include Meowstic and Indeedee. The genders of Nidoran ♀ and Nidoran ♂ are part of their species names and should be included.
 - Form name is *not* required in the case of forms that are purely aesthetic in nature or entirely dictated by other criteria listed on the team list. Examples include Gastrodon, Sawsbuck, and Alcremie.
 - If in doubt, it is strongly recommended that the player list the form name, as failing to list the form name in a case for which it is required could result in penalties.
- ⊕ Ability
 - ⊕ Held item
 - ⊕ Level (this should be the actual level the Pokémon is seen to be when viewed in the player's in-game Box)
 - ⊕ All known moves
 - ⊕ All stats (HP / Attack / Defense / Special Attack / Special Defense / Speed), recorded at the Pokémon's actual level
 - ⊕ Whether the individual Pokémon has the Gigantamax Factor (denoted by a red X-like symbol next to the Pokémon's name on the summary screen)

3. Match Play

3.1. Double Battle Format

Each player selects four Pokémon from their Battle Team to battle with. At the start of the battle, players send out the first two Pokémon in their party, making a total of four Pokémon on the battlefield. Gameplay continues until a player makes all four of their opponent's Pokémon faint or until the in-game time limit has expired.

3.2. Number of Games

Matches played during Swiss rounds may be best-of-one or best-of-three at the Tournament Organizer's discretion, although best-of-three is strongly recommended for events at the Regional Championships level and above. Any top cut portion of the event must be run as best-of-three.

There is no round time for Video Game Championship Series events. The expectation is that all matches are allowed to run their course of up to three games. No game should be interrupted or terminated before the natural end of the game unless exceptional circumstances occur (such as Sudden Death).

To avoid going over the maximum number of games playable (as set by the regulations), players are not permitted to use the Live Competition feature to play friendly games during a tournament.

3.3. Registering a Battle Team

- ⦿ Teams must contain a minimum of four Pokémon to participate in these events.
- ⦿ Selecting Quit Competition and then Unregister after the Battle Team is locked is interpreted as the player opting to drop from the tournament.
- ⦿ At the start of the tournament, players must submit a team list with details that exactly match those of the player's Pokémon as they appear in the Battle Team.
- ⦿ Players must use this team during the entire tournament.

3.3.1. *Game Time Limits*

Players may use as much time as allowed each turn. Championship Series tournaments will automatically enforce the following time limits:

- ⦿ Team Preview: 90 seconds
- ⦿ Move time limit: 45 seconds
- ⦿ Player time (Your Time) limit: 7 minutes
- ⦿ Game time:
 - At events where Battle Teams are locked through Live Competition, the game time limit will be 15 minutes. This is the case for the majority of events, including all Premier Challenges and Midseason Showdowns held on a local level and most Regional Championships / Special Events outside of North America, Europe, and Australia.

- At events where Battle Teams are locked using specialized distribution consoles, the game time limit will be 20 minutes. This is limited to a small number of events, such as Regional Championships in North America, Europe, and Australia, all International Championships, and the World Championships.
- If a player is unsure what timer will be used at a particular event, they should contact the Tournament Organizer.

In the interest of maintaining an enjoyable tournament environment, Pokémon Organized Play may decide to make revisions to these limits during the season based on feedback from Organizers.

3.4. Match Resolution

- ⦿ A player wins by making their opponent's final Pokémon faint.
- ⦿ If both players' Pokémon faint during the last turn of a match, the player whose Pokémon faints last wins the game.
- ⦿ Players are unable to resolve a match with an intentional draw (ID).
- ⦿ A player who selects the Run option is electing to forfeit the game. Should both players select the Run option during the same turn, the game will be recorded as having no winner.

3.4.1. Resolving Best-of-Three Matches in Swiss Rounds

Use the following criteria, in order, to determine the outcome of a match that is unresolved after the final game has ended. After one of the criteria has been met, none of the others are applied.

1. If one player was late to the match or was away from the match without a Judge's permission for any period of time during the round, that player loses the match. To avoid an automatic loss, the absent player must have notified the Judge of this absence before the end of the match.
2. If both players were on time and present for the entire match, refer to the following charts to determine at which point the winner of the match is decided.

Example	Player	Game 1 Outcome	Game 2 Outcome	Game 3 Outcome	Sudden Death	Match Outcome
A	Player 1	Win	Win	<i>Unnecessary</i>	<i>Unnecessary</i>	Player 1 wins
	Player 2	Loss	Loss			
B	Player 1	Win	Loss	Win	<i>Unnecessary</i>	

	Player 2	Loss	Win	Loss		Player 1 wins
C	Player 1	Win	Tie	Win	<i>Unnecessary</i>	Player 1 wins
	Player 2	Loss		Loss		
D	Player 1	Tie	Win	Tie	<i>Unnecessary</i>	Player 1 wins
	Player 2		Loss			
E	Player 1	Tie	Win	Win	<i>Unnecessary</i>	Player 1 wins
	Player 2		Loss	Loss		
F	Player 1	Tie	Tie	Tie	Win	Player 1 wins
	Player 2				Loss	
G	Player 1	Tie	Win	Loss	Win	Player 1 wins
	Player 2		Loss	Win	Loss	

See Section 3.4.4. for the definition of and protocol for Sudden Death games.

If Sudden Death resolves in a tie during Swiss rounds, a tie is given for the match.

3.4.2. Resolving Best-of-Three Matches in Single-Elimination Rounds

Use the following criteria, in order, to determine the outcome of a match that is unresolved after the final turn has ended. After one of the criteria has been met, none of the others are applied.

1. If one player was late to the match or was away from the match without a Judge's permission for any period of time during the round, that player loses the match. To avoid an automatic loss, the absent player must have notified the Judge of this absence before the end of the match.
2. If both players were on time and present for the entire match, refer to the following charts to determine at which point the winner of the match is decided.

Example	Player	Game 1 Outcome	Game 2 Outcome	Game 3 Outcome	Sudden Death	Match Outcome
A	Player 1	Win	Win	<i>Unnecessary</i>	<i>Unnecessary</i>	Player 1 wins
	Player 2	Loss	Loss			
B	Player 1	Win	Loss	Win	<i>Unnecessary</i>	Player 1 wins
	Player 2	Loss	Win	Loss		

C	Player 1	Win	Tie	Win	<i>Unnecessary</i>	Player 1 wins
	Player 2	Loss		Loss		
D	Player 1	Tie	Win	Tie	<i>Unnecessary</i>	Player 1 wins
	Player 2		Loss			
E	Player 1	Tie	Win	Win	<i>Unnecessary</i>	Player 1 wins
	Player 2		Loss	Loss		
F	Player 1	Tie	Tie	Tie	Win	Player 1 wins
	Player 2				Loss	
G	Player 1	Tie	Win	Loss	Win	Player 1 wins
	Player 2		Loss	Win	Loss	

If Sudden Death resolves in a tie during Single Elimination rounds, a second Sudden Death game will be played.

3.4.3. Sudden Death

During Sudden Death, players begin a new game. Players are required to gain an advantage in number of remaining Pokémon over their opponent. After each turn has been completed, tournament staff will determine the number of Pokémon that each player has remaining to determine if an advantage has been gained.

- ☉ If both players have the same number of Pokémon remaining at the end of the turn, the game continues for another turn.
- ☉ If either player has more remaining Pokémon than their opponent at the end of the turn, that player wins the game.
- ☉ If both players' final Pokémon faint on the same turn, the game will end naturally. In this case, the game will utilize in-built match resolution to determine the result of the game.

3.4.4. Double Game Freeze

In some rare circumstances, players may experience a situation where both games freeze, and it is not clear which player is at fault. In this situation, the game cannot progress any further by organic means and must be resolved as outlined in the table below.

The point in the game at which the double game freeze happens has an impact on how the resolution should occur.

Pokémon Remaining in Team	Game Resolution
4–4 (including during Team Preview)	Game void, restart from the beginning
4–3	Tie
4–2	Tie
4–1	Win for player with most remaining Pokémon
3–3	Tie
3–2	Tie
3–1	Win for player with most remaining Pokémon
2–2	Tie
2–1	Tie
1–1	Tie

4. Team Checks

At all Premier Events, team checks must be performed. Pokémon Organized Play recommends that team checks be performed on at least 10 percent of teams over the course of the tournament. The teams of all players advancing to a Single Elimination portion of a tournament should be checked after Swiss rounds have concluded. The team check consists of two parts: a team list check and a legality check.

4.1. Team List Check

Staff must verify that the player's Battle Team matches the team list they submitted.

4.2. Legality Check

Staff must verify that the player's Battle Team is legal for tournament play, in terms of both the parameters specified by the tournament format and checking for signs of illegal manipulation. This is split into electronic and manual processes.

4.2.1. *Electronic Team Check*

This involves running a player's Battle Team through the Battle Stadium check. To do this, follow the below steps.

1. Enter Battle Stadium and begin to set up a Casual Battle. When prompted to choose a Battle Team, use the Team Registration option to copy the player's team into a new Battle Team. Select that team for the battle.
2. When the message "Searching for an opposing Trainer" appears, press the Power button to put the console into Sleep Mode and disconnect the search. At this point, the team has passed. If, instead, a message appears saying that some Pokémon are unable to participate, penalties may need to be applied appropriately.

4.2.2. *Manual Team Check*

A small number of criteria are not caught by the electronic team check. The team should be viewed in-game and checked using Appendix A: Manual Team Checking.

4.3. Illegally Manipulated Pokémon

The use of external devices, such as a mobile app, to modify or create items or Pokémon in a player's Battle Team is expressly forbidden. Players found to have Pokémon or items that have been tampered with may receive a Disqualification, regardless of whether the Pokémon or items belong to that player or were traded for.

4.4. Reporting Illegal Manipulation

Any Play! Pokémon member who believes they have discovered a new method of illegal team manipulation, via any means, should report this to the Pokémon Organized Play team through the [Customer Support Portal](#).

5. Pokémon Video Game Penalty Guidelines

5.1. Introduction

Play! Pokémon protocols and procedures are intended to foster a spirit of friendly competition at all Play! Pokémon events. However, situations occasionally 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, penalties can be earned, ranging from **Cautions** and **Warnings** that do not represent substantial corrective action to more lasting forms of penalties, including **Disqualification** from an event.

This section of the document is intended to provide organizers and Judges with guidelines by which they can assign and report penalties in a fair, even, and logical way.

5.2. Assigning Penalties

Play! Pokémon Professors should 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. 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, organizers and Judges 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.

5.2.1. *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 age division. Younger players are often prone to make mistakes due to lack of experience or from 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 age 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 Professor organizing the tournament 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 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.

5.2.2. *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 playercoordinator@pokemon.com within seven 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 information below to playercoordinator@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, 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.

5.3. Types of Penalties in the Pokémon Video Game

The following list details the various levels of penalty in order of severity. Only Pokémon Organized Play (POP) is authorized to add to or alter any of the penalties below. Organizers and Judges may not issue any penalties other than those listed below. In addition to the below penalties, the Judge or organizer may need to take further corrective action, such as removing an illegal Pokémon from a player's team.

5.3.1. *Caution*

A **Caution** is the most basic of assigned penalties. In essence, the Judge or Tournament 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 notification to the player that a repeated offense may result in a higher penalty.

5.3.2. *Warning*

A **Warning** is similar to a **Caution** in that both are minor penalties. They differ in that **Warnings** must be reported to POP 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 age division, as this group is often still learning the game.

After a **Warning** has been issued, the issuing TO or Judge should confirm that the erring player is aware of the proper rules and procedures as set forth in the Play! Pokémon VG Rules, Formats, and Penalty Guidelines document. The player should be informed that a repeat offense may result in an escalated penalty.

5.3.3. *Game Loss*

The **Game Loss** penalty is generally used when a mistake has been made that has a severe impact 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 a **Game Loss** penalty is issued between rounds, the penalty is applied to the player's next game.

5.3.4. *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 any more attention to the situation 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 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.

5.4. 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 Premier Challenge or Midseason Showdown.

The Tier 2 Penalty should be assigned at events such as Regional Championships, Special Championships, International Championships, or World Championships events, as players at these events are held to a higher standard of gameplay.

5.4.1. *Gameplay Error*

This infraction covers general mistakes made during 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 levels of errors and outlines the appropriate penalties for each.

5.4.1.1. *Minor*

Recommended Penalty:

Tier 1—**Caution** (first offense); **Warning** (second offense); **Game Loss** (third offense)

Tier 2—**Warning** (first offense); **Game Loss** (second offense)

Examples of **Gameplay Error: Minor** include:

- ⊕ Inducing a fixable frozen match delay

5.4.1.2. *Major*

Recommended Penalty: **Game Loss**

Examples of **Gameplay Error: Major** include:

- ⦿ Gigantamaxing a Pokémon not listed as eligible to Gigantamax in Section 1.4
- ⦿ Removal of Game Card mid-game
- ⦿ Loss of power to game system
- ⦿ Inducing an unfixable frozen game state*
- ⦿ Attempting to view the opponent's screen to gain an advantage (screen peeking)**

**If both players are experiencing an unfixable frozen game state, and it is unclear which player is at fault, the problem should be resolved as outlined in 3.4.5. Double Game Freeze.*

*****Game Loss** is recommended as the starting penalty for a first offense. If the player is confirmed to have engaged in a second offense, the penalty should be escalated to **Disqualification**.*

5.4.2. Team Error

This infraction encompasses problems found with a player's Battle Team.

5.4.2.1. Minor

Recommended Penalty: **Warning**

Examples of **Team Error: Minor** may include:

- ⦿ A Pokémon or item in the player's Battle Team does not match the team list, resulting in no potential competitive advantage. Examples where potential competitive advantage does not exist include the following:
 - A Pokémon is listed without accurate form information, but other information contained on the team list makes it apparent which form is being used.
 - Example #1: Rotom is listed on the team list when Heat Rotom is contained in the Battle Team, but the form-exclusive move Overheat is correctly listed in the move set on the team list.
 - Example #2: Mr. Mime alone is listed on the team list when Galarian Mr. Mime is contained in the Battle Team, but the form-exclusive Ability Screen Cleaner is correctly listed on the team list.

- A Pokémon is listed as holding Charcoal but is holding a Flame Plate in the Battle Team and does not know the move Fling.

5.4.2.2. Major

Recommended Penalty: **Game Loss**

In all cases, the offending Pokémon or held item should be prohibited from play and the appropriate penalty should be applied. If this results in a player having fewer than four usable Pokémon remaining in their team, the infraction should be escalated to **Team Error: Severe**. If the Pokémon or held item described on the team list is immediately available, the player should be given the opportunity to add the correct one to their team.

If the player is unable to present the correct held item, the offending item should be removed and not replaced.

If an error is found after one match is completed but before the following round is paired, any **Game Loss** penalties issued as a result should apply retroactively to the completed game.

Examples of **Team Error: Major** may include:

- ⊕ A Pokémon or item in the player's Battle Team does not match the team list, resulting in potential competitive advantage. Examples where potential competitive advantage exists include:
 - A Pokémon is listed without accurate form information, and no other information contained on the team list makes it apparent which form is being used.
 - Example #1: Rotom is listed on the team list when Wash Rotom is contained in the Battle Team, and the correct association cannot be reasonably made by event staff by considering the move set.
 - Example #2: Mr. Mime alone is listed on the team list when Galarian Mr. Mime is contained in the Battle Team, and the Ability field on the team list has been left blank.
 - A move is listed as "Thunder" on the team list when the move known by the Pokémon in the Battle Team is actually Thunder Wave.
 - A Pokémon's stat is not listed or is listed incorrectly on the team list.
- ⊕ A Pokémon on the player's team also appears in Section 1 of the Manual Team Checking Appendix.

5.4.2.3. Severe

Recommended Penalty: **Disqualification**

Examples of **Team Error: Severe** include:

- ⦿ A player has fewer usable Pokémon remaining than the permitted minimum team size after receiving earlier penalties.
- ⦿ A Pokémon on the player's team also appears in Section 2 of the Manual Team Checking Appendix.
- ⦿ Any indication via official tools that a Pokémon has been illegally manipulated, such as a player's team failing an electronic team check

5.4.3. *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 TO 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.

5.4.3.1. *Minor*

Recommended Penalty: **Caution**

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:

- ⦿ Walking away from a match before both players' game systems have recognized the results of the final game
- ⦿ Forgetting to sign the match slip
- ⦿ Entering marked or announced staff-only areas
- ⦿ Interrupting staff during announcements to players or rulings in progress

5.4.3.2. *Major*

Recommended Penalty: **Warning**

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 other players. 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:

- ⦿ Filling out a match slip incorrectly
- ⦿ Showing up late to a match (less than 5 minutes)

5.4.3.3. *Severe*

Recommended Penalty: **Game Loss**

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

Examples of **Procedural Error: Severe** include:

- ⦿ Reporting an incorrect result for a match
- ⦿ Showing up late to a match (5 minutes or more)
- ⦿ Failing to report dropping from an event before leaving the venue (this penalty should be issued whether or not the player is there to receive it)
- ⦿ Playing the incorrect opponent (in this case, the player sitting at the wrong table receives the penalty)

5.4.4. *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.

5.4.4.1. *Minor*

Recommended Penalty: **Warning**

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
- ⊖ Disturbing a match in progress

5.4.4.2. *Major*

Recommended Penalty: **Game Loss**

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
- ⊖ Attempting to manipulate a match through intimidation or distraction
- ⊖ Refusal to sign a match slip

5.4.4.3. *Severe*

Recommended Penalty: **Disqualification**

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, by the use of bribery or coercion, or by any means other than those set forth in these guidelines
- ⊖ Assault
- ⊖ Use of profanity or physical threats to event staff
- ⊖ Theft
- ⊖ Use of slurs or insults

🕒 Lying to the event staff

Appendix A. Manual Team Checking

This section outlines known examples of illegal manipulation which are not currently caught by the electronic team check.

In the event of non-consensus between event staff regarding whether or not a player's Pokémon meets any of the below criteria, the Head Judge is awarded the ultimate determining authority.

Section 1

Any players found to have one of the Pokémon described below in their Battle Team have committed a **Team Error: Major** infraction and should be penalized appropriately as outlined in the Pokémon Video Game Penalty Guidelines.

The offending Pokémon should also be removed from the player's Battle Team. Should this result in the player's having fewer than the minimum tournament entry requirement, the player must also receive **Disqualification** from the event.

- ⊕ Any Pokémon contained in a Poké Ball in which it cannot be found through normal gameplay or official promotions—for example:
 - Any Pokémon that lists "From: A Nursery Worker" on its summary screen and that is contained in a Master Ball or a Cherish Ball
- ⊕ Any Pokémon that is Shiny for which the Shiny variant cannot be found through normal gameplay or official promotions

Section 2

Any players found to have one of the Pokémon described below in their Battle Team have committed a **Team Error: Severe** infraction and should be penalized appropriately as outlined in the Pokémon Video Game Penalty Guidelines.

- ⊕ Any Pokémon with an attack, an Ability, a Nature, or other attribute that results in a potential competitive advantage that cannot be obtained through normal gameplay or official promotions

Appendix B. 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 (January 25, 2021)

Section	Revision	Details
1	Series 8	Updated regulations for Series 8.