

Pokémon GO Tournament Handbook

ENGLISH VERSION

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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

These events will operate a “bring-six-pick-three” format. This means that all players will create a team of up to six Pokémon, of which three will be brought to each game.

The six Pokémon in a player’s team must stay the same throughout the tournament. No changes may be made to the Pokémon chosen, their moves, their CP, or any other feature. However, the three Pokémon brought to each game may vary. *Note: Event staff may need to alter a team based on a penalty earned by a player.*

Players must assign a unique in-game tag to the six Pokémon on their team, and *only* to those Pokémon, to help event staff identify them. Players cannot register a Pokémon they do not possess.

1.2 Format

These events will use the Great League format.

1.3 Team Preview

At the start of each round, there will be a Team Preview phase in which players may view the six Pokémon on their opponent’s team and each Pokémon’s CP. Each player then decides in secret which three of their Pokémon to bring to each game.

Only the potential Pokémon and their CP are visible to the opponent. Players are not shown their opponent’s attacks during Team Preview.

1.4 Restrictions

Two Pokémon on a player's team may not have the same Pokédex number.

Only one specific Pokémon on a player's team may be used with the Best Buddy CP boost throughout a tournament. Multiple Pokémon on the team may have a Best Buddy ribbon, but if one of them is the player's current Buddy Pokémon, it must be the same Pokémon during every match and must be listed at its boosted CP level on the team list (see section 2.3).

Mega Evolution is not permitted.

2 Equipment Rules

2.1 Provided Devices

For many large events, players will participate using smart devices provided onsite and will not be permitted to use their own devices. Unless stated otherwise, the model provided will be the Samsung Galaxy A52. If devices are not provided at a given event, the organizer will specify such at registration.

Due to the structure of these events, it is likely that a player will log in to Pokémon GO on a device for a single round and then log out so another player may use the device. It is the player's responsibility to make sure that they have fully logged out of Pokémon GO and any associated accounts on the device.

Players are strictly prohibited from attempting to access the tournament's private Wi-Fi network or using the provided devices for anything other than competing in the tournament via the Pokémon GO app.

2.2 Objects in Play Area

Players are permitted to have good luck charms or objects in the play area but must keep the play area neat. There must be no food or drink on the table.

2.3 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 GO Team List document for this purpose.

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

A team list will be accepted if it contains the player's name, age division, and Player ID, alongside the following information for each Pokémon.

- Pokémon species, including whether that Pokémon is any of the following.
 - A regional Pokémon (e.g., Galarian Rapidash)
 - A specifically named form (e.g., Wash Rotom)
 - A Shadow Pokémon or a Purified Pokémon
 - A currently active Best Buddy Pokémon
- All known attacks
- CP (for Best Buddy Pokémon, list the CP it will be used at)

3 Event Structure

3.1 Number of Games

Most matches will be best-of-three. A best-of-three is considered completed when *either* of the following occurs.

- One player has won two games
- One player has lost two games

Some brackets—such as the top cut phase of Qualifiers, the Losers Finals, Winners Finals, and Grand Finals—will be best-of-five. A best-of-five is considered complete when *either* of the following occurs.

- One player has won three games
- One player has lost three games

3.2 Double Elimination

All stages of an event will follow a double-elimination format. Players who lose two matches are out of the tournament.

During the Grand Finals of any stage, if the player from the Winners bracket loses the first match, a bracket-reset match will occur, and play will continue until one player has lost two matches.

3.3 Tournament Stages

Tournaments will begin with a pools phase. Registered players will be divided into pools. The winner of each pool will advance to the top cut phase: a double-elimination bracket to determine the overall winner of the tournament.

Brackets may be seeded at the Tournament Organizer's discretion.

3.4 Match Resolution

- A player wins a game by making their opponent's final Pokémon faint.
- If a winner is not clear from the results screen, the winner will be determined using the players' Journals where possible.
- Where it is not possible to determine a winner of a given game, the game will be voided, and play will continue until the match has a conclusive winner.
- Players are unable to resolve a match with an intentional draw (ID).
- A player who quits a game before it is over is electing to forfeit the game.

4 Team Checks

At all Premier Events, event staff must perform team checks. Pokémon Organized Play recommends that event staff perform team checks on at least 10 percent of teams over the course of the tournament. The teams of all players advancing to the top cut phase of a tournament should be checked after pools have concluded. Staff must verify that each player's battle team matches the team list they submitted.

5 Pokémon GO Tournament 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 assigned, ranging from **Cautions** and **Warnings** that do not represent substantial corrective action, to more lasting penalties that can include **Disqualification** from an event.

This section 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 nonstressful play experiences for 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, as well as 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 attempt to avoid receiving a serious penalty by dropping from an event. If this happens, 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. Generally, Judges should take a more lenient approach with younger players, as they are often prone to making mistakes due to lack of experience or from the intimidation of playing in a competitive environment. Younger or less-experienced players

should always be given the benefit of the doubt, as they are often learning the game and making most mistakes accidentally. These players *may* be given more leeway in how many **Caution** penalties they can take before they receive a **Warning**, depending on the severity of the infractions.

The Head Judge of the event has the final word on what penalties should be applied to which players and at what time. The Tournament Organizer and other Judges may assign penalties, but they should always check with the Head Judge before assigning a penalty more severe than a **Warning**. All **Cautions** and **Warnings** assigned by any Judge or Tournament Organizer should be reported to the Head Judge of the event. The Head Judge must report any penalty above a **Caution** to Pokémon Organized Play.

5.2.2 Reporting Penalties to Pokémon Organized Play

Any penalties at the **Warning** level and above must be reported to Pokémon Organized Play. Pokémon Organized Play tracks each player's penalty history to differentiate intentional repetition of infractions from unintentional occurrences and to determine whether long-term action is necessary.

Penalties that require reporting must be emailed 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.

If a Head Judge cannot access the penalty-reporting form, they should 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 Tournament Organizer, and the reaction of the involved players, if any

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 Pokémon GO Tournaments

The following list details the various levels of penalty in order of severity. Only Pokémon Organized Play is authorized to add to or alter any of the penalties below. Organizers and Judges may not issue any penalties other than those listed below. In addition to assigning the below penalties, the Judge or organizer may need to take further corrective action, such as removing an ineligible 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 the player 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 Pokémon Organized Play by the Head Judge or Tournament Organizer of the event in which they occur.

After a **Warning** has been issued, the issuing Head Judge or Tournament Organizer should confirm that the erring player is aware of the proper rules and procedures as set forth in this 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 is severe enough that a 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 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 necessary.

When a player is disqualified from a double-elimination bracket, they receive a loss for their current match (if one is ongoing) and any remaining matches they would've participated in. The player is then dropped from the event.

If the player's actions warrant it, staff may need to ask the player to leave the tournament site. 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 infractions.

5.4.1 Gameplay Error

This infraction covers general mistakes made during a game. These mistakes can have 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: **Warning** (first offense); **Game Loss** (second offense)

An example of **Gameplay Error: Minor**

- Delaying the beginning of a match due to needing to find a device charger

5.4.1.2 Major

Recommended Penalty: **Game Loss**

Examples of **Gameplay Error: Major** include the following.

- Closing the Pokémon GO app in the middle of a game
- Intentionally inducing an unfixable freeze in the game

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 the following.

- A Pokémon appears on the team list without complete form information, but other information contained on the team list makes it apparent which form is being used
 - Example: Only "Castform" is listed on the team list when Sunny Form Castform is on the Battle Team, but the form-exclusive move Ember is correctly listed in the move set on the team list

5.4.2.2 Major

Recommended Penalty: **Game Loss**

Examples of **Team Error: Major** may include the following.

- A Pokémon on the player's Battle Team does not match the team list, resulting in potential competitive advantage. Examples may include the following.
 - A Pokémon is listed without accurate form information, and no other information on the team list makes it apparent which form is being used.
 - Example: "Castform" is listed on the team list when Sunny Form Castform is on the Battle Team, and event staff can't determine the correct form based on the listed move set.
 - A Pokémon is listed with an incorrect move.
 - Example: A move is listed as "Thunder" on the team list when the move known by the Pokémon on the battle team is Thunderbolt.
 - A Pokémon's CP is not listed or is listed incorrectly on the team list.
- A Pokémon on the player's team has a nickname or other attribute that deliberately refers to matters that go against the spirit of the game.

In all cases, the appropriate penalty should be applied. However, a penalty may merit an additional fix as follows.

- If the correct Pokémon described on the team list is immediately available, resulting in no delay to the tournament, the player should be given the opportunity to add the correct one to their team.
- If not, the offending Pokémon should be prohibited from play, and the player's opponents should be made aware of this each round. If this results in a player having fewer than three usable Pokémon remaining in their team, the infraction should be escalated to **Team Error: Severe**.

5.4.2.3 Severe

Recommended Penalty: **Disqualification**

Examples of **Team Error: Severe** include the following.

- A player has fewer usable Pokémon remaining than the permitted minimum team size after receiving earlier penalties.
- The player used a modified Pokémon GO client or any other third-party application that may affect the integrity of the tournament.

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 Tournament Organizer that they are dropping from the event, or other such errors—needs to be reminded of the procedural rules of a Play! Pokémon event. As with Gameplay Errors or other accidental infractions, this reminder is usually given with a **Caution**. 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 assigned 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 the following.

- Walking away from a match before both players' devices 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, while 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 the following.

- Filling out a match slip incorrectly
- Showing up late to a match (less than five 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 the following.

- Reporting an incorrect result for a match
- Showing up late to a match (five 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 the following.

- 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 the following.

- 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 the following.

- 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

5.4.4.4 Cheating

There is no place in the Play! Pokémon program for those who cheat. As such, all instances of cheating are regarded as severe and merit disqualification.

Recommended Penalty: **Disqualification**

Examples of **Cheating** include the following.

- Intentionally taking actions, even those that might otherwise result in lesser penalties, in order to gain an unfair advantage or alter the outcome of a match.

6 Player Eligibility by Age

In addition to [program-wide requirements](#), players must be of or above the age of digital consent in their home region in order to participate in Pokémon GO Championship Series events.

A player's home region is defined as the region or country in which they live, and their Pokémon Trainer Club account must accurately reflect this information.

At the time of this document's publication, the age of digital consent varies but is at least 13 in all member states, meaning all eligible players will fall into the Senior or Masters age divisions. There is no Junior division for Pokémon GO Championship Series events.

7 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 available at [the official Pokémon website](#).