**https://www.reddit.com/r/TheSilphRoad/comments/mzo21v/the\_many\_different\_types\_of\_skills\_in\_gbl\_part\_1/**

**The many different types of skills in GBL (Part 1)**



[Analysis](https://www.reddit.com/r/TheSilphRoad/search?q=flair_name%3A%22Analysis%22&restrict_sr=1)

Background

A few days ago there was a discussion in the community about how much of GBL is just [luck](https://www.reddit.com/r/TheSilphArena/comments/mws0tt/pvp_is_entirely_variance/) and how much is [skill](https://www.reddit.com/r/TheSilphArena/comments/mxt1si/perennial_leaderboarders_guide_to_getting_good/). So i thought it would be helpful to make a list of skills (in a very broad sense) in GBL to help people think and talk about this more concretely.

About this list

This list consists of 82 skills/strategies/tricks that can potentially be useful in GBL. Of course, some of these have overlaps, some can be grouped together or further broken down, and some may seem trivial or obvious. But the point is, there are potentially a lot of things in GBL that you can at least try to work on and strategize about.

Since the entire list exceeds the word limit of reddit posts, I've divided it into **Part 1** (this post) and [**Part 2**](https://www.reddit.com/r/TheSilphRoad/comments/mzo3s3/the_many_different_types_of_skills_in_gbl_part_2/). **Part 1** covers the first major group of skills: **Pre-battle skills and preparation**. **Part 2** covers the second and third major groups of skills: **In-battle skills and strategies**, and **Post-battle skills and management**.

**TL;DR :**

* GBL does involve at least some skills;
* The definition of GBL skills can be pretty broad and there are a whole variety of them in every part of the game;
* Hopefully this list can help people become aware of these skills so they can begin to learn and improve in a more efficient and targeted way.

My credentials in case people need to know: recently hit #2 on the leaderboard, Rank 10/24 in Season 2-7.

A few clarifications before I start. Feel free to skip.

1. **This is NOT a guide**. Rather, it's more like a sort of incomplete glossary of many of the skills that are potentially involved in PvP (or at least GBL). I won't explain many of the skills in detail and won't tell you how to acquire/practice the skills because 1) it will make the post even longer and unreadable and 2) I haven't mastered or even fully understood many of the skills either.
2. **Don't be intimidated by this list**. You don't need to master or even know many of these skills to be good, and you'll naturally learn some of these as you play more. No one has mastered all of these, not even the best of the best. In fact many good players probably aren't even aware that they've been using some of the skills.
3. Some of these are more important then others, some are used more frequently than others, some are easier to learn than others. But in most parts of this post I didn't rank the skills in the same category in any particular order. I'm just listing them for your reference.

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1. Pre-battle skills/preparation

GBL battles start before they start. There are many skills involved in the preparation stage.

**1.1 Game Knowledge**

Knowledge is power. There are just things that you either know or don't know. And not knowing these things can be a huge disadvantage and make you more prone to mistakes or bad decisions during battle. And yes, a lot of these require memorizing, although if you play enough games you may not need to do much extra memorizing.

**1.1.1 Type effectiveness**

I mean it's a Pokemon game... Ideally you should learn all the type effectiveness (and resistance), not just the common ones. And you won't have time during battle to check this online.

**1.1.2 Pokemon's type**

Again, it's Pokemon. Sure, you can look at the top right corner to see the type, but that potentially creates delay and distraction.

**1.1.3 Pokemon's move pool**

You need to know the move pool of all the common and ideally all the less common GBL Pokemon. For open Great League, that's almost 100 Pokemon. Some Pokemon can have multiple viable move sets so you'll need to be aware of that.

**1.1.4 Move stats**

This includes fast move turns, move damage, energy cost/generation, energy efficiency, and buffing/debuffing effects. Fast move energy generation and charged move energy cost are the most crucial ones. Raw move damage is less important. In most cases you just need to know enough to know which move to use in what situation. See 1.1.6 for more.

**1.1.5 Pokemon stats**

You don't need to know the actual stats, but it's helpful to know how bulky and hard hitting each Pokemon generally is. However, when you want to know who wins CMP (see 1.1.10) or if important breakpoints are involved (e.g. Dialga mirror), you'd want to take a closer look at it.

**1.1.6 "Can you tank it?"**

It helps to know how much damage different moves do on different Pokemon (or how well [can you tank it](https://www.reddit.com/r/TheSilphArena/comments/k8wcdy/can_you_tank_it_holiday_cup_edition_part_1_of_3/)). This basically combines move stats and Pokemon stats and often informs many of your important decisions during the game such as shielding, baiting, farming, etc.

**1.1.7 Know how to use PvPoke**

PvPoke is an incredibly useful resource. It's an indispensable tool if you want to be somewhat serious about PvP. It has three main uses: ranking, team building tool, and battle simulations. I believe the overall usage of the 3 functions is ranking > team building tool > battle simulations, but I think the actual usefulness should be ranking < team building tool < battle simulations. There are many different ways to use the simulations. For example, you can use it to [decide between two of the same Pokemon with different IVs](https://www.reddit.com/r/PokemonGOBattleLeague/comments/mbk433/stepbystep_guide_how_to_decide_between_two_of_the/). But I won't go into details here.

**1.1.8 Know how** ***NOT*** **to use PvPoke**

Common mistakes: picking 3 high ranking Pokemon and throw them into a team, relying on the team building tool to build the entire team for you, [taking simulation results at face value](https://www.reddit.com/r/TheSilphArena/comments/m9gx6m/something_to_keep_in_mind_when_you_use_pvpoke/). PvPoke is only a tool and it's only as good as how you use it. You need to know what you want from the different tools on the site instead of waiting for it to just spit out "the perfect team". It does not replace thinking and strategizing. In fact it only sparks more thinking when used right.

**1.1.9 Know matchups**

This is a big one and is potentially time consuming. In the most ideal case (not necessary in most cases), you should know how the matchups between your Pokemon and the rest of the meta will go in different shielding and energy situations so you can make the most informed decisions about shielding, baiting, switching, farming, and more. Sure, you can estimate how a specific matchup will go as it unfolds, but it's much less accurate and requires a lot of fast thinking. Knowing the matchups is especially important for the lead and the swap and a small difference can cascade into gaming deciding factors. It's not uncommon for the best PvP players to spend hours on PvPoke learning the different matchups and formulate detailed game plans for each common lead and swap, all the way down to a single fast move. But be aware of the limitations of simulations and test different scenarios. Some matchups are very sensitive to small energy/health advantages and can flip from big wins to big losses in very specific situations.

**1.1.10 Know who wins CMP ties**

Usually CMP ties happen when they happen and there is nothing you can do about it, but if you want to force CMP ties (see 2.4.2) or want to get the absolute max amount of farming, you'd better know who's going to win CMP. This is also important in the end game when shields are down and at least one side has a move saved. It doesn't matter how much energy you farm up if you can't throw the killing blow before your opponent does.

**1.2 Know the Meta**

Every team and every strategy works better in one meta but poorly in another. It's hard to build a team and design strategies if you're going into a meta completely blind.

**1.2.1 Know/predict the meta**

You can try and get familiar with the meta by looking at PvPoke rankings, reading/watching other people's analysis, watching stream/YouTube, etc. But take things with a grain of thought and be aware of local metas and meta changes over time.

**1.2.2 Know popular meta Pokemon/teams**

Streamers, Youtubers, reddit posts, and other forms of influencers can have a disproportional effect on the meta. Many of the now famous/infamous teams were invented, or at least popularized, by a few players. So like it or not, you'll need to be prepared for whatever Pokemon/teams that have been featured by influencers recently, as well as the most common counters to them.

**1.2.3 Get a sense of your local meta**

You might need to account for how your local meta might be different from the overall meta. Or in sort of Bayesian terms, you need to update your meta "prior" with your own local data. Local both in a ratings sense and a regional/temporal sense. The meta can be different at each rating range. Part of it is due to availability of certain Pokemon, part of it is just random fluctuation around the overall meta equilibrium. Different timezones might also have different local meta because they have different influencers. It's hard to get a sense of the local meta without playing a few sets yourself.

**1.2.4 Correctly detect meta shifts**

Meta shifts do happen, usually in response to the introduction or change of Pokemon or moves, and sometimes events or popular teams (e.g. grasshole). However, it's not always obvious if or when the meta has shifted and by how much. Sometimes an apparent meta shift may just turn out to be a random fluctuation. It's hard to detect meta shifts as they happen, but there are some skills that can help. Better and deeper understanding of the RPS relationships between different types/groups of Pokemon might help; better understanding of the new Pokemon or moves and their place in the meta can help; collecting more and better data from stream/YouTube/gobattlelog, etc. might help you detect new trends.

**1.2.5 Correctly adjust to meta shifts**

Relatively minor adjustments on existing team are usually preferred over drastic overhauls of entire teams. For example, instead of building a completely different team from scratch, first try swapping out one of the team members for something that works better in the new meta, or changing the lead, or changing the moves. But occasionally, bigger changes need to happen, and the ability to know when that is necessary is a form of skill.

**1.2.6 Combating subjectivity and confirmation bias**

The whole knowing the meta thing honestly sounds a bit like a mini data science project: collecting and analyzing data to separate signal from noise. It's important to be aware of your own subjectivity and the traps and limitation of your perception such as confirmation bias. One common mistake is to violently change one's team based on one's subjective (and often inaccurate) impression based on a small sample of data (a few sets or even a few games). People tend to sound very convincing to themselves.

**1.3 Team Building**

There have been many guides and videos and discussions on this so I won't go into too much detail here. I'll just make a few general points.

**1.3.1 Make strategy, not team**

Good team building is not just building a team, but building a specific strategy/game plan. A good team is built at the same time a strategy is formed.

On a macro level, different types of teams tend to have different styles and strategies: tanky teams and glassy teams tend to play very differently; fast move teams and spammy teams tend to require very different strategies; ABC teams and ABB teams can feel like completely different animals; and so on. Ask yourself how you envision your team to win. By winning/maintaining/taking back alignment? By fast move pressure? By charge move pressure? By timeout? By bulk? By nukes?... Then work backwards and figure out how you can direct the game to those favorable situation and what does that require of your team.

On a micro level, skilled players usually have very detailed game plans for almost every common lead and swap. Do you stay in or switch? Do you throw a move and switch or bank a move and switch? Do you try and catch a move on the swap? How many shields are you willing to use for a given matchup? How badly do you want to maintain/win switch advantage? What's a common backline for this lead and how can you deal with it?... This is still just scratching the surface, and the more you think about these before the battle, the less you need to think about it during battle. But you also need to remain flexible and avoid being dogmatic.

In summary, no team is a silver bullet. Know its strengths, know its weaknesses, know the play style, know how people will try to counter it, and make plans, lots plans.

**1.3.2 Create synergy**

Sometimes, two or three Pokemon are all very good on their own and should complement each other well on paper, but in practice they just feel awkward in a team as if something is missing. And that something that turns individual parts into a well-oiled machine is synergy. Synergy can mean very different things for different types of teams. Sometimes it means covering each other's weaknesses, sometimes it means enhancing each other's strengths, sometimes it means they can set up the right farming opportunities/shield advantages/win conditions for each other, sometimes it means being able to safely catch charged moves onto each other, etc. It's a pretty fluid concept and it takes experience and skill to even sense synergy, let alone create it.

**1.3.3**  **Build YOUR team**

Don't try to build a "perfect" team. In the long run, every team will lose around 40-60% of all games. Instead, build a team that you know well how to use and try to win the games you can win through good strategy and great execution.

If you copy other people's team, it's ok, but make sure you actually understand the team and the strategy behind it. Know its battle style and see if it fits with your play style (if you have a specific style or preference). If it doesn't match, you may not enjoy using it. Many people have limited success using popular teams because they copy the form but not the "soul". They know it can work but don't know exactly why it worked or how to make it work.

**1.3.4 Use spice correctly**

Spicy picks or spicy moves might create opponent hesitation and information asymmetry: the opponent may not know what moves it has; they may not have a direct answer to it; the spice may be more bulky or hard-hitting than the opponent expects; and while you know the matchups against the meta (if you've done your homework or have experience using it), the opponent may not know the matchup, making them prone to misjudgment and mistakes. Being able to identify the potential in spicy picks and then give it an appropriate team and strategy is an uncommon yet valuable skill.

**1.3.5 Grind smartly**

PvP does not exist in vacuum, it exists in parallel to the rest of PoGo, so resources management and efficient and targeted grinding is important. Mid-to-long term planning is also needed, especially for XL and BB. Knowing what you need in advance helps. Otherwise you might be overwhelmed by all the grinding.

Continue to [**Part 2**](https://www.reddit.com/r/TheSilphRoad/comments/mzo3s3/the_many_different_types_of_skills_in_gbl_part_2/) of this list for the second and third major groups of skills: **In-battle skills and strategies**, and **Post-battle skills and management**.

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