



Play! Pokémon Penalty Guidelines

Pokémon TCG, VG, GO, and UNITE

ENGLISH VERSION

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For Pokémon TCG, VG, GO, and UNITE

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1 Introduction

Welcome to the world of competitive Pokémon! We believe in providing fun, fast, and fair tournaments for all our games, and that means ensuring all our tournament rules and regulations are followed. Whether intentional or not, errors and infractions can happen during a tournament, and while we may not be excited to take disciplinary action, it is everyone's responsibility to protect the integrity of games, matches, and tournaments.

We do this with the Spirit of the Game in mind and to educate with the goal of preventing future infractions.

These guidelines are established to provide you with the most up-to-date information on how to act on infractions that may arise during a tournament.

1.1 Who Is This For?

We believe in transparency for our rules and guidelines, so this document is visible to anyone who participates in our tournaments. Because of that, every participant in our tournaments (whether they're a competitor or a spectator) is responsible for upholding the information in this document and our other tournament regulations and guidelines (including but not limited to our Play! Pokémon Tournament Rules Handbook and Play! Pokémon Standards of Conduct).

This document is required reading for our Tournament Organizers, Judges, and staff at events. We also highly recommend reading this document if you are a competitor at our events.

Being a spectator or parent at our events also comes with certain expectations and responsibilities, so some of the information in this guide applies to actions you may take during our events (such as procedural errors and unsporting behavior). Being familiar with what is and is not allowed during tournament play can empower you to make the best decisions possible while supporting the competitors in your life.

1.2 Using This Guide

This document doesn't exist because we want to penalize competitors during our tournaments, but unfortunately, infractions happen. We need to be prepared to handle these issues definitively, fairly, and consistently. These guidelines were established to provide you with the information needed to uphold the integrity of every game, match, and tournament.

We will discuss our overall philosophy, infractions, penalties, applications, and examples to help you make a tournament successful. It's important for us to note that we **cannot** cover every possible issue or infraction in these guidelines, so we have provided key examples and suggestions to help you make determinations when issues outlined in these guidelines arise, as well as empower you to act on related issues or errors not explicitly covered here.

Use these guidelines to find the most applicable base infraction, analyze the situation based on the information provided, and then determine the appropriate course of action.

Don't worry! We'll be covering more of this in the application section. We're just priming you for what's to come.

1.3 Why Create This Document?

We've gone through several iterations of documentation regarding penalties. Before this document, our penalty guidelines were isolated by game in each appropriate game handbook or our Tournament Rules Handbook.

Why are we telling you this?

We think it's important to provide context on how we've reached our current iteration of penalty guidelines. We also want to outline that we are constantly striving to provide the best set of guidelines we possibly can. We may occasionally update the guidance in this handbook to best support our Professors, competitors, and community.

We hope centralizing information regarding penalties will make it easier and faster to find the information you're looking for exactly when you need it.

1.4 Notice of Potential Changes

As stated above, we've iterated on this information several times already, and it's likely that further adjustments will be made as Play! Pokémon continues to grow and learn, just as you will grow and learn with our program too. This means that the information in this guide is subject to change at the sole discretion of Play! Pokémon and The Pokémon Company International.

We highly recommend checking in at least every quarter to see if any changes have been made to the content presented in these guidelines. Pokémon Professors are required to maintain an up-to-date and accurate knowledge of this document's contents. Read ahead and be prepared for every tournament and event!

2 Philosophy

The Spirit of the Game drives the philosophy of this document. We strive to provide fun, fair, and respectful tournaments that foster the community that makes Play! Pokémon special. Our program is bolstered by several games with different goals and successes, meaning our philosophy must cover multiple systems while remaining consistent. This document aims to cover all our games and will note where deviations exist from game to game—or even from our overarching philosophy.

The Play! Pokémon program utilizes the Professor Program to deploy Judges to events, where they evaluate base infractions and their effects on game state to apply penalties as appropriate.

While this document is owned and updated by The Pokémon Company International and Play! Pokémon, Judges use this document to ensure the flow and integrity of a tournament is upheld. Play! Pokémon trusts Judges to provide fair rulings and elucidate where necessary.

Let's discuss our philosophy statement in more detail.

2.1 Judges

Judges, and Tournament Organizers acting as Judges, are staff at Play! Pokémon events. They utilize our rules and resources to act as a neutral party within each game, match, and tournament. Judges use their expertise to determine the nature of infractions based on the guidelines outlined in this document and information provided in our Tournament Rules Handbook, Standards of Conduct, and other applicable documents. When a Tournament Organizer is acting as a Judge, the same guidance given to Judges throughout this document applies to them as well.

Because of a Judge's role in a tournament, it is highly recommended that they not rule on a match that may involve a family member, close friend, teammate, or other direct relation. In some instances, this may be impossible. In such instances, a Judge must remain neutral regardless of any relationship with a competitor.

Judges are responsible for providing a fun, fast, and fair experience for competitors. They should investigate any issues and infractions fully before committing to a penalty, and they should provide a clear explanation of any infraction and its penalty. Should a Judge not have the necessary information or expertise on a matter, they should make every reasonable attempt to seek it out before using their best judgment to issue an appropriate penalty.

Because of a Judge's direct role in a tournament, all questions or appeals to a Judge's call must take place at the tournament. Should a competitor request more information about a call, the Judge should endeavor to accommodate this, provided it does not impact the flow of the tournament.

Should a competitor wish to appeal a ruling or penalty issued by a Judge, they have the right to escalate it to the Head Judge. Judges must always accommodate requests for appeal.

It is also the responsibility of any competitor, spectator, parent, or other Professor to treat Judges with respect when engaging with them about questions, rulings, or appeals. Failure to treat tournament staff respectfully can result in disciplinary action.

2.2 Base Infraction

A base infraction is the triggering issue that leads to an investigation from a Judge when determining if a penalty should be imposed. Base infractions represent the most common issues seen at tournaments and act as anchors for assessing an appropriate penalty should one need to be issued.

Base infractions include things like procedural errors, such as forgetting to sign a match slip upon leaving the play area or arriving late to a match. They may also represent gameplay errors, such as listing the wrong item on a team list for a video game tournament or playing too many Supporters during your turn in a Pokémon TCG match.

Base infractions also center what penalty a Judge should consider when investigating an infraction at a tournament. If the infraction aligns with a base infraction described in this guide, the recommended starting penalty for that base infraction should be applied. If the infraction causes a larger issue for the overall game state

(discussed below) or otherwise differs from the description of the most similar base infraction, a Judge may need to consider deviating from the recommended starting penalty.

Where possible, we will provide examples of recommended starting penalties and their deviations, but Play! Pokémon trusts Judges to work toward the best solution for each infraction by comparing the infraction to its effect on the game state and determining the most appropriate penalty based on their review.

2.3 Game State

While the base infraction should always be considered first, the infraction's effect on the game state is paramount to addressing the issue. Depending upon the way that an infraction affects the game state, a recommended starting penalty may be applied or a Judge may need to deviate from the recommended starting penalty for the base infraction.

So, what exactly is the game state?

The game state encompasses everything happening during all phases of a competitor's turn and their opponent's turn, the Pokémon and resources a competitor has available to them in their hand or on their team, and all possible choices competitors can make as part of their turns.

This means that when weighing the base infraction, a Judge must consider how the infraction affects every aspect of what is on the board, in competitors' hands or on their teams, and the potential actions competitors could have taken as a result.

A Judge is then responsible for trying to reset the game state to the best of their abilities to mitigate the integrity loss of the game or match. This is why the appropriate penalty is a Game Loss if the game state is irreparably damaged. If the base infraction is small and its effect on the game state is also small, a Caution or Warning penalty may be most appropriate, depending upon the infraction.

2.4 Applying the Most Appropriate Penalty

We will be discussing the different types of penalties and application of those penalties soon, but the important thing to remember when applying a penalty is that we do so with the intent to educate the competitor on the base infraction and keep it from happening again. When we say "most appropriate," it means determining the base infraction, the infraction's impact on the game, the age or skill level of the competitor, their intent, and several other factors and weighing them all before handing out a penalty.

You should also consider your own skills as a Judge when making a decision based on the potential damage to the game state. If you are not as skilled at resetting the game state, consider how our penalties function and their impact on educating the competitor. Find the penalty proportional to all factors you identify, especially if you may not be able to reset the game state to exactly where it was prior to the infraction. Instead of immediately escalating to a severe penalty, consider whether another penalty is more proportional despite your inability to reset the game state to what it was prior to the base infraction.

Again, we can't cover every instance of how an infraction may occur or impact a game, so you'll need to use what we provide in this guide to make the best decisions for your tournaments, each individual game, and turns within. When you make a decision on how to deliver a penalty for an infraction, always explain why you are applying the penalty.

We'll discuss applying penalties in section 4 of this guide.

3 Penalties

We recognize that the nature of play in our various game tournaments varies greatly. We selected the following penalties because their application across our games creates consistency.

A base infraction in our video games can't be analogous to drawing an extra card in the Pokémon TCG, but the application of the penalties below represents the most appropriate, proportional action we can take for how base infractions can impact game state.

3.1 Caution

A Caution is the most basic of penalties. When a Judge assigns a Caution, they notify a competitor that they have done something incorrectly. All other applications procedures are followed.

3.2 Warning

A Warning is like a Caution in that both are minor penalties. They differ in that Warnings must be reported to Play! Pokémon by the Head Judge or Tournament Organizer of the event in which they occur.

Please Note: While the Tournament Organizer and other Judges may assign penalties, they should always check with the Head Judge or Assistant Head Judge before assigning a penalty more severe than a Warning. Additionally, all Cautions and Warnings assigned by any Judge should be reported to the Head Judge of the event.

3.3 Double Prize Card Penalty (Pokémon TCG Only)

The Double Prize Card penalty is exclusive to the Pokémon Trading Card Game and is used when a mistake has been made that significantly affects the game state and there is no clear way to resolve the issue or when a Warning has been given and a Quadruple Prize Card penalty would be too harsh.

When a Double Prize Card penalty is issued, the offending competitor's opponent requires two fewer Prize cards than would normally be necessary, according to the format, to win the game. All available Prize cards remain in the Prize card area, but a competitor requires only four of the Prize cards to secure a victory. If the competitor has already taken at least four Prize cards, the competitor immediately wins the game.

3.4 Quadruple Prize Card Penalty (Pokémon TCG Only)

The Quadruple Prize Card penalty is used when a mistake has been made that has a severe impact on the game state, there is no clear way to resolve the issue, and a Game Loss penalty would be too harsh.

As with a Double Prize Card penalty, all available Prize cards remain in the Prize card area, but a competitor requires only two Prize cards to secure a victory for the game. If the competitor has already taken at least two Prize cards, the competitor immediately wins the game.

3.5 Game Loss

The Game Loss penalty is generally used when a mistake has been made that has a severe impact on the game state, 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. The game is recorded as a loss for the competitor receiving the penalty.

In extreme cases where significant errors have been made by both competitors in a game, a Game Loss penalty may be issued to both competitors simultaneously.

3.6 Match Loss

The Match Loss penalty may be used when one competitor's conduct or actions irreparably compromise the integrity of a match, rather than that of a single game. The match immediately ends and is recorded as a loss for the offending competitor.

3.7 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 competitor's actions (whether intentional or unintentional) have significantly and negatively impacted the integrity or operation of the entire event.

Competitors who receive this penalty are removed from the tournament and become ineligible to receive any prizes. If the competitor's actions warrant it, asking the competitor to leave the tournament site may be necessary.

4 Application

After determining the nature of the base infraction and assessing its impact on the game state, Judges must determine if a penalty should be applied. The following section provides instruction on how penalties are applied, when they take effect, and how to deviate from our outlined recommendations when the necessity arises.

4.1 Standard Applications

In the event a base infraction occurs, a review of the issue and its impact on the game state must take place to determine the level of disruption it had on the turn, game, and match in progress. This review should include information provided by both competitors at the table.

Should the issue align with the information present in section 5 regarding base infractions and their recommended starting penalties, issue the appropriate recommended starting penalty as outlined in that section. Should the issue cause a disruption that does *not* align with the recommended starting penalty for that base infraction, a deviation from the recommended starting penalty may be required. In such a case, utilize the information present in section 4.2 and alternative penalty pathways outlined in the appropriate subsections of section 5.

The vast majority of penalty applications will align with the recommendations in this guide; however, this does not mean a proper review of the infraction and its effect on the game state can be ignored. Each issue requires the same attention to ensure the integrity of the turn, game, match, and tournament, and it is a Judge's responsibility to maintain that integrity when an infraction occurs.

Depending on the penalty level (anything above a Warning), the Head Judge or Assistant Head Judge of the event should be consulted before issuing the penalty. In the case of a Disqualification penalty at events at the level of Regional Championships, Special Championships, or above, at least three Judges (including the Head Judge) must conclude that applying a Disqualification penalty is the most appropriate course of action.

4.1.1 Timing of Penalty Application

Each penalty type has a specific timing for when the penalty occurs, whether it is during a turn, between games, or even between matches. Unless extenuating circumstances apply, the below information should hold true for all timings of penalty applications.

In exceedingly rare situations, The Pokémon Company International may be required to supersede the usual timing of a penalty or the information recorded on a signed match slip when tournament integrity is at risk or a severe disregard for tournament policy has occurred.

4.1.1.1 Cautions and Warnings

Cautions and Warnings should be applied immediately upon determining that one of these penalties should be issued. While Cautions are not logged in the penalty report for the event, Warnings should be logged. No additional action is required from the issuing Judge or the competitor receiving the Caution or Warning unless additional infractions occur.

REMINDER: Any penalty above a Warning needs to be confirmed by a Head Judge or Assistant Head Judge before application.

4.1.1.2 Prize Card Penalties (Pokémon TCG Only)

Both Double Prize Card (DPC) and Quadruple Prize Card (QPC) penalties are applied immediately upon determining that these penalties should be issued. The offending competitor's opponent is informed that to win the game in progress, they must take two fewer Prize cards (DPC) or four fewer Prize cards (QPC) than would normally be necessary (according to the format) to win. If the opponent of the competitor receiving the penalty has already obtained the appropriate number of Prize cards, the opponent immediately wins the game in progress.

4.1.1.3 Game Loss

If a competitor receives a Game Loss during a game in progress, the offending competitor records a loss for that game. If another game would be played, the competitors immediately set up for the following game. If no additional games would be played after the Game Loss is issued, the match is complete.

In extreme cases where significant errors have been made by both competitors in a game, both competitors may be issued a Game Loss simultaneously. A single-game match terminated in this manner is not a tie; it is recorded as having no winner.

If a Game Loss is issued immediately after a game concludes but before the next game proceeds or match results are finalized, the penalty should be applied to the game that just concluded.

If a Game Loss is applied between rounds, the penalty is applied to the competitor's next game.

4.1.1.4 Match Loss

If a Match Loss is applied during a match currently in progress, the game in progress is recorded as a loss for the competitor receiving the penalty. The match will subsequently be recorded as a loss for the offending competitor.

If a Match Loss is issued immediately after a match concludes and before the match results are finalized, the penalty should be applied to the match that just concluded.

If the Match Loss is recorded between rounds (after match results are finalized), the penalty is applied to the competitor's next match.

4.1.1.5 Disqualification

Disqualification can occur in three separate situations, with different results depending upon the situation.

1. **Swiss:** If the competitor is disqualified during Swiss rounds while their match is still ongoing, that competitor should also receive a Match Loss for their current match that has yet to complete. Disqualification is then applied.
 - a. If the competitor is not currently playing a match, Disqualification is applied immediately.
2. **Single Elimination:** During single-elimination rounds, the competitor receiving a Disqualification will also receive a Match Loss for their most recent single-elimination match.

- a. If a competitor is disqualified during their single-elimination match, the Match Loss is applied to the current round.
 - b. If a competitor is disqualified while they are not playing in an ongoing match, the Match Loss is applied to the most recently completed round and the opponent from the match will advance, if eligible.
3. **Double Elimination:** Competitors receiving a Disqualification during double-elimination rounds will receive Game Losses for all games in their most recent double-elimination match.
- a. Should this result in a competitor's first loss for the tournament, they also receive Game Losses for all games in their next upcoming match.
 - b. If a competitor is disqualified during a match, the Game Losses are applied to the current round and, where applicable, to the following round.
 - c. If a competitor is disqualified while they are not playing in an ongoing match, the Game Losses are applied to the most recently completed round and, where applicable, to the following rounds.

4.2 Deviations from Recommended Starting Penalties

When reviewing an infraction and its effect on the game state, you may conclude that the infraction is not aligned to our recommended starting penalty for the base infraction. Perhaps a second Supporter card played in error resulted in a completely reversible effect, or perhaps it triggered a chain of events that resulted in a partially or completely broken game state. This may change the entire strategy of the turn. Or perhaps a competitor forgot to initiate a mandatory Ability, but the Ability was localized to one competitor and not to the game itself.

In instances like these, you may be required to use your deductive reasoning skills and these guidelines to determine a deviation from our recommended starting penalties. In the above examples, a competitor gaining information that may change their entire gameplay strategy because of an infraction may require something more severe than the recommended starting penalty. On the other hand, what if a mistake results in something that had little to no actual impact on the game state? In that case, it's probably best to issue a lesser penalty than the recommended starting penalty outlined for the base infraction.

The most important thing when issuing any penalty, especially when you are deviating from recommended starting penalties, is to have a clear, decisive reason for why you're making the call you're making. You need to be sure you can clearly explain your reasoning for why the penalty you have decided upon is the correct penalty.

Below is a nonexhaustive list of reasons a Judge might deviate from recommended starting penalties. Use these as a foundation when considering deviations.

Please Note: If an example is not present in either the De-escalate or Escalate section, this does not mean that a penalty can't be de-escalated or escalated. It just means there is not a common example for that base infraction.

4.2.1 Reversibility

By way of example, consider the act of mistakenly playing two Supporter cards in a single turn. In many such cases, it may not be possible to mitigate that impact without assessing a penalty that offsets any potential advantage gained, as the scenario below illustrates.

Situation: Brendan plays Lillie (UPR, 125). Later in the same turn, Brendan also plays Mars (UPR, 128) and draws two cards. He also discards a random card from his opponent's hand. Brendan then realizes his error and calls a Judge.

Game State Correction: The Judge, Professor Elm, can restore the correct card to the opponent's hand, since it is known to both competitors. However, the opponent cannot verify which cards in Brendan's hand were those drawn due to Mars. Therefore, Professor Elm must select two cards at random to return to the deck. After the game state has been restored as much as possible, Mars is returned to Brendan's hand.

Penalty Assessed: Brendan receives a Double Prize Card penalty to offset the potential advantage gained by having access to two new cards from his deck and having knowledge of one of the cards in his opponent's hand.

If the erroneous action can be reversed such that the game state mirrors one in which the second Supporter card had never been played, this may be grounds to de-escalate (decrease the severity of) the penalty.

Situation: Brendan plays Lillie (UPR, 125). Later in the same turn, Brendan also plays Guzma (BUS, 115) and switches his opponent's Active Pokémon with one of their Benched Pokémon. He then does the same himself. Brendan then realizes his error and calls a Judge.

Game State Correction: The Judge, Professor Elm, can determine which Pokémon were in the Active Spot prior to Guzma being played and move them back. After the game state has been restored, Guzma is returned to Brendan's hand.

Penalty Assessed: Brendan receives a Warning to remind him of the requirement to carefully track his play. The incident should be recorded in the tournament's penalty summary.

If the erroneous action results in a game state that is irreparably broken, the most appropriate course may be to escalate (increase the severity of) the penalty.

Situation: Brendan plays Lillie (UPR, 125). Later in the same turn, Brendan also plays Cynthia (UPR, 119) and shuffles his hand into his deck. Brendan then realizes his error and calls a Judge.

Game State Correction: The Judge, Professor Elm, is unable to determine which cards were in Brendan's hand prior to Cynthia being played. No corrective action can be taken.

Penalty Assessed: Brendan receives a Game Loss. No other penalty can satisfactorily mitigate the damage done to the game state by his action in playing the second Supporter and shuffling away the cards in his hand.

Another factor that may influence the decision to escalate or de-escalate a penalty is the point at which the mistake is caught. If the erroneous action is not yet fully completed, for instance, there may be greater opportunity to reverse its impact.

4.2.2 Repeated Infractions

One of the purposes of penalties is to educate the competitor of their mistake and remind them to take extra care when completing game actions and interacting with others at tournaments. If, however, infractions are repeated, it may be appropriate to escalate the penalty for each subsequent infraction to further reinforce the necessity of adhering to Play! Pokémon tournament rules.

4.2.3 Age and Experience

Consider the age, experience, and current standing of the competitor. Although these are not always relevant factors, Judges should be aware that mistakes may be made due to lack of experience or the intimidation of playing in a competitive environment.

Competitors who commit more than one type of infraction during a tournament are often genuinely uninformed. Competitive tournaments can be daunting, and there is much to learn about procedure, etiquette, and fair play. It can also be nerve-wracking to compete for prizes at the age of many of our competitors, and they should be given every chance to learn about the game and the Play! Pokémon system.

Should you make a deviation from a recommended starting penalty based on age and experience for one competitor, consider how this may affect your calls for similar infractions for other competitors under similar circumstances.

While there are no guarantees that two instances of the same base infraction will be handled the same way given the surrounding circumstances, a Judge should consider the precedence set by deviating from a recommended starting penalty, especially for deviations due to age and experience.

4.3 Delivering Penalties

Play! Pokémon Judges seek to create fun, safe, and stress-free play experiences for our competitors. For this reason, the application of penalties should be handled in the most polite and discreet manner possible.

Whenever a penalty is assessed and delivered, that delivery should include the following:

- An explanation of how the competitor's actions are not allowed

- How the assessed penalty will impact the competitor's tournament
- A reminder that the competitor may appeal this or any other penalty to the Head Judge

4.3.1 Discussing Penalties

Due to the nature of some infractions, it is often inevitable that the wider Play! Pokémon community will become aware of penalties assessed in some circumstances. It is important, however, that Professors treat information pertaining to penalties with sensitivity to prevent any undue embarrassment to those involved. We would want others to extend the same courtesy to us if we were in a similar situation.

Penalties discussed publicly for reasons of training should be sufficiently anonymized, and penalty history regarding specific competitors should be shared between Professors only when relevant. If shared online, such information should be shared on appropriate channels and not to wide audiences where speculation can grow.

Professors should also refrain from providing a public opinion on rulings and penalties for which they were not present. The many varied factors a Professor must consider when applying a penalty are easily overlooked or misrepresented in a social forum. To refrain from providing comment is to avoid sharing an underinformed viewpoint that may accidentally undermine a fellow Professor.

4.4 Time Extensions

Judges may issue time extensions of a length corresponding to the time taken to resolve any issue. The extra time allotted must be clearly communicated to both competitors and recorded immediately by the Judge.

Time extensions during Championship Series events (events at the level of Regional Championships and above) cannot exceed 16 minutes in total. This applies whether the round incurs several Judge rulings that result in multiple shorter time extensions or a single Judge ruling that results in a longer time extension.

5 Base Infractions, Recommended Starting Penalties, and Deviations

Below is a nonexhaustive list of base infractions that may occur during a game. It is impossible for Play! Pokémon to create a list of every potential error or infraction that can occur during a tournament. As such, this section, as outlined in the title of this document, is a set of guidelines that will sometimes require Judges to extrapolate based on the information listed below.

Descriptions of base infractions and lists of recommended starting penalties depending on infraction severity are provided here. Examples are separated by game where applicable. The information in this section should act as the foundation for ruling on all potential infractions, even if an infraction does not fit perfectly into what's listed below.

Potential deviations to recommended starting penalties are also provided here. These are also nonexhaustive and are meant to help a Judge decide on a deviation if they determine that a deviation from the recommended starting penalty is needed.

5.1 Procedural Error

Procedural errors have an impact on the smooth and uninterrupted progression of the tournament, not just for the competitor or competitors involved but potentially for the staff and wider participation group.

5.1.1 Recommended Starting Penalties and Examples

1) Minor: Caution	2) Major: Warning	3) Severe: Game Loss
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- 1) **Minor procedural errors** do not cause any substantial delay or inconvenience to tournament proceedings and can be rectified almost immediately.

Examples may include the following:

- a) A competitor accidentally enters a designated “staff only” area.
- b) A competitor forgets to sign a match slip or verify match results prior to leaving the play area but is called back immediately by a member of staff.
- c) **Pokémon video games and Pokémon GO**: A competitor fails to provide their opponent with a team sheet during team preview.

- 2) **Major procedural errors** have the potential to cause a delay to the tournament or to cause an inconvenience to surrounding competitors while they are rectified.

Examples may include the following:

- a) A competitor forgets to sign a match slip or verify match results prior to leaving the play area, causing a delay to tournament proceedings while staff attempt to locate them.
- b) A competitor unplugs or detaches equipment during a game or match.
- c) A competitor refuses or fails to comply with tournament staff instruction.
- d) **Pokémon TCG**: A competitor cannot provide the appropriate Special Condition markers for the effects of the cards in their deck.
- e) **Pokémon GO**: Following team preview, a competitor takes an unreasonable length of time to choose which three Pokémon to bring into battle.

- 3) **Severe procedural errors** not only cause disruption to the tournament but have the potential to negatively affect the experience of others.

Examples may include the following:

- a) A competitor knowingly damages provided equipment through aggressive behavior.
- b) A competitor forgets to sign a match slip or verify match results prior to leaving the play area and cannot be located before the next round begins.
- c) **Pokémon GO**: A competitor leaves the table prior to a Judge finalizing match results.

5.1.2 Deviations from Recommended Starting Penalties and Examples

- 1) Examples for when to de-escalate a penalty may include the following:
 - a) (No examples listed.)
- 2) Examples for when to escalate a penalty may include the following:
 - a) **Escalate to Game Loss**: A competitor disconnects a device, causing a delay to tournament proceedings.

5.2 Tardiness

Tardiness affects the pace of a tournament and can disrupt competitors' abilities to finish their matches in the time allotted to a round and cause an inconvenience to surrounding competitors. Competitors are responsible for arriving at their correct assigned location on time. They should handle personal matters ahead of the start of the round and confirm their match pairings prior to beginning their match. Unless otherwise noted by a member of tournament staff, a competitor begins accruing a Tardiness penalty as soon as the round begins.

5.2.1 Recommended Starting Penalties and Examples

1) Minor: Warning	2) Major: Game Loss	3) Severe: See Below
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- 1) **Minor tardiness** does not cause a substantial delay or inconvenience to tournament proceedings but is seen as a disruption to both a competitor's opponent and those around them.

Examples may include the following:

- a) A competitor arrives less than 5 minutes late for their match.

- 2) **Major tardiness** can have an impact on whether a match completes on time, which can cause delays to the overall tournament.

Examples may include the following:

- a) A competitor arrives between 5 to 10 minutes late for their match.

- 3) **Severe tardiness** causes a major disruption to a round for a competitor and their opponent. Severe tardiness guarantees a match cannot be completed on time without extensive pacing issues. **A specific**

set of actions initiates when a penalty for severe tardiness is issued.

If a competitor arrives more than 10 minutes late to their match...

- a) the tardy competitor receives a Match Loss for their round,
- b) the tardy competitor is dropped from the event, and
- c) the present competitor receives a Match Win for their round.

Please Note: A competitor can reenter the tournament if the subsequent round has not been paired and the competitor confirms their participation with the Tournament Organizer. Once the subsequent round is paired, the dropped competitor is unable to reenter the tournament, and their match record is updated accordingly.

In the event a competitor cannot be dropped from the event (as in double-elimination tournaments), the competitor will continue to receive Match Losses as outlined in this section until they are naturally removed from the tournament due to double elimination.

5.2.2 Deviations from Recommended Starting Penalties and Examples

- 1) Examples for when to de-escalate a penalty may include the following:
 - a) (No examples listed.)
- 2) Examples for when to escalate a penalty may include the following:
 - a) (No examples listed.)

5.3 Unsporting Conduct

This section covers inappropriate actions taken by competitors or spectators at an event. A competitor does not have to be actively involved in a match to receive a penalty for unsporting conduct. While competitors and spectators should enjoy their tournament, they also need to remember that their actions can have a negative impact on fellow participants.

5.3.1 Recommended Starting Penalties and Examples

1) Minor: Warning	2) Major: Match Loss	3) Severe: Disqualification
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- 1) **Minor unsporting conduct** is characterized by mild lapses in judgment that result in a contained incident or the annoyance of a small group of attendees.

Examples may include the following:

- a) A competitor swears mildly in annoyance or in conversation with a friend.
- b) A competitor disturbs a match in progress.
- c) A competitor leaves trash or other detritus in the play area after their match is over.

- 2) **Major unsporting conduct** is characterized by behavior that displays a lack of respect or consideration for fair play or for the enjoyment of others in attendance at our events.

Examples may include the following:

- a) A competitor attempts to distract or intimidate their opponent into a misplay.
- b) A competitor commits an unintentional violation of the Play! Pokémon Inclusion Policy that nonetheless causes distress to others.
- c) A competitor refuses to cooperate with a tournament policy, such as signing a match slip.

- 3) **Severe unsporting conduct** demonstrates a blatant disregard for the Play! Pokémon Standards of Conduct and actively contributes toward the disruption of a safe and family-friendly environment.

Examples may include the following:

- a) A competitor uses profanity, slurs, physical threats, or insults toward any other attendee.
- b) A competitor commits a deliberate violation of the Play! Pokémon Inclusion Policy with the intent to provoke or cause distress to others.
- c) A competitor engages in assault, theft, or other criminal activity.
- d) A competitor willfully lies to tournament staff, such as during an investigation.
- e) A competitor engages in bribery or coercion of other competitors.
- f) A competitor determines the outcome of a match via random means or other disallowed methods.

5.3.2 Deviations from Recommended Starting Penalties and Examples

- 1) Examples for when to de-escalate a penalty may include the following:
 - a) (No examples listed.)
- 2) Examples for when to escalate a penalty may include the following:
 - a) **Escalate to Game Loss:** A competitor engages in excessive celebration that is used to taunt another competitor or participant.

5.4 Cheating

Cheating is a violation of the Spirit of the Game and the integrity of Play! Pokémon tournaments. All instances of cheating are severe and merit Disqualification. Cheating is defined as knowingly utilizing any means to gain or attempt to gain a competitive advantage over another competitor.

There are no escalations or de-escalations for cheating as a base infraction.

Examples may include the following:

- 1) **All Games**

- a) A competitor solicits and acts upon private game information from an external source during a game in progress.
- b) A competitor knowingly completes a match slip or verifies the results of a match incorrectly in an attempt to change the results of the match.

2) Pokémon TCG

- a) A competitor intentionally draws extra cards or takes cards from the discard pile and adds them to their deck or hand.
- b) A competitor arbitrarily adjusts the Special Conditions or damage counters on Pokémon in play.
- c) A competitor stacks or deliberately randomizes the deck insufficiently to engineer greater access to a card or cards.

3) VG

- a) A competitor uses a game system with custom firmware.
- b) A competitor engages in account sharing or uses the same game download or cartridge as another competitor.
- c) A competitor uses third-party software or any other sort of application to gain hidden information about a match in progress.
- d) A competitor knowingly misrepresents team stats for their registered team.
- e) A competitor utilizes multiple teams during a tournament.
- f) A competitor registers for an online competition with multiple systems or game cartridges (multi-accounting).

4) Pokémon GO

- a) A competitor engages in GPS manipulation.
- b) A competitor engages in multi-accounting.
- c) A competitor uses third-party software or any other sort of application to gain hidden information about a match in progress.

5) Pokémon UNITE

- a) A competitor engages in account sharing.
- b) A competitor engages in multi-accounting.
- c) A competitor uses third-party software or any other sort of application to gain hidden information about a match in progress.

5.5 Gameplay Error

Gameplay errors, as a class of base infractions, are committed during the context of a game in progress. They often come about because of missed or ill-executed game mechanics that cause integrity issues to the game, match, or tournament.

Note: Reversibility should be pursued to the best of the Judge’s ability to preserve the game state following minor and major Pokémon TCG gameplay errors. See section 4.2.1.

5.5.1 Pokémon TCG Recommended Starting Penalties and Examples

1) Minor: Warning	2) Major: DPC Penalty	3) Severe: Game Loss
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- 1) **Minor Pokémon TCG gameplay errors** have little to no effect on the progress of a game and can be fixed or reset completely with little effort. Many genuine mistakes made during a Pokémon TCG match begin as minor gameplay errors and may be reclassified as major if they are not caught and rectified immediately.

Examples may include the following:

- a) A competitor puts a card into their hand without revealing it to their opponent when an effect specifies they must do so.
- b) A competitor declares an attack without having the required Energy attached.
- c) A competitor fails to set up Prize cards at the beginning of the game.
- d) A competitor contributes to an opponent’s gameplay error by failing to keep track of game actions and mechanics.

- 2) **Major Pokémon TCG gameplay errors** result in some irreversible confusion to the game state that cannot be completely reset or otherwise offset through corrective action. Errors that result in a competitor gaining illicit access to knowledge or cards that requires a substantial level of involvement by a Judge to rectify—or that have remained unnoticed for long enough to have influenced gameplay—may be classified as major.

Examples may include the following:

- a) A competitor draws an extra card.
- b) A competitor takes a Prize card without Knocking Out a Pokémon or takes too many Prize cards after Knocking Out a Pokémon.
- c) A competitor uses and completes all effects of an Ability when a card in play prevents use of that Ability.
- d) A competitor attaches more than one Energy card in a turn without an effect that allows this.
- e) A competitor fails to set up Prize cards at the beginning of the game, resulting in potential access to six additional cards throughout one or two deck searches.

- 3) **Severe Pokémon TCG gameplay errors** result in an irretrievably broken game state, such that a Judge cannot reasonably be expected to restore the game to a point where it can continue without compromising the integrity of that game to an unacceptable extent.

Examples may include the following:

- a) A competitor shuffles their hand, Prize cards, or discard pile into the deck without the use of a card effect.

- b) A competitor retrieves or puts away cards from a game in progress before the match slip is signed to show that both competitors agree on the outcome.
- c) A competitor fails to set up Prize cards at the beginning of the game, resulting in potential access to six additional cards for three or more deck searches.

5.5.1.1 Deviations from Recommended Starting Penalties and Examples

- 1) Examples for when to de-escalate a penalty may include the following:
 - a. **De-escalate to Warning:** A competitor draws an extra card. This is noted while the correct card can still be identified and before the competitor saw the face of the card. The error can be completely reversed by placing the card back on top of the deck.
 - b. **De-escalate to Warning:** A competitor shuffles their discard pile into their deck without the use of a card effect. The contents of the discard pile were minimal. The game has not progressed past the first few turns, and both competitors agree it is easily discernable which exact cards were in the minimal discard pile. The game state can be fixed by retrieving the correct cards from the deck and returning them to the discard pile.
- 2) Examples for when to escalate a penalty may include the following:
 - a. **Escalate to Double Prize Card, Quadruple Prize Card, or Game Loss, depending on the extent to which the game state can be repaired:** A competitor declares an attack without having the required Energy attached. A Knock Out results from this illegal attack, and the game progresses for several turns before the error is noticed. The game state is confused and cannot be completely repaired due to the many actions taken since the error occurred.

5.5.2 VG

1) Minor: Warning		2) Severe: Game Loss
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- 1) **Minor VG gameplay errors** cover small mistakes made during a game. These mistakes have very little impact on a game.

Examples may include the following:

- a) A competitor causes a delay by inducing a fixable game freeze.
- b) A competitor delays the beginning of a match due to hardware issues or needs.

- 2) **Severe VG gameplay errors** result in an irretrievably broken game state.

Examples may include the following:

- a) A competitor removes their game card from their system mid-game.
- b) A competitor causes their system to lose power or internet connection.
- c) A competitor removes any controller or peripheral during a game.

- d) A competitor induces an unfixable game freeze.
 - i) Note: If both competitors experience an unfixable game freeze and it is unclear which competitor is at fault, resolve the issue using section 3.4.4 (Double Game Freeze) of the Play! Pokémon VG Rules and Formats handbook.
- e) A competitor attempts to view their opponent's screen to gain an advantage in the match.

5.5.2.1 Deviations from Recommended Starting Penalties and Examples

- 1) Examples for when to de-escalate a penalty may include the following:
 - a. (No examples listed.)
- 2) Examples for when to escalate a penalty may include the following:
 - a. **Escalate to Disqualification:** A competitor attempts to view their opponent's screen more than once.
 - b. **Escalate to Disqualification:** A competitor utilizes a fixable game freeze to gain a competitive advantage.

5.5.3 Pokémon GO

1) Minor: Warning		2) Severe: Game Loss
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- 1) **Minor Pokémon GO gameplay errors** have a brief, reversible effect on the progression of a game.

Examples may include the following:

- a) A competitor delays the beginning of a match due to needing to source a charger or gameplay device.
- b) A competitor delays the beginning of a match due to inability to log in to their Pokémon GO account.

- 2) **Severe Pokémon GO gameplay errors** result in an irretrievably broken game state.

Examples may include the following:

- a) A competitor closes the Pokémon GO application during a game in progress.
- b) A competitor engages in behavior that directly induces a major technical issue.
- c) A competitor attempts to view their opponent's screen to gain an advantage in the match.

5.5.3.1 Deviations from Recommended Starting Penalties and Examples

- 1) Examples for when to de-escalate a penalty may include the following:
 - a. (No examples listed.)

- 2) Examples for when to escalate a penalty may include the following:
 - a. **Escalate to Match Loss:** A competitor is unable to source a charger or gameplay device, or their gameplay device becomes inoperable and is not replaced within 10 minutes of the start of the match.
 - b. **Escalate to Match Loss:** A competitor is unable to log in to their Pokémon GO account within 10 minutes of the start of the match.
 - c. **Escalate to Disqualification:** A competitor attempts to view their opponent's screen more than once.

5.5.4 Pokémon UNITE

1) Minor: Warning		2) Severe: Disqualify
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- 1) **Minor Pokémon UNITE gameplay errors** have a brief, reversible effect on the progression of a game.

Examples may include the following:

- a) A competitor delays the beginning of a match due to needing to source a charger or gameplay device (including peripherals).

- 2) **Severe Pokémon UNITE gameplay errors** result in an irretrievably broken game state.

Examples may include the following:

- a) A competitor closes the Pokémon UNITE application during a game in progress.
- b) A competitor engages in behavior that directly induces a major technical issue.
- c) A competitor intentionally exploits bugs or system errors.

5.5.4.1 Deviations from Recommended Starting Penalties and Examples

- 1) Examples for when to de-escalate a penalty may include the following:
 - a. (No examples listed.)
- 2) Examples for when to escalate a penalty may include the following:
 - a. **Escalate to Match Loss:** A competitor is unable to source a charger or gameplay device, or their gameplay device becomes inoperable and is not replaced within 10 minutes of the start of the match.

5.6 Legality Checks

Legality checks are used to ensure the integrity of Play! Pokémon tournaments. As outlined in the Tournament Rules Handbook, it is expected that at least 10 percent of competitors go through a legality check for their specific

game, though Play! Pokémon recommends completing as many legality checks as is possible for the size of the venue and the staffing for the event, so long as it does not impact quality or tournament operations.

Each game has legality check standards listed prior to base infractions.

5.6.1 Pokémon TCG Deck Legality

Infractions that fall under the category of deck legality include all problems identified due to cards in the deck that are not legal for tournament play, either for reasons of condition, language, or format restriction. In addition to the penalty assessed, the offending card or cards should be replaced in all cases.

Problems may be caused by the cards themselves, the sleeves, or the corresponding deck list. In cases concerning the latter, the contents of the deck list always take priority over the contents of the physical deck. Any discrepancy between the two should therefore always be rectified by modifying the physical deck.

In the case that a deck list contains fewer than 60 cards, cards that are not legal for play, or cards that cannot be reasonably identified from the information provided, the deck list should be made legal by adding an appropriate number of Basic Energy cards of the competitor’s choice. Then, the physical deck should be updated accordingly.

1) Minor: Warning	2) Major: Game Loss	3) Severe: Disqualification
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- 1) **Minor deck legality** infractions are so classified because they offer little to no opportunity for a competitor to gain an advantage as a result.

Examples may include the following:

- a) A competitor’s sleeves have standard wear and tear that translates to many distinct scratches and markings over all the cards in the deck.
- b) A handful of cards in a competitor’s deck have factory defects on the back of the sleeves. However, the combination of cards does not create a pattern that would provide the competitor with a significant advantage.
- c) A competitor’s deck contains four copies of Clodsire, but the deck list does not specify the collector number. However, there is only one card with the name Clodsire in the set, so the intended card remains identifiable.
- d) A competitor’s deck contains an illustration rare variant of Pikachu, but the deck list specifies the collector number of a common rarity variant of the same card.
 - i) This minor deck legality issue does not require a proxy card or Basic Energy replacement.

- 2) **Major deck legality** infractions result in an opportunity for a competitor to gain an advantage, usually through ambiguity or discrepancy caused by dissimilarity between the deck list and the physical deck or by

a pattern of marked cards.

Examples may include the following:

- a) A competitor's deck list or deck does not contain 60 cards.
 - b) A competitor's deck contains three Ultra Ball cards and two Max Elixir cards, but their deck list contains two Ultra Ball cards and three Max Elixir cards.
 - c) The sleeves on the Special Energy cards in a competitor's deck are slightly longer than the rest.
 - d) In a Standard format tournament, a competitor's deck list or deck contains five copies of Double Colorless Energy.
 - e) A competitor's deck list contains two copies of Electivire (*Sun & Moon—Lost Thunder*, 72/214), but their deck contains two copies of Electivire (*XY—Furious Fists*, 30/111).
 - f) A card in the competitor's deck is damaged and has created a visible wear mark on the back of the sleeve along the damaged area, allowing the card to easily be identified while face down.
- 3) **Severe deck legality** infractions result in an opportunity for a competitor to gain an advantage through intentional manipulation of a deck's contents, dissimilarities between the deck and the deck list submitted, or repeated patterns of marked cards. The severity of the infraction causes issues with tournament integrity and significantly impacts the suitability of the competitor to continue in the tournament.

Examples may include the following:

- a) There are clear indicators that cards integral to a competitor's deck have been marked intentionally.
- b) A competitor's deck contains cards not recorded on their deck list that provide a competitive advantage.

5.6.1.1 Deviations from Recommended Starting Penalties and Examples

- 1) Examples for when to de-escalate a penalty may include:
 - a. (No examples listed.)
- 2) Examples for when to escalate a penalty may include:
 - a. **Escalate to Disqualification:** A competitor is flagged for marked cards multiple times during a tournament.
 - b. **Escalate to Disqualification:** An investigation of a major deck legality issue shows clear intent to gain a competitive advantage.

5.6.2 VG Team Check

This infraction encompasses problems found with a competitor's Battle Team including listed Pokémon, their stats, their moves, and held items. Team lists serve as the source of truth for a competitor's Battle Team. Every

detail listed on a team list must match the competitor's Battle Team. Failure to produce a Battle Team in-game that matches the submitted team list may result in the below penalties.

1) Minor: Warning	2) Major: Game Loss	3) Severe: Disqualification
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- 1) A **minor VG team error** occurs when an error has no competitive advantage for the offending competitor.

Examples may include the following:

- a) A Pokémon or item in the competitor's Battle Team does not match their team list, resulting in no potential competitive advantage.
 - i) A Pokémon is listed without accurate form information, but other information contained on the team list makes it apparent which form is being used.
 - (1) Example #1: Rotom is listed on the team list when Heat Rotom is contained in the Battle Team, and the form-exclusive move Overheat is correctly listed in the move set on the team list.
 - (2) Example #2: Meowth alone is listed on the team list when Galarian Meowth is contained in the Battle Team, and the form-exclusive Tough Claws Ability is correctly listed on the team list.
 - ii) A Pokémon is listed as holding a Power Anklet but is holding a Power Bracer in the Battle Team.
 - b) A Pokémon in the competitor's Battle Team is nicknamed with the name of another Pokémon.
 - i) If the option to change that Pokémon's nickname is available, the competitor should change this nickname prior to their next game.
 - ii) If the option to change that Pokémon's nickname is not available, that Pokémon should be removed from the competitor's Battle Team for the rest of the tournament.
 - c) A competitor's Battle Team and team list match, but the Rental Team ID is incorrect.
 - i) The competitor should provide the correct Rental Team ID to a judge prior to their next match.
- 2) A **major VG team error** generally requires fixes to be applied to a competitor's Battle Team to ensure it matches their submitted team list. The offending Pokémon, Tera Type, move, Ability, or held item should be prohibited from play, and the appropriate penalty should be applied. If the Pokémon, Tera Type, move, Ability, or held item described on the team list is immediately available, the competitor should be given the opportunity to correct their team.

If the competitor is unable to immediately correct their team, any offending Pokémon, moves, or held items should be removed and not replaced. For instances of offending Tera Types or Abilities, which cannot be removed without replacement, the Pokémon with an offending Tera Type or Ability should be removed and not replaced.

Examples may include the following:

- a) A Pokémon or item in the competitor's Battle Team does not match the team list, resulting in potential competitive advantage.
 - i) 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.
 - (1) 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.
 - (2) Example #2: Meowth alone is listed on the team list when Galarian Meowth is contained in the Battle Team, and the correct association cannot be reasonably made by event staff by considering other information in the team list.
 - ii) There are inconsistencies with a competitor's Battle Team, team list, or Rental Team ID. In cases where only one of these is inconsistent while the other two match, the inconsistent one can be fixed to match the other two.
 - (1) Example #1: The competitor's Battle Team and Rental Team ID match but do not match their team list.
 - (2) Example #2: The competitor's team list and Rental Team ID match but do not match their Battle Team.
 - (3) Example #3: The competitor's Battle Team, team list, and Rental Team ID do not match. Any inconsistencies across each should be removed from the Battle Team for the rest of the tournament.
 - iii) 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.
 - iv) A Pokémon's stat is not listed or is listed incorrectly on the team list.
 - b) A Pokémon on the competitor's team appears in section 1 of appendix A (Manual Team Checking) in the Play! Pokémon VG Rules and Formats handbook.
 - c) A Pokémon on the competitor's team has a nickname, OT, or other attribute that deliberately makes reference to matters that go against the Spirit of the Game.
- 3) A **severe VG team error** causes an extreme disruption to match integrity and is grounds for immediate application of a Disqualification penalty.

Examples may include the following:

- a) A competitor has fewer usable Pokémon remaining than the permitted minimum team size after receiving earlier penalties.
- b) A Pokémon on the competitor's team also appears in section 2 of appendix A (Manual Team Checking) in the Play! Pokémon VG Rules and Formats handbook.
- c) There is any indication via official tools that a Pokémon has been illegally manipulated, such as a competitor's team failing an electronic team check.

5.6.2.1 Deviations from Recommended Starting Penalties and Examples

- 1) Examples for when to de-escalate a penalty may include the following:
 - a. (No examples listed.)
- 2) Examples for when to escalate a penalty may include the following:
 - a. **Escalate to Disqualification:** If an infraction would remove a number of Pokémon from a competitor's Battle Team that would reduce the Battle Team to fewer than four usable Pokémon, the infraction should escalate to a severe VG team error.

5.6.3 Pokémon GO Team Check

Infractions that fall under the team legality category include all problems found with a competitor's team. Such problems are usually caused due to a discrepancy between the Pokémon in the team and those detailed on team lists.

In all cases, the contents of the team list always take priority over the contents of the team. Any discrepancy between the two should therefore always be rectified by modifying the team to remove the offending Pokémon from play.

If the Pokémon described on the team list are immediately available, the competitor should be given the opportunity to add the correct Pokémon to their team. If the competitor is not able to do so, the offending Pokémon should remain on their team but be prohibited from play. The competitor must inform each opponent during team preview that this Pokémon will not be used. If a competitor has fewer than three usable Pokémon remaining in their team, the infraction should be escalated to a severe Pokémon GO team error.

1) Minor: Warning	2) Major: Game Loss	3) Severe: Disqualification
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- 1) **Minor Pokémon GO team errors** are discrepancies between the Pokémon in a competitor's Battle Team and those on their team list and that *do not* give the competitor a potential advantage.

Examples may include the following:

- a) A Pokémon is listed without accurate form information, but other information on the team list makes it apparent which form is being used.
 - i) Example: The team contains Sunny Form Castform, but the team list lists simply "Castform." However, the intended form can be identified due to the form-exclusive move Ember recorded on the team list.
- 2) **Major Pokémon GO team errors** are discrepancies between the Pokémon in a competitor's Battle Team and those on their team list and that *do* give the competitor a potential advantage.

If a competitor concedes a game after identifying a major Pokémon GO team error with their Pokémon, any Game Loss penalty earned as a result of the infraction should be recorded as usual but not applied to the match. However, competitors may not concede once a Game Loss penalty has been assessed.

Examples may include the following:

- a) A Pokémon not included on the team list is selected for battle.
- b) A Pokémon in the team knows the move Thunder Punch, but that move is listed as “Thunder” on the team list.
- c) A Pokémon’s CP is not listed (or is listed incorrectly) on the team list.
- d) A Pokémon is listed without accurate form information, and no other information on the team list makes it apparent which form is being used.
 - i) Example: The team contains Sunny Form Castform, but the team list lists simply “Castform.” The intended form cannot be identified from other information recorded on the team list.

- 3) **Severe Pokémon GO team errors** occur when either official tools indicate that a Pokémon has been illegally manipulated or a competitor’s team contains too few Pokémon to continue in the tournament.

Examples may include the following:

- a) A competitor has fewer than three usable Pokémon remaining on their team after receiving earlier penalties.
- b) A competitor uses a modified Pokémon GO client or any other third-party application that may affect the integrity of the tournament.

5.6.3.1 *Deviations from Recommended Starting Penalties and Examples*

- 1) Examples for when to de-escalate a penalty may include the following:
 - a. **De-escalate to Warning:** A competitor makes an error on their team list, but the error is a mistaken HP value. HP is not a value present on the team preview list for review, so the penalty can be de-escalated.
- 2) Examples for when to escalate a penalty may include the following:
 - a. (No examples listed.)

5.7 Pace of Play

Competitors should take care to play in a manner that keeps the game pace lively, regardless of the complexity of the situation. Pace of play infractions occur when a competitor’s actions (or lack thereof) affect the game pace to an extent that puts their opponent at a disadvantage. In addition to the recommended penalty, a Judge may issue a time extension to offset this disadvantage.

Play! Pokémon has set forth the below guidelines by which to assess whether a game action is completed in a reasonable time frame.

- Shuffling and setup during the start of a game: 2 minutes
- Mid-game shuffling and deck searching: 15 seconds
- Performing the actions of a card or attack: 15 seconds
- Considering the game position before playing a card: 10 seconds
- Starting the turn after an opponent’s “end of turn” announcement: 5 seconds

These are guidelines only and should be considered within the context of normal gameplay.

1) Minor: Warning	2) Severe: DPC Penalty
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- 1) **Minor pace of play infractions** are isolated incidents that may occur due to slow decision-making or tense, complex scenarios.
- Examples may include the following:
- a) A competitor repeatedly searches their deck, hand, or discard pile while executing a card effect.
 - b) A competitor counts or searches their (or their opponent’s) deck or discard pile more than once in a short time period.
 - c) A competitor takes an unreasonable length of time to decide where to attach an Energy card.
 - d) A competitor rushes through their opponent’s attack step by putting damage on their Pokémon before their opponent announces which attack they are using.
- 2) **Severe pace of play infractions** may be assessed when there is a sustained or repeated ill effect on the pace of one or more subsequent games.

- Examples may include the following:
- a) A competitor displays habitual slowness in choosing targets for receiving or resolving effects or damage.
 - b) A competitor exhibits poor pace of play that does not improve following a prior penalty.

5.7.1 Deviations from Recommended Starting Penalties and Examples

- 1) Examples for when to de-escalate a penalty may include the following:
- a. (No examples listed.)
- 2) Examples for when to escalate a penalty may include the following:
- a. (No examples listed.)

6 Reporting

Play! Pokémon tracks each competitor's penalty history to differentiate intentional repetition of infractions from unintentional occurrences and to determine if disciplinary action is necessary. To aid in this effort, the following documentation must be submitted to Play! Pokémon via the Play! Pokémon customer support portal upon completion of a tournament.

6.1 Tournament Penalty Summaries

The Tournament Penalty Summary fully details all penalties assessed during any one tournament. To create a Tournament Penalty Summary, a .csv format spreadsheet file with the below headers should be created:

Tournament ID	Round of Issue	Judge Player ID	Competitor's Player ID	Category	Severity	Penalty	Notes
XX-XX-XXXXXX	1	XXXXXXX	XXXXXXX	VG Team Error	Minor	Warning	

A new row should be completed for each penalty issued.

Once the file is complete, it should be attached and submitted via the Play! Pokémon customer support service's Tournament Report tool within seven days of an event concluding. Select "Penalty Summary" from the relevant drop-down menu. The subject of your submission should be "Penalty Report: XX-XX-XXXXXX", where XX-XX-XXXXXX is the tournament ID.

6.2 Disqualification Reports

In the event of a Disqualification, it is the responsibility of the Head Judge to submit a full and thorough report of the incident to Play! Pokémon. 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 Judges who were present at the time of the incident.

Once complete, the file should be attached and submitted via the Play! Pokémon customer support service's Tournament Report tool within seven days of an event concluding. Select "Disqualification Report" from the relevant drop-down menu.

A Disqualification Report must be submitted after any Disqualification issued at a Championship Series event. Repeated failures to submit a thorough report may result in disciplinary action, including ineligibility to hold leadership roles at future events.

7 Post-Event Disciplinary Action

Post-event disciplinary actions occur when a competitor receives a penalty at an event that calls into question the suitability of the competitor to remain a part of the Play! Pokémon community (such as cheating or a gross violation of our inclusion policy). Penalties are evaluated by an internal team. Should the team confirm that a post-event disciplinary action is necessary, the competitor will receive a notice of disciplinary action. Play! Pokémon urges you to understand that our events are for everyone; actions and behaviors at our events that threaten the inclusivity, enjoyment, and integrity of our events may have additional consequences.

Play! Pokémon reserves the right to take disciplinary action against any competitor for rules infractions. Disciplinary action is determined by severity and whether the occurrence is repeated. Such action may include a suspension from the program. In these cases, the suspended competitors will be notified, and their names and Player IDs will be made available to Organizers.

A suspended competitor is not allowed to participate in or attend any Play! Pokémon events as a spectator, competitor, Judge, or in any other capacity. If a suspended competitor disrupts an event by trying to participate and refusing to leave, the incident should be reported to Play! Pokémon. An extension to the existing suspension may then be applied.

Appendix A

This section outlines known examples of illegal manipulation which may not be caught by the electronic team check. In the event of non-consensus between event staff regarding whether a competitor's Pokémon meets any of the below criteria, the Head Judge is awarded the ultimate determining authority.

Section 1

Any competitors found to have one of the Pokémon described below in their Battle Team have committed a major team error infraction and should be penalized appropriately as outlined in the Pokémon Video Game Penalty Guidelines.

The offending Pokémon should also be removed from the competitor's Battle Team and not replaced. Should this result in the competitor's having fewer than the minimum tournament entry requirement, the competitor must also receive disqualification from the event.

1. A Pokémon with any attribute that indicates it was not obtained via normal gameplay or official promotions but results in no discernible competitive advantage. Examples may include the following:
 - a. A Pokémon that is contained in a Poké Ball in which it cannot be found through normal gameplay or official promotions.
 - b. A Pokémon that lists it was obtained from an Egg on its summary screen and that is contained in a Master Ball or a Cherish Ball.
 - c. A Pokémon that is Shiny but is of a species that cannot be found as a Shiny Pokémon through normal gameplay or official promotions.
 - d. A Pokémon with a nickname or Original Trainer (OT) that indicates it was not obtained via normal gameplay or official promotions section.

Section 2

Any competitors found to have one of the Pokémon described below in their Battle Team have committed a severe team error infraction and should be penalized appropriately as outlined in the Pokémon Video Game Penalty Guidelines.

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

8 Summary of Changes

Date of previous issue: September 1, 2025

Date of current issue: January 1, 2026

1 Introduction		
Section	Page #	Change

2 Philosophy		
Section	Page #	Change

3 Penalties		
Section	Page #	Change

4 Application		
Section	Page #	Change

5 Base Infractions, Recommended Starting Penalties, and Deviations		
Section	Page #	Change
5.4	20	New example added Console -> system
5.6.2	26–27	Aligning language with previous section

6 Reporting		
Section	Page #	Change

7 Post-Event Disciplinary Action		
Section	Page #	Change