

# Pokémon Organized Play Floor Rules

Rules effective October 1, 2003 for the 2003-2004 Tournament Season

## Introduction

These rules are used in conjunction with the most recent **Pokémon** trading card game rules. The latest descriptions on how specific tournament formats are run can be found on our website at [pokemon-tcg.com](http://pokemon-tcg.com).

This document is a resource to preserve an equitable and consistent tournament environment for every match across the globe. These Pokémon Organized Play (POP) tournament rules apply to the **Pokémon** trading card game, and any other games supported by POP.

## Player Eligibility

Anyone is allowed to participate in a Pokémon Organized Play sanctioned event, except for the following positions:

- The tournament organizer for that event
- Any judge assisting in the event
- Corporate employees of The Pokémon Company and Pokémon USA, Inc.
- Nintendo Corporate employees
- Game Freak inc. employees
- Creatures employees
- Former employees of the above mentioned companies (until 60 days after their last day of employment)
- Employees of companies who assist Pokémon USA, Inc, in promoting organized play in their country
- Any player that has been suspended by Pokémon Organized Play
- Special invitation-only tournaments, such as the Pokémon World Championships

## Wagering

Anyone in the event may not gamble on the outcome of any match or standings of a sanctioned tournament. Spectators attempting to wager on any outcome of the event should be removed from the event site.

## Publishing Event Information

Tournament organizers are allowed to publish the results of their events, subject to local, state, and national laws. Pokémon USA reserves the exclusive rights to publish event information such as the contents of a player's deck, transcripts, video recordings or any other applicable recounts of a Pokémon Organized Play sponsored event, as well as any player suspensions resulting from those events.

## **Required Tournament Information**

Players, judges, and tournament organizers are required to be familiar with the most recently published **Pokémon** trading card game rules, as well as the relevant information contained in this document.

### **Player Responsibilities**

Players are expected to participate in a sportsmanlike manner at all times. Players participating in a constructed deck tournament are required to bring their own deck composed of cards for the appropriate format.

### **Judge Responsibilities**

Judges are expected to administer impartial rulings, and assist the tournament organizer and head judge in running a quality event. Judges are expected to encourage sportsmanlike behavior at all times.

### **Head Judge Responsibilities**

The head judge serves as the final arbiter of all rulings and rules interpretations for that tournament. The head judge is chosen by the tournament organizer before the event, and is ultimately responsible for making sure that all participants abide by the rules set forth in this document. The head judge is also responsible for reporting players who are caught cheating at their events to the Pokémon Organized Play staff.

### **Spectator Responsibilities**

Spectators may watch a match, but cannot interfere with a match in any way. The only way a spectator can interact with an event is by contacting a judge to ask whether a specific play is legal or not. Spectators are expected to behave in a non-disruptive fashion.

### **Organizer Responsibilities**

The tournament organizer is in charge of the non-game elements of the tournament. The organizer is in charge of finding a well-lit and safe event location, providing appropriate staff, sanctioning their POP tournaments, submitting the results of those tournaments in a timely fashion, and distributing the prizes for the event.

### **Appeals**

A player may appeal any ruling made by a judge to the head judge of that tournament. The head judge is the final authority on card rulings and interpretation of floor rules for that event.

### **Tardiness**

Players are expected to be at their matches when the round begins. If a player is more than 10 minutes late to the match, it is assumed that they have forfeited that round. Any player who does not arrive in the tournament area by the end of the round will be removed from the event.

## **Pre-game**

Players will shuffle their decks and give their opponents the option to shuffle and/or cut their deck. If a judge decides a player (or players) is taking excessive amounts of time for shuffling before the game begins or during the game, the judge may assign penalties based on as if the player was late for the match.

## **Taking Notes**

Players may not take notes during the match, with the exception of tracking the effects of cards in play.

## **Conceding a Match**

A player may concede a match to his or her opponent at any point during the round. Players are not allowed to determine the winner by random means, and may not receive anything from their opponent for conceding the match, or for drawing with their opponent. Engaging in bribery or collusion will result in both players being disqualified from the tournament and/or suspended from Pokémon Organized Play.

## **Intentional Draw**

Players may agree to declare their match an intentional draw at any point during a round of swiss pairing. Players report the intentional draw to the scorekeeper instead of reporting a win or loss. An intentional draw is scored the same as a regular draw.

## **Withdrawing from a Tournament**

Any player desiring to withdraw from an event may do so. That player notifies the scorekeeper by stating their first and last name, and allowing the scorekeeper to drop them from the event. If a player wishes to withdraw from the tournament after pairings have been posted, that player will receive a match loss before being removed from the tournament. Players may not re-enter the tournament.

## **Early Departure for Limited-format tournaments**

Players are expected to play at least the first round of any Limited tournament. If a player leaves the event before the first round of pairings have been posted, they will receive a match loss for that round before being removed from the event.

## ***Card Specifics***

### **Cards Allowed**

Players may only use cards legal for that tournament. In the instance of a Limited tournament, players may only play with cards that have been given to them for Sealed Deck events, or cards they have drafted for Draft tournaments.

## **Card Interpretation**

The head judge is the final authority on how a card is interpreted during an event. If a player has a question on how a card (or combination of cards) is supposed to interact, they may ask the head judge before or during the tournament.

## **Shuffling**

Players are required to sufficiently randomize their deck at the start of the match, before presenting it to their opponent for his or her deck to be cut and/or shuffled.

## **Card Elevation**

Players must keep all of the cards of their deck above the edge of the table at all times.

## **Proxy Cards**

A card that has been damaged or marked during the course of a tournament may be replaced, at the discretion of the head judge. During Limited-format tournaments, cards that have been damaged during the manufacturing process, it is the head judge's discretion on how the card or booster is replaced.

## **Card Sleeves**

Card sleeves are legal for tournament play. Players may use Pokémon cards with different card backing only with opaque sleeves. All sleeves must be of uniform size, color, and approximately the same worn condition. Sleeves that do not meet this criteria will be treated as marked cards.

## **Game Markers**

Players are responsible for providing their own markers for their cards. Damage counters and markers denoting Special Conditions may not be placed in such a way that would obscure the game card. If a player has a question about whether their markers may be used, the player should discuss the matter with the head judge before the event.

## ***Illegal Tournament Play***

The head judge is the final arbiter of any ruling for the event. They may assign any penalty, ranging from cautioning the player for relatively minor problems, assigning a penalty for illegal card play or unsportsmanlike conduct, up to ejection from the tournament for cheating or significant unsportsmanlike conduct.

## **Cheating**

Players found cheating will be removed from the event to preserve the integrity of the tournament. The head judge may decide to reduce the penalty for lesser offenses and is the final arbiter of any penalty assigned during the tournament. Cheating is generally defined as any intentional act to gain advantage during a match through deceit or unfair play.

Examples of cheating:

- Drawing extra cards

- Manipulating any player's deck; such as viewing cards that a player should not see, or alter the order of cards being drawn
- Misrepresenting match or in-game information to any player or tournament staff

## **Unsportsmanlike Conduct**

Unsportsmanlike conduct is not welcome in any Pokémon event, whether or not that event is sanctioned by Pokémon Organized Play. Everyone is encouraged to be polite and respectful to each other, even during a disagreement. This rule applies to spectators, players, and the tournament staff. Anyone engaging in disruptive, unsportsmanlike behavior will be asked to leave the event, subject to the head judge's discretion.

## **Slow Play**

Players should attempt to complete their match in the allotted time. It is important for the players to avoid the appearance of cheating or unsportsmanlike conduct, especially when it comes to playing slowly. If the head judge determines that a player is intentionally attempting to stall out a match, it will be considered cheating, and subject to the appropriate penalties.

## **Marked Cards**

Players using marked sleeves or cards may be asked to leave the event by the judging staff. In general, if it can be determined that the cards or sleeves are scuffed or discolored in a specific fashion, it will be considered a form of cheating. The judging staff may ask the player to replace damaged or worn sleeves/cards, instead of removing the player from the event.

## ***Official Tournament Formats***

### **Constructed Deck Formats**

- Unlimited
- Modified

### **Limited Formats**

- Sealed Deck
- Booster Draft
- Rochester Draft

## **Rating Points**

Players gain and lose rating points after each match, in whichever category that match took place in. Each player is assigned a Pokémon Organized Play ID to track matches won and lost. If a player does not have a POP number, an ID will be assigned by the tournament organizer at the event.

## **Cards legal for constructed deck format**

All **Pokémon** cards from trading card game expansion sets that have been released in the United States, including promotional cards, are legal for tournament play. Specific constructed deck formats may include additional rules on which card sets are allowed.

Players who use **Pokémon** cards with different backs must play with uniform sleeves with opaque backs on all cards in the deck.

## **Card Interpretation**

Tournament judges will base their card rulings and interpretations on a card, based on the event location's local language. Major tournaments that span multiple countries will default to the original intent and design of Pokémon cards produced in Japan. Pokémon Organized Play will issue card rulings based on that information.

## **New Releases**

All **Pokémon** trading card game sets and promotional trading game cards are allowed in POP-sanctioned tournaments as soon as they are released to the public.

In addition, highly competitive tournaments supported through Pokémon Organized Play may include specific rules on which expansions will be allowed for those events. New expansions may not be allowed for such events. Please check our website [pokemon-tcg.com](http://pokemon-tcg.com) for specific details on the event.

## ***Tournament Structure***

### **Definition of a Match**

Each match consists of one game of **Pokémon**. A tournament organizer may declare at the beginning of a tournament, that a match consists of more than one game, but must state this before the tournament starts.

### **Match Time Limits**

Each round has a recommended time limit of 30 minutes. The head judge will announce the time limit for each round at the beginning of the event.

### **Deck Registration**

For tournaments that require decklists:

- Constructed deck tournaments, players turn in their decklists as they register at the event site.
- Limited tournaments, tournament organizers will allow 30 minutes for deck construction and registration, with extra time allowed for whatever method the tournament organized uses for additional deck registration.

### **Pre-game set-up**

1. Whoever wins the coin toss chooses which player goes first.
2. Both players draw an opening hand of 7 cards.

3. The player going first checks to see if he or she has a Basic Pokémon card in their hand. If they don't have any, that player reveals their hand to the opponent and then shuffles their hand back into their deck. That player draws a new opening hand of 7 cards, while their opponent may draw an extra card. This will be repeated until the starting player has at least one Basic Pokémon in their hand.
4. The other player checks to see if his or her hand has at least one Basic Pokémon at this time. If they don't have any Basic Pokémon, they shuffle their hand back into their deck and draw an equal number of cards. *(For example, Jake drew an extra card because Sarah had to re-draw her hand once. If Jake doesn't have any Basic Pokémon in his hand of 8 cards, he will shuffle his hand back into his deck, and re-draw a hand of 8 cards.)* The starting player would be allowed to draw one extra card.
5. Each player places a Basic Pokémon face-down as their Active Pokémon, and then each player may start with up to 5 other Basic Pokémon on their Bench, face-down.
6. Both players set aside 6 Prize cards face-down, to the side of the match. In the case of Limited format tournaments, players set aside 4 Prize cards instead.

## **Reporting Results**

Upon match completion, each player is responsible for reporting the match results to the tournament judging staff. Optionally, the tournament organizer may state at the beginning of the event that only the winner of each match reports the score.

## **Time Expiration**

If time for the match has been called, the current player is allowed to finish their turn. At the end of that turn, the player with the least amount of Prize cards left is considered the winner. If both players have an equal number of Prize cards, the game is a draw.

Tournaments that include multiple-game matches check games won by each player. If both players have the same number of game wins for that round, the match is a draw.

## **Rules Specific to Constructed Deck Tournaments**

### **Deck-Size**

Each player will have a 60-card deck at all times.

Players may not have more than 4 of any single card, with the standard exception for basic Energy cards. A card is defined by the name of the card.

## ***Unlimited Constructed Deck Format***







Unlimited decks may contain cards from any and all **Pokémon** trading card game sets that have been released in the United States, as well as all promotional cards. New sets are allowed as soon as the product has been released.

### **Banned Cards**

- The promotional card “Ancient Mew”
- \_\_\_\_\_’s Pikachu (Known as the Birthday Pikachu promotional card)

## ***Modified Constructed Deck Format***

Modified decks may include cards from the following **Pokémon** trading card game sets:

- *Expedition*<sup>TM</sup> (  ) expansion
- *Aquapolis*<sup>TM</sup> (  ) expansion
- *Skyridge*<sup>TM</sup> (  ) expansion
- *EX Ruby & Sapphire*<sup>TM</sup> (  ) expansion
- *EX Sandstorm*<sup>TM</sup> (  ) expansion
- Any new post-*EX Sandstorm* expansion
- (  ) Promotional cards numbered 001 and higher

With the exception of basic Energy cards and previously printed cards that appear in current sets, players may not use cards from older **Pokémon** sets. New sets are allowed as soon as the product has been released.

### **Banned Cards**

There are no cards currently banned in the Modified tournament environment.

## ***Rules Specific to Limited Tournaments***

### **Deck Construction**

Limited decks contain exactly 40 cards. Players who open or draft multiple copies of a card are not limited to only 4 of any single card that is normally applied to the **Pokémon** trading card game. Any extra cards are set aside for the remainder of the event.

### **Prize Cards**

Players set aside 4 Prize cards at the start of each game, instead of the normal 6.

### **Required Materials**

Tournament organizers may provide basic Energy cards to participants in the event. For events that supply basic Energy, an equal amount will need to be made available to each player. Tournament organizers will state during event registration and before deck construction begins, whether or not Basic energy will be provided.

Players may only use the actual cards they receive at the Limited Format event, for that tournament. Participants who receive non-standard booster packs (too many cards, too few cards, all of one card or rarity, etc) must contact the head judge of the event, for a possible product replacement.

### **Sealed Deck Format**

Each player will have 6 booster packs of the Pokémon-e TCG: *EX Ruby & Sapphire* set for a **Pokémon** Sealed Deck tournament. Players add Basic Energy cards to build a 40-card deck. Please refer to the **Pokémon Sealed Deck Format** document found on the [pokemon-tcg.com](http://pokemon-tcg.com) website for more details.

### **Booster Draft Format**

Each player should receive 6 **Pokémon** booster packs. The suggested format is 6 booster packs of Pokémon-e TCG: *EX Ruby & Sapphire*, however, other breakdowns are allowed as long as the sets use similar Evolution paths for the Pokémon. After players have finished drafting, they may add Basic Energy cards to build a 40-card deck. Please refer to the **Pokémon Booster Draft Format** document for more details. This document can be found on the [pokemon-tcg.com](http://pokemon-tcg.com) website.

### **Rochester Draft Format**

Each player receives 6 **Pokémon** booster packs. The recommended format is 6 booster packs of Pokémon-e TCG *EX Ruby & Sapphire*, however, other breakdowns are allowed as long as the sets use similar Evolution paths for the Pokémon. Please refer to the **Pokémon Rochester Draft Format** document, found on the [pokemon-tcg.com](http://pokemon-tcg.com) website.

### **Document Updates**

Pokémon Organized Play may from time to time alter these rules, or make updates to these rules, and reserves the right to do so with or without prior notice.