

# Pokémon Organized Play TCG Penalty Guidelines

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## Introduction

Pokémon Organized Play protocols and procedures are intended to foster a spirit of friendly competition at all POP events. However, there occasionally arise situations, whether intentionally or unintentionally, in which players and spectators do not abide by the rules of the **Pokémon** TCG or the Spirit of the Game. In these cases, Tournament Organizers and judges need to issue penalties to the players, ranging from **Cautions** and **Warnings** that do not represent substantial corrective action to more lasting forms of penalties, including disqualification from an event.

This document is intended to provide Tournament Organizers and judges with guidelines by which they can assign and report penalties in a fair, even, and logical way.

## 1. Assigning Penalties

Pokémon Organized Play Tournament Organizers seek to create fun, safe, and non-stressful play experiences for our players. For this reason, the application of penalties should be handled in the most polite and discrete manner possible.

Every time a penalty is assigned, it should be accompanied by an explanation of specifically how the player's actions are disallowed by the Pokémon TCG rules or the POP Tournament Rules and by a clear description of what penalty will result from a repeated infraction.

POP believes that standard-level events are a learning environment for new players, as well as players practicing for more competitive-level events. Therefore, the application of penalties should be handled in a way that is positive and that moves the player toward a better overall understanding of the rules. In order to avoid singling players out or making a spectacle of an incident, Tournament Organizers and judges may want to assign penalties in private.

In some cases a player may choose to drop from the event in an attempt to avoid receiving a serious penalty. This tactic is unacceptable. The Head Judge should notify the player that the penalty will still be assessed and reported to POP accordingly.

With the exception of the Unsporting Conduct penalties, the penalties outlined in this document assume that all rules violations are unintentional. If a judge deems that a rules violation has been made intentionally, the Unsporting Conduct: Cheating penalty should be applied. POP feels that cheating is the worst offense that a player can commit at an event and should be dealt with swiftly.

### 1.1. Deviating from Recommended Penalties

The penalties for infractions are simply recommendations and may be increased or decreased in severity based on circumstances. As a general rule, judges should take an especially easy approach with the Junior age division. Younger players are often prone to mistakes due to lack of experience or the intimidation of playing in a competitive environment. POP recommends starting with a **Caution** for most penalties applied to players in the Junior age division. Younger or less-experienced players should always be given the benefit of the doubt, as they are often learning the game and most of the mistakes they make are accidental. These players may be given additional **Caution** penalties before a **Warning** is issued.

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

## 2. Repeated Infractions

In the case where a player repeats an infraction or fails to correct his or her behavior after receiving a penalty, the judge or Tournament Organizer should increase the level of penalty for each subsequent infraction to further reinforce the need for the erring player to play within the rules. This will result in a higher-than-usual penalty being issued for a particular offense.

Generally speaking, increasing the penalty by one step per repetition of an infraction is satisfactory. This means that for the fourth penalty, an error that was originally penalized with a **Caution** will often receive a **Game Loss**. In some cases, increasing the penalty by more than one step may be appropriate.

Judges and Tournament Organizers should understand that a tournament is not an isolated incident. If a player has a history of excessively committing the same infractions at your events, starting with a penalty higher than the one recommended in this document is appropriate. For example, a player who has a history of Unsporting Conduct: Minor at past events could be issued a **Warning** or **Prize Card** penalty, instead of a **Caution** for the first instance of the penalty at an event.

## 3. Multiple Infractions

Players who commit more than one type of infraction during the course of an event 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 players, and they should be given every chance to learn about the game and the Pokémon Organized Play system.

That being said, it is also important to recognize that some players attempt to gain extra leverage at an event by committing several different errors “accidentally,” and these players should be encouraged to discontinue this type of behavior.

Simply put, the decision as to whether to increase the penalty assigned to a player who has previously committed a different infraction is left to the assigning judge or Tournament Organizer. Younger and less-experienced players deserve a little extra consideration, and, unless recommended in this document, **Game Loss** penalties should rarely be assigned to first offenses, even if the player has made other mistakes during the same event.

## 4. Unreported Infractions

It is each player’s responsibility to ensure that he or she and his or her opponent are playing by both the game and tournament rules. If a player makes a game play, procedural, or other error, and both that player and his or

her opponent miss the error, the judge and Tournament Organizer cannot be held responsible for the game-play decisions made after the error or for the outcome of the game itself.

## 5. Reporting Penalties to POP

Simple **Cautions** do not need to be reported to POP; however, penalties at the **Warning** level and above **must** be reported. POP tracks each player's penalty history to differentiate intentional repetition of infractions from unintentional occurrences and to determine if long-term action is necessary.

Penalties that require reporting must be submitted to [customerservice@pokemon.com](mailto:customerservice@pokemon.com) within 7 days of the event date. A penalty reporting form can be found on the Tournament Rules and Resources page for your convenience.

If you cannot access the penalty reporting form, please email the information to [customerservice@pokemon.com](mailto:customerservice@pokemon.com):

- Tournament sanctioning number
- POP IDs and names of the relevant players
- POP ID and name of the judge issuing the penalty
- A detailed account of the relevant proceedings of the event, up to and including the infraction, the response from the judges and Tournament Organizer, and the reaction, if any, of the involved players

## 6. Types of Penalties

The following list details the various levels of penalty in order of severity. Only Pokémon Organized Play is authorized to add to or alter any of the penalties below. Tournament Organizers and judges may not issue any penalty other than those listed below.

### 6.1. Caution

A **Caution** is the most basic of assigned penalties. In essence, the judge or TO assigning the **Caution** is merely notifying the player that he or she did something wrong. The **Caution** should be followed with an explanation to the player about the correct procedure as well as notification to the player that a repeated offense may result in a higher penalty.

### 6.2. Warning

A **Warning** is similar to a **Caution** in that both are minor penalties. They differ in that **Warnings must** be reported to POP by the Head Judge or Tournament Organizer of the event in which they occur. If younger or less-experienced players commit a second offense that was penalized the first time with a **Caution**, a second **Caution** is a suitable second penalty, but a **Warning** may need to be issued on a third offense. Judges should always use discretion when escalating a penalty in the Junior age division, as this group is often still learning the game.

After a **Warning** has been issued, the issuing TO or judge should confirm that the erring player is aware of the proper rules and procedures as set forth in the POP Tournament Rules and the Pokémon TCG rulebook. The player should be informed that a repeat offense may result in an escalated penalty, such as a **Prize Card** penalty or a **Game Loss**.

### 6.3. Prize Card

The **Prize Card** penalty 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 **Multi-Prize Card** penalty would be too harsh. When issuing a **Prize Card** penalty, a judge gives the player who did not commit the penalty the option to draw one of his or her Prize cards into his or her hand. The penalty is still recorded, even if the player chooses to not draw the Prize card. If this Prize card happens to be the last Prize card, the game is over, and the player who drew his or her last Prize card is given the game win.

### 6.4. Multi-Prize Card

The **Multi-Prize Card** penalty is used when a mistake has been made that has a severe impact on the game state and there is no clear way to resolve the issue, but a Game Loss is too harsh of a penalty. When issuing a **Multi-Prize Card** penalty, a judge gives the player who did not commit the penalty the option to draw three of his or her Prize cards into his or her hand. The player may choose to draw fewer than three Prize cards if he or she wishes, and must announce how many he or she will be taking in advance of drawing these Prize cards. The penalty is still recorded, even if the player chooses to not draw any Prize cards. If one of these Prize cards happens to be the last Prize card, the game is over, and the player who drew his or her last Prize card is given the game win.

### 6.5. 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.

When issuing a Game Loss penalty during an active game, the game is recorded as a loss for the player receiving the penalty. In extreme cases where significant errors have been made by both players in a game, a Game Loss penalty may be issued to both players simultaneously. A game terminated in this manner is recorded as having no winner.

If this penalty is issued in-between rounds, the penalty is applied to the player's next game.

### 6.6. Disqualification

**Disqualification** is the most serious penalty that can be issued at a tournament. Its use should be strictly reserved for the most extreme cases, where a player's actions (whether intentional or unintentional) have significantly and negatively impacted the integrity or operation of the entire event. Players who receive this penalty are removed from the tournament and become ineligible to receive any prizes. It is important that the removal be enacted in such a way so as not to inflame, extend, or call any more attention to the situation than is absolutely necessary.

The timing of a player's disqualification has an impact on the remainder of the tournament.

- If disqualified after pairings are posted or during an active match, the player is given a loss for that round, and then dropped from the event.
- If disqualified after his or her match is completed but before pairings for the next round are posted, the player is simply dropped from the event.
- If disqualified at any point during a Single Elimination cut, the player is dropped from the event, and his or her opponent receives a win for that round.

If the player's actions warrant it, asking the player to leave the tournament site may be necessary. The player receiving the penalty should be given time to collect his or her belongings and to make arrangements with any other players he or she may have traveled with.

## 7. Types of Infractions

There are several categories of infraction, and each should be treated slightly differently based on the age and experience level of the involved players.

Each infraction lists two penalties. The Tier 1 Penalty is the first penalty that should be assigned to a player committing this type of infraction at an event with a K-Value of 16 or less, such as a store level tournament, Battle Road, or City Championships event. The Tier 2 Penalty should be assigned at an event with a K-Value higher than 16, as players at these events are held to a higher standard of game play. Additionally, the Pokémon TCG World Championships will use the Tier 2 Penalty category.

### 7.1. Game-Play Error

This infraction covers general mistakes made during the course of a game. These mistakes can have very little impact on a game, or they can bring a game to an abrupt halt. This category defines the three levels of errors and outlines the appropriate penalties for each.

#### 7.1.1. Minor

These errors have very little effect on game-play and can usually be fixed with little effort. In many cases, players should be given multiple starting penalties before escalating the penalty, and the maximum penalty given should be a **Prize Card** penalty.

Examples of Game-Play Error: Minor include:

- Playing a Team Galactic's Mars and looking at the card before putting it on the bottom of your opponent's deck.
- Forgetting to discard a Supporter card at the end of your turn.
- Playing a Supporter card into your discard pile instead of next to your Active Pokémon.
- Declaring an attack without having the proper Energy attached.
- Drawing an extra card.
- Forgetting to flip a coin for a Burned or Poisoned Pokémon in between turns.
- Inadvertently revealing the top card of your deck, or one of your Prize Cards.

#### Recommended Starting Penalty:

Tier 1: **Caution**

Tier 2: **Warning**

#### 7.1.2. Major

When game state has become irreversibly confused due to game-play errors, it is appropriate for the judge to issue a higher-level penalty. Major game-play error penalties are also appropriate for minor game-play errors that have left the game too confused to reset.

In addition to the assigned penalty to the offending player, a **Caution** should be issued to the player's opponent for not properly keeping track of game state and rules.

Examples of Game-Play Error: Major include:

- Playing more than one Energy card in a turn without the use of an effect that allows you to.
- Shuffling your deck mid-game without the use of a card effect.
- Insufficiently randomizing your deck.
- Failing to place Prize cards at the beginning of the game\*
- Drawing a Prize card without Knocking Out a Pokémon.
- Drawing too many Prize cards after Knocking Out a Pokémon.
- Forgetting to place damage counters on a Pokémon from a mandatory effect, such as Poisoned.
- Using a Poké-Power when a card prevents its use.

**Recommended Starting Penalty:**

Tier 1: **Warning**

Tier 2: **Prize Card**

*\*If the Head Judge determines that the offending player gained significant advantage due to this error, the starting penalty should be escalated one step. If the Head Judge determines that game state is irreparably broken, this penalty should be escalated to Game Play Error: Severe.*

### 7.1.3. Severe

In some cases, a game-play error occurs which irreparably breaks the game state. In these cases, there is no way that either player or a judge can reset the game to the point where it can be continued.

In addition to the assigned penalty to the offending player, a **Warning** should be issued to the player's opponent for not properly keeping track of game state and rules.

Examples of Game-Play Error: Severe include:

- Shuffling your hand into your deck without the use of a card effect.
- Shuffling your Prize cards into your deck without the use of a card effect.
- Shuffling your discard pile into your deck without the use of a card effect.
- Picking up your cards before both players agree on the game winner.

**Recommended Starting Penalty:**

Tier 1: **Game Loss**

Tier 2: **Game Loss**

## 7.2. Marked Cards

Cards in a player's decks that are clearly distinguishable from other cards in the deck are called marked. A variety of conditions can cause the cards in a player's deck to become marked. Because marked cards can give a player foresight into the next card that he or she will draw, the contents of his or her deck, or the location of a specific card in the player's deck, marked cards cannot be allowed in a player's deck at

a sanctioned Pokémon TCG event. If the problem is caught during deck checks prior to the start of the event, these errors can be corrected without issuing a penalty.

While considering the severity of penalty to be assessed based on advantage, the tournament staff should take into account both the markings on the cards or sleeves, and the variety of cards that have these markings. For example, if five different cards in a player's deck are marked due to sleeve length, it is reasonable to assume that little advantage was gained, as knowledge of which cards are in those sleeves provides very little advantage. However, in the same example, if the cards all have a similar mechanic, such as allowing the player to search their deck for a Pokémon, significant advantage could have been gained, so a stronger penalty should be applied.

If a player is required to resleeve a deck due to deck problems, the player should be strongly encouraged to randomize the deck prior to sleeving. In the event that there is a flaw in the new sleeves that goes undetected initially, randomizing the deck will reduce the likelihood of a pattern occurring. Players are always responsible for the condition of their cards and card sleeves, even if any problems were missed by the event staff during a previous deck check.

### **7.2.1. Minor**

This penalty should be used when marked cards exist but there is no discernable pattern to which cards are marked. If there appears to be some pattern to which cards are marked, escalating to the next penalty tier is appropriate.

Placing the deck in card sleeves (if unsleeved) or replacing the damaged sleeves (if sleeved) usually solves the problem. Marked cards or sleeves should be replaced as soon as possible, without disrupting game play.

Examples of Marked Cards: Minor include:

- Two basic Energy, a Ralts, a Warp Point, and a Potion have a thumbnail mark along the lower edge of the sleeve. No solid pattern to which cards are marked is evident which would provide the player with significant advantage.
- The player's sleeves have standard wear and tear in different areas of the sleeves, which could allow the player to determine which cards are which at a cursory glance.
- Several of the player's cards are parallel holo versions of the card, causing a slight bend down the center of the card. However, while the cards are identifiable as parallel holo cards, there is enough variety in which cards bend that no pattern can be determined.

#### **Recommended Starting Penalty:**

Tier 1: **Caution**

Tier 2: **Warning**

### **7.2.2. Major**

This penalty applies to a player who has marked cards or sleeves and there is a discernable pattern to which cards are marked. Because the possibility for a player to gain an advantage is high, the penalties associated with this category are more severe. Further investigation may be required to determine if the markings are intentional, or if the player is using accidental markings to intentionally gain advantage. If this proves to be the case, the penalty should be escalated to Unsportsmanlike Conduct: Cheating, and the appropriate action should be taken.

Placing the deck in card sleeves (if unsleeved) or replacing the damaged sleeves (if sleeved) usually solves the problem. Marked cards or sleeves should be replaced as soon as possible, without disrupting game play.

Examples of Marked Cards: Major include:

- All of the Basic Pokémon in a player's deck are parallel holo, causing a slight bend down the center of the card. This creates a pattern which allows the player to identify Basic Pokémon when the cards are face-down, at rest.
- A card in the player's deck was 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.
- The sleeves on all of the Special Energy cards in a player's deck are slightly longer than the rest of the sleeves.
- A player has drawn on some of his or her cards, and the markings appear along the edges of the cards, where they are discernable when the deck is at rest.

**Recommended Starting Penalty:**

Tier 1: **Multi-Prize Card**

Tier 2: **Game Loss**

### 7.3. Deck Problem

This section serves as a catchall for problems involving illegal decks and decklists discovered after a tournament has started. A player's decklist is the roadmap to his or her deck. It is important that each player's deck matches his or her decklist at all times over the course of the tournament. There are four general categories for deck problems, which are outlined below.

The timing of when a decklist or deck problem is discovered dictates what penalty should be assigned. If decklist or deck problems are caught during deck checks prior to the start of the event, these errors can be corrected without issuing a penalty. As the deck has not been officially registered at this time, the player may make any changes to the decklist or deck to make it legal.

- If decklist or deck problems are caught during a match and the problem can be quickly and easily resolved, the penalties below should be used. The player is restricted as to what changes can be made, as outlined below.
- If decklist or deck problems are caught during a match and the problem cannot be quickly resolved, or the error has created significant advantage to the player, a **Game Loss** should be issued. The player is restricted as to what changes can be made, as outlined below.
- If decklist or deck problems are caught between rounds, the penalties listed below should be used. The player is restricted as to what changes can be made, as outlined below.

In all cases, it is important that the illegal deck or decklist be corrected as soon as possible. The player should be reminded why his or her deck or decklist was illegal, and that player should be the individual who actually changes the cards in his or her deck. These changes must be verified by the Head Judge or Tournament Organizer of the event.

Players are always responsible for ensuring that the contents of their deck and decklist are legal for the event, even if any deck problems were missed by the event staff during a previous deck check.

Sections 7.3.1. through 7.3.4. assume that the deck problems are caught after the event has begun.

### 7.3.1. Illegal Decklist, Legal Deck

If a player's deck meets the format restrictions and deck construction rules but the decklist does not, the decklist should be made legal by replacing the illegal cards with basic Energy cards of the player's choosing, if necessary. The deck should then be modified to reflect the changes.

Examples of Deck Problems: Illegal Decklist, Legal Deck include:

- In a Modified event, the decklist contains two copies of Pikachu (*EX Sandstorm* 72/100), but the deck contains two copies of Pikachu (*Diamond & Pearl-Majestic Dawn* 70/100).
- The decklist contains five copies of Metal Energy (Special), but the deck contains four copies of Metal Energy (Special).
- The decklist contains more or less than sixty cards, but the deck contains exactly sixty cards.

#### Recommended Starting Penalty:

Tier 1: **Caution**

Tier 2: **Caution**

### 7.3.2. Legal Decklist, Illegal Deck

If a player's decklist meets the format restrictions and deck construction rules but the deck does not, the illegal cards must be removed from the deck, and the deck must be modified to match the decklist. The Head Judge should carefully consider what advantage, if any, was gained by the illegal deck. If the Head Judge feels that there was a significant advantage, elevating the penalty to a **Game Loss** may be necessary.

The exception to this is if cards are simply missing from the deck. This usually happens if the player and a previous opponent are using similar sleeves, if cards get stuck in the player's deck box, or if cards are dropped on the floor. If the card is found, or the player can provide an identical card to replace the missing one, the player should be allowed to continue the event without further modifying the deck or the decklist. If the card cannot be found and the player cannot provide an identical card, the missing card should be replaced with a basic Energy card of the player's choice, and the decklist should be modified to reflect the new contents of the deck. Either way, the penalty should still be issued.

Examples of Deck Problems: Legal Decklist, Illegal Deck include:

- The decklist contains four copies of Metagross and one copy of Metagross ex, but the deck contains five copies of Metagross. In this case, one Metagross is replaced with a basic Energy card, and the decklist is modified to reflect the change.
- The decklist contains sixty cards, including four copies of Cursed Stone, but the deck contains fifty-nine cards and only three copies of Cursed Stone. In this case, the player may add one Cursed Stone to his or her deck. If that player cannot provide one, he or she must add a basic Energy card. The decklist is then modified to reflect the change.

- In a Modified event, the decklist contains two copies of Pikachu (*Diamond & Pearl-Majestic Dawn*), but the deck contains two copies of Pikachu (*EX Sandstorm*). In this case, the Pikachu cards are removed from the deck and replaced with basic Energy cards, and the decklist is modified to reflect the change.
- More than 10% of the player's deck is made up of foreign cards, as defined by the Pokémon Tournament Rules. In this case, the excess cards should be replaced with a local language version if possible. If this is not possible, the cards should be replaced with basic Energy cards. The decklist is then modified to reflect the change.

**Recommended Starting Penalty:**

Tier 1: **Warning**

Tier 2: **Warning**

### 7.3.3. Illegal Decklist, Illegal Deck

Occasionally, a player will simply show up with a completely illegal decklist and deck that do not meet the format restrictions or the deck construction rules. When this is the case, both the deck and the decklist must be modified to make the deck legal for the event. Any illegal cards should be replaced with basic Energy cards of the player's choice, and the changes should be reflected on the decklist.

As with the previous category, the Head Judge should carefully consider what advantage, if any, was gained by the illegal deck. If the Head Judge feels that there was a significant advantage or the error cannot be easily fixed during the match, elevating the penalty to a **Game Loss** may be necessary.

Examples of Deck Problems: Illegal Decklist, Illegal Deck include:

- Both the decklist and the deck contain five copies of Metal Energy (Special), violating the four-card limit rule.
- Both the decklist and the deck contain more or less than sixty cards.
- In a Modified event, both the decklist and the deck contain four Dark Ampharos cards (*EX Team Rocket Returns 2/109*).

**Recommended Starting Penalty:**

Tier 1: **Prize Card**

Tier 2: **Prize Card**

### 7.3.4. Legal Decklist, Legal Deck

Occasionally a player's decklist and deck meet the format restrictions and the deck construction rules but do not match. As the contents of the decklist always take priority over the contents of the deck itself, the player must modify his or her deck so that it matches the decklist. If the player is unable to provide the cards listed on the decklist, missing cards should be replaced with basic Energy cards of the player's choice, and the decklist should be updated to reflect these changes.

As with previous categories, the Head Judge should carefully consider what advantage, if any, was gained by this error. If the Head Judge feels that there was a significant advantage or the

error cannot be easily fixed during the match, elevating the penalty to a **Game Loss** may be necessary.

Examples of Deck Problems: Legal Decklist, Legal Deck include:

- A player's deck contains 4 Darkness Energy cards, but the decklist contains 4 Dark Metal Energy cards.
- A player's deck contains 4 Shelgon cards (*EX Delta Species 53/113*), but the decklist contains 2 Shelgon cards (*EX Delta Species 53/113*) and 2 Shelgon cards (*EX Delta Species 54/113*).
- A player's deck contains 3 Battle Frontier cards and 2 Cursed Stone cards, but the decklist contains 2 Battle Frontier cards and 3 Cursed Stone cards.
- In an Unlimited event, the decklist contains four copies of Torchic (*EX Ruby & Sapphire 73/109*), but the deck contains four copies of Torchic (*EX Ruby & Sapphire 74/109*).
- Cards in the player's deck have been marked on, though none of the markings appear to create a marked card situation.

**Recommended Starting Penalty:**

Tier 1: **Warning**

Tier 2: **Warning**

## 7.4. Game Tempo

The pace of a Pokémon TGC game should be moderate and lively, and each player should receive approximately half of the allotted time for the game. However, the way players react to pressure can have an impact on the tempo at which they take their turns. Judges should watch for changes in tempo and make corrections if needed.

In general, the following time limits for various game actions should be appropriate. The times given below are general guidelines; players attempting to compartmentalize their turn in order to use every second of the time allowed for the items below are almost certainly stalling and should be subject to the Unsporting Conduct: Severe penalties.

- Performing the actions of a card or attack: 15 seconds
- Shuffling and setup, game start: 2 minutes
- Shuffling and deck search, mid-game: 15 seconds
- Starting the turn after opponent's "end of turn" announcement: 5 seconds
- Considering the game position before playing a card: 10 seconds

### 7.4.1. Slow Play

Players should take care to play in a manner that keeps the game pace brisk, regardless of the complexity of the situation. A player who takes too long to make decisions about game play runs the risk of putting his or her opponent at a disadvantage due to the round's time limit. In addition to the recommended penalty, the judge may issue a time extension to offset this disadvantage.

Examples of Game Tempo: Slow Play include:

- You are excessively slow when deciding which Pokémon to attach an Energy card to.

- You take an unreasonable amount of time deciding which Basic Pokémon to take from your deck after playing a Poké Ball card.
- Counting or searching your (or your opponent's) deck or discard pile more than once in a short time period.
- Repeatedly searching your deck, hand, or discard pile while performing a card effect.
- Attempting to engage in extraneous conversation that interferes with timely play.

**Recommended Starting Penalty:**

Tier 1: **Caution**

Tier 2: **Warning**

#### 7.4.2. Rushing

Rushing involves a player trying to get his or her opponent to play faster. This can cause the opponent to lose his or her concentration, making the player more likely to make a mistake. Rushing is often a symptom of an opponent's Slow Play, but it can also occur when a player is excited to get to his or her next turn.

Examples of Game Tempo: Rushing include:

- Placing your hand near your deck to draw a card during an opponent's turn, indicating that you are ready to start your turn.
- Making exasperated noises or comments regarding your opponent's actions.
- Rushing through your opponent's attack step by putting damage on your Pokémon before your opponent announces which attack is being used, or the total damage being done to the Defending Pokémon.

**Recommended Starting Penalty:**

Tier 1: **Caution**

Tier 2: **Warning**

### 7.5. Procedural Error

A player who causes an error in the operation of an event, such as misreporting a match, playing the wrong opponent, failing to notify a judge or TO that they are dropping from the event, or other such errors, needs to be reminded of the procedural rules of a Pokémon Organized Play event. As with Game-Play Errors or other accidental infractions, this reminder is customarily given with a **Caution** penalty. Repeated infractions may result in higher penalties.

#### 7.5.1. Minor

This category covers smaller errors that do not have a serious impact on the operation of the event. If the situation can be corrected before any delay or disruption occurs, the correction should always be made and no higher penalty than a **Caution** should be dispensed for a first infraction. If the situation goes unreported until delay or disruption is caused, a **Warning** is a suitable first penalty.

Examples of Procedural Error: Minor include:

- Forgetting to sign the match slip.
- Entering marked or announced staff-only areas.
- Interrupting staff during announcements to players or rulings in progress.

**Recommended Starting Penalty:**Tier 1: **Caution**Tier 2: **Caution****7.5.2. Major**

Occasionally errors are made that have a much larger impact on the tournament's operation. Some can cause a major delay in the timeliness of the event; others can cause a significant inconvenience for the players around you. In some extreme cases the penalty for this infraction can be escalated to a **Game Loss** for a first offense.

Examples of Procedural Error: Major include:

- Incorrectly filling out a match slip
- Showing up to a match late (less than 5 minutes).
- Failure to provide a reference card or Card-Dex when using a foreign card.
- Failure to provide status condition markers if cards in your deck use those conditions.
- Failure to provide damage counters.

**Recommended Starting Penalty:**Tier 1: **Warning**Tier 2: **Warning****7.5.3. Severe**

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

Examples of Procedural Error: Severe include:

- Reporting the incorrect result of a match.
- Showing up late to a match (5 minutes or more).
- Failure to report that you are dropping from an event before leaving the venue. *(This penalty should still be issued, regardless of whether the player is there to receive it or not.)*
- Playing the incorrect opponent. *(In this case, the player sitting at the wrong table receives the penalty.)*

**Recommended Starting Penalty:**Tier 1: **Game Loss**Tier 2: **Game Loss****7.6. Unsporting Conduct**

This group of penalties covers the inappropriate actions taken by players or spectators at an event. This category always assumes that the offending actions are intentional. A player does not have to be actively involved in a match to receive an Unsporting Conduct penalty. While players and spectators should enjoy their tournament experience, they also need to remember that their actions can have a negative impact on fellow participants.

### 7.6.1. Minor

Players are expected to behave in a respectful manner to all attendees and staff of a Pokémon TCG event. Players who don't behave properly need to be reminded to with the issuance of a penalty. Infractions in this category have no impact on the event operation itself.

Examples of Unsporting Conduct: Minor include:

- Swearing in the tournament area.
- Leaving a small amount of garbage in the tournament area.
- Roughhousing.
- Repeatedly touching or moving an opponent's cards without permission.
- Disturbing a match in progress.

#### **Recommended Starting Penalty:**

Tier 1: **Warning**

Tier 2: **Warning**

### 7.6.2. Major

Players are expected to behave in a respectful manner to all attendees and staff of a Pokémon TCG event. Players who don't behave properly need to be reminded to with the issuance of a penalty. Infractions in this category have a direct impact on event operation or cause a small degree of emotional distress to those around them.

Examples of Unsporting Conduct: Major include:

- Leaving a large amount of garbage in the tournament area.
- Failure to comply with the instructions of the event staff.
- Engaging in gamesmanship/rules lawyering.
- Attempting to manipulate a match through intimidation or distraction.
- Refusal to sign a match slip.
- Making legal plays which have no effect on the game in progress to manipulate the time remaining in a match.
- Playing slowly to manipulate the time remaining in a match.

#### **Recommended Starting Penalty:**

Tier 1: **Game Loss**

Tier 2: **Game Loss**

### 7.6.3. Severe

Players are expected to behave in a respectful manner to all attendees and staff of a Pokémon TCG event. Players who don't behave properly need to be reminded to with the issuance of a penalty. Infractions in this category have a serious impact on event operation, cause great emotional distress to those around them, or involve a physical altercation.

Examples of Unsporting Conduct: Severe include:

- Defacement of tournament area.
- Assault.
- Use of profanity or physical threats to event staff.

- Theft.
- Use of slurs or insults.

**Recommended Starting Penalty:**

Tier 1: **Disqualification**

Tier 2: **Disqualification**

#### 7.6.4. Cheating

Players who **intentionally** commit infractions are looking to gain an unfair advantage over other players at the event. The Head Judge should carefully consider whether an infraction was intentional or not before applying this penalty. ***If the Head Judge feels that an infraction was unintentional, this penalty should not be applied.***

Examples of Unsporting Conduct: Cheating include:

- Drawing extra cards.
- Taking cards from the discard pile and adding them to your hand or deck.
- Offering some form of compensation to an opponent for a concession.
- Altering match results after the conclusion of the match.
- Playing with marked cards.
- Lying to event staff.
- Modification of the Card-Dex to misrepresent official card text.
- Arbitrarily adjusting the Special Conditions or damage counters put on any Pokémon in play.
- Use of dubious game actions intended to deceive your opponent into making misplays.
- Attempting to manipulate a random result.
- Stacking your deck.

**Recommended Starting Penalty:**

Tier 1: **Disqualification**

Tier 2: **Disqualification**

## 8. Lasting Consequences

Players who commit repeated infractions over a series of events, or commit enough infractions at a single event to result in disqualification, may require a lasting penalty to be assigned to them.

Pokémon Organized Play is the only body authorized to penalize players with penalties that extend over multiple events. Pokémon Organized Play requires the reporting of all penalty assignments of **Warning** level or higher in order to ensure that these penalties are made fairly and only when warranted.

## 9. Suspension

Pokémon Organized Play may issue suspensions to players who disrupt other players or the events they attend. In these cases, the players will be notified and their names and POP IDs will be made available to POP Tournament Organizers.

Suspended players should not be allowed to participate in any Pokémon Organized Play events as a player, judge, Tournament Organizer, or volunteer. If a suspended player disrupts an event by trying to participate and then refusing to leave, the incident should be reported to POP and may result in an extension of the existing suspension.

## Appendix A. Quick Reference Chart

		Recommended Penalty	
Game-Play Error: Minor	7.1.1.	Caution	Warning
Game-Play Error: Major	7.1.2.	Warning	Prize Card
Game-Play Error: Severe	7.1.3.	Game Loss	Game Loss
Marked Cards: Minor	7.2.1.	Caution	Warning
Marked Cards: Major	7.2.2.	Multi-Prize Card	Game Loss
Deck Problem: Illegal Decklist, Legal Deck	7.3.1.	Caution	Caution
Deck Problem: Legal Decklist, Illegal Deck	7.3.2.	Warning	Warning
Deck Problem: Illegal Decklist, Illegal Deck	7.3.3.	Prize Card	Prize Card
Deck Problem: Legal Decklist, Legal Deck	7.3.4.	Warning	Warning
Game Tempo: Slow Play	7.4.1.	Caution	Warning
Game Tempo: Rushing	7.4.2.	Caution	Warning
Procedural Error: Minor	7.5.1.	Caution	Caution
Procedural Error: Major	7.5.2.	Warning	Warning
Procedural Error: Severe	7.5.3.	Game Loss	Game Loss
Unsporting Conduct: Minor	7.6.1.	Warning	Warning
Unsporting Conduct: Major	7.6.2.	Game Loss	Game Loss
Unsporting Conduct: Severe	7.6.3.	Disqualification	Disqualification
Unsporting Conduct: Cheating	7.6.4.	Disqualification	Disqualification

## ***Appendix B. Document Updates***

Pokémon Organized Play reserves the right to alter these rules, as well as the right to interpret, modify, clarify, or otherwise issue official changes to these rules, with or without prior notice.

Document updates will be made available at <http://www.go-pokemon.com/op/>.

### Changes for September 1, 2009

General reformatting of document.

- Section 4. Removes the Active vs. Passive Judging sub-section.
- Section 5. Added penalty reporting deadline and updated contact email address.
- Section 6.5. Added further detail on timing of Game Loss.
- Section 7.1.1. Escalated recommended starting penalty for Tier 2 to **Warning**.
- Section 7.1.2. Escalated playing more than one Energy per turn to Game-Play Error: Major.
- Section 7.2. Added guidelines for determining patterns in marked cards, and appropriate penalty levels.
- Section 7.2.1. Added new examples of marked cards with no pattern.
- Section 7.2.2. Added new examples of marked cards with a pattern.
- Section 7.2.2. Lowered recommended starting penalty.
- Section 7.3. Lowered recommendation of **Game Loss** for problems caught after a match has started.
- Section 7.3.2. Removed **Disqualification** as a recommended escalation.
- Section 7.3.2. Added foreign card restriction as an example.
- Section 7.3.3. Removed **Disqualification** as a recommended escalation.
- Section 7.3.3. Lowered recommended starting penalty.
- Section 7.3.4. Removed **Disqualification** as a recommended escalation.
- Section 7.3.4. Added cards that have been marked on as an example.
- Section 7.5.1. Removed tardiness as an example.
- Section 7.5.2. Reduced tardiness time to less than 5 minutes as an example.
- Section 7.5.2. Added filling out a match slip incorrectly as an example.
- Section 7.5.3. Reduced tardiness time to 5 minutes or more as an example.
- Section 7.5.3. Moved reporting the incorrect result of a match to Procedural Error: Severe.
- Section 7.6.1. Escalated recommended starting penalty for Tier 1 to **Warning**.
- Section 7.6.2. Escalated recommended starting penalty for Tier 1 to **Game Loss**.
- Section 7.6.4. Added additional examples.