2017 Pokémon VGC Rules, Format, and Penalty Guidelines

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1. Team Construction

Players are responsible for ensuring that their team adheres to any restrictions set forth by the tournament format and this document. The rules and restrictions that follow are considered the "Standard format."

1.1. Battle Team Setup
- A player must designate a Battle Team and keep the Battle Team unchanged from the beginning to the end of the event.
- Teams must have a minimum of 4 Pokémon.

1.2. Nicknames
- A player's team cannot contain two Pokémon with the same nickname.
- A player's team cannot contain a Pokémon nicknamed with the name of another Pokémon (for example, an Unfezant named "Pidove").
- Players must avoid the use of potentially inappropriate, obscene, or otherwise offensive words or phrases when naming their Trainer or their Pokémon.

1.3. Items
- Each Pokémon may hold an item, though no two Pokémon may hold the same item.
- Players may only use items that can be obtained through regular gameplay (including the Pokémon Global Link and related functions of games released by The Pokémon Company and Nintendo) or that have been awarded as part of a distribution or special event.
- Pokémon may not hold a Mega Stone.

1.4. Pokémon
- A player's team cannot contain two Pokémon with the same Alola Pokédex number.
- Pokémon may only use moves that have been learned through normal gameplay or from an official Pokémon event or promotion.
- Pokémon may have Hidden Abilities.
- Pokémon may use Z-Moves.
- Pokémon must have the black clover on their summary screen.
- Pokémon above and below Level 50 are permitted, but will be auto-leveled to Level 50 during battle.
- Players may use Pokémon from the Alola Pokédex, from No. 001–204, No. 206 - 288 and No. 293 - 299, that are caught or hatched in the game or received at an official event or distribution.

2. Equipment Rules

2.1. Game Cards
- Only legitimate versions of *Pokémon Sun* or *Pokémon Moon* can be used in Play! Pokémon tournaments. This includes Game Cards and downloadable versions of *Pokémon Sun* or *Pokémon Moon*. Players are restricted on which region Game Cards they can use, based on the country where they are playing.
  - Players at European events may only use European Game Cards.
  - Players at North American events may only use North American Game Cards.
  - Players in the Oceania, Latin America, South Africa, and Russia rating zones may only use Game Cards distributed in their local market.
  - Players at the World Championships or International Championships may only use Game Cards that are distributed in their local markets.

2.2. Game Systems
- Players may use any system in the Nintendo 3DS™ family of systems during the competition. This includes the New Nintendo 3DS™, New Nintendo 3DS XL™, Nintendo 3DS™, Nintendo 3DS XL™, and Nintendo 2DS™. Players are responsible for bringing a charger that is compatible with their system.
- Players at European events may only use systems in the European Nintendo 3DS™ family.
- Players at North American events may only use systems in the North American Nintendo 3DS™ family.
- Players in the Oceania, Latin America, South Africa, and Russia rating zones may only use systems distributed in their local market.
- Players at the World Championships or International Championships may only use Game Cards and systems that are distributed in their local markets.

2.3. Game Patches and Updates
- Players are responsible for ensuring their version of *Pokémon Sun* or *Pokémon Moon* has the latest game update downloaded prior to the start of the tournament. Players may be penalized, including disqualification, in the event their game does not have the latest update.

2.4. Headphone Use
- Headphones may be worn by players only if they are wired and plugged directly into their game system. The headphone wire must be clearly visible.

2.5. Notes
- Players may take notes at any time during their match but must begin each match with a blank sheet. Lined, ruled, or grid paper are permitted. No written or printed aids, including type charts, are permitted in the play space.

2.6. Objects in Play Area
- Players are permitted to have good luck charms or objects in the play space but must keep the play space neat. Players must avoid objects obstructing the IR port connection between game systems.

3. Match Play

3.1. Double Battle Format
- Each player selects four Pokémon from their Battle Team to battle with. At the start of the battle, players send out the first two Pokémon in their party, making a total of four Pokémon on the battlefield. Gameplay continues until a player makes all four of their opponent's Pokémon faint or one player's time limit has expired.

3.2. Tethered Tournaments
- A tethered tournament is a tournament where the Battle Team is locked electronically.
- "Cancelling Participation" after the Battle Team is locked may result in disqualification.

3.2.1. Game Time Limits
- Tethered tournaments will automatically enforce the following time limits:
  - Team preview: 90 seconds
  - Move time limit: 45 seconds
  - Player time limit: 10 minutes
- Players may take notes at any time during a turn.
- Players may use as much time as allowed each turn.

3.2.2. Match Time Limits
- There is a match time limit of 50 minutes for best-of-three games and 20 minutes for best-of-one games. When match time is called, players will have 3 additional turns to complete the current game.

3.3. Untethered Tournaments
- An untethered tournament is a tournament where the Battle Team is not locked electronically. Players should use Festival Plaza and select Battle – Link Battle - Double Battle - 2017 World Championships Rules when setting up a battle. Players should download the "2017 World Championships Rules" from the Festival Plaza prior to attending the event.
- Players must submit Team Sheets at the start of the tournament that matches the player's Pokémon, items, and moves as they appear in the Battle Team. They must use the this team during the entire tournament.

3.3.1. Untethered Time Limits
- Untethered tournaments should use the following time limits:
  - Game Enforced
    - Team Preview: 1 minute 30 seconds
    - Move time limit: 45 seconds
    - Player time: 10 minutes

- Organizer or Judge Enforced Match Time Limits
  - Single game: 20 minutes + three turns
  - Best-of-three games: 50 minutes + three turns
  - Players may take notes at any time during a turn.

3.4. Match Resolution
- Players are unable to resolve a match with an intentional draw (ID).
- A player wins by making their opponent's final Pokémon faint.
- If both players' Pokémon faint during the last turn of a match, the player whose Pokémon faints last wins the game.

3.4.1. Resolving Time Outs
- The player time will automatically count down the time left in the game.
- A player who runs out of time will lose at the end of the turn.
- If both players run out of time on the same turn the game will automatically determine the winner using the following conditions in hierarchical order. This should also be applied by the tournament staff for any game that is not finished when match time is called and the final turn has resolved:
  1. Whoever has the most Pokémon remaining wins.
  2. If both players have the same number of Pokémon remaining, the player with the highest ratio of total HP remaining / total maximum HP for all Pokémon in his or her party wins.
     - (Current HP of remaining Pokémon) / (Maximum HP of all four Pokémon brought to battle)
  3. If there is no clear winner from conditions 1 or 2, then the Player with the highest total HP remaining wins.
  4. If there is still no clear winner, the game will be a draw.

3.4.2. Resolving Best-of-Three
- Best-of-Three Matches
  - Use the following criteria, in order, to determine the outcome of a match that is unresolved after any given game has ended. After one of the criteria has been met, none of the others are applied.
    - GAME 1:
      - The players proceed to Game 2.
    - GAME 2:
      - If the winner of Game 2 also won Game 1, that player wins the match. If the winner of Game 2 did not win Game 1, or either game ended in a tie, players proceed to Game 3.
      - During Swiss rounds, if players are tied after Game 2 has been completed and match time has been called, players will play a Sudden Death game. This will only occur if there is a tie during Swiss rounds after two games are played.
    - GAME 3:
      - The winner of Game 3 wins the match if there were no ties. If there was a tie in one game continue to play games until one player has more wins than their opponent. If there was a tie in two games the player who won the single game wins the match.

- During Single Elimination, if players have won the same number of games after either Game 2 or Game 3 have completed and match time has been called, players will play a Sudden Death game.

3.4.3. Sudden Death
- During Sudden Death, players begin a new game. Players are required to gain an advantage in number of remaining Pokémon over their opponent. Tournament staff will evaluate the game at the end of each turn to determine if an advantage has been gained. After each turn has been completed, the tournament staff will determine the number of Pokémon that each player has remaining.
  - If both players have the same number of Pokémon remaining at the end of the turn, the game continues for another turn.
  - If a player has more remaining Pokémon than the opponent at the end of any turn, that player wins the game.

Illegal Pokémon

4.1. Illegally Manipulated Pokémon
- The use of external devices, such as a mobile app, to modify or create items or Pokémon in a player's Battle Team is expressly forbidden. Players found to have Pokémon or items that have been tampered with may be disqualified from competition, regardless of whether the Pokémon or items belong to that player or were traded for.

4.2. Electronic Hack Checking
- A player's Battle Team may be checked at any time for illegal Pokémon using an electronic hack check.
- If you are unable to connect to the Internet due to device error or are blacklisted from game online functionality you will not be able to participate in the event.

4.3. Manual Hack Checking
- A player's Battle Team may be manually checked by an organizer or a judge for known hacks as outlined in the appendix below. Only hacks outlined in the Manual Hack Checking Appendix or uncovered through the electronic hack check may be penalized.

4.4. Reporting Suspected Hacks
- Suspected new hacks should be reported to Pokémon Organized Play (POP) through Customer Support – support.pokemon.com

5. Manual Hack Checking Appendix

This appendix outlines known hacks which are not currently caught by the electronic hack check.

5.1. Case 1 – Severe Tier 2
- Any Alola Pokémon with a move that cannot be learned prior to the launch of Pokémon Bank in 2017.
- Any Alola Pokémon with Hidden Abilities that cannot be obtained through normal gameplay.

5.2. Case 2 – Severe Tier 2
- Any Legendary or Mythical Pokémon (with the black clover) that has Hidden Power as a Fighting-type move.

5.3. Case 3 – Severe Tier 1
- Any of these Alola Pokédex numbers (with the black clover) that is also shiny
  - No. 285–288
  - No. 293–299

5.4. Case 4 – Severe Tier 1
- Any Pokémon that lists "From: Nursery Helpers" on its summary screen and that is contained in a Master Ball or a Cherish Ball.

5.5. Case 5 – Severe Tier 1
- Any of these Pokémon (with the black clover) that has the following real level.
- No. 076 under Lv. 54
- No. 078 under Lv. 54

6. Penalty Guidelines
6.1. Penalty Types
- Caution
  - Verbal warning to inform the player that they did something wrong.
- Warning
  - Must be reported to POP by the Head Judge or Tournament Organizer of the event in which they occur.
- Game Loss
  - Game loss for the current game (or next immediate game in best of three). If the penalty is issued between rounds, the penalty will be applied to the player's next game.
- Disqualification
  - Players who receive this penalty are removed from the tournament and become ineligible to receive any prizes.
6.2. Game Play Error
- Minor
  - Holding/Moving your game system in a way that results in a fixable frozen match delay

- Double Frozen Game State – If both players' game systems are stuck in an unfixable frozen game state and it cannot be determined which player's Game Card or system is responsible for the frozen state, both players will receive a tie for that game.
  - Attempting to view your opponent's screen to gain an advantage
    - Recommended Penalty
      - Tier 1 – Caution
      - Tier 2 – Warning
      - Tier 3 – Game Loss for the current game (or next game in best of three)
- Major
  - Removal of Game Card mid-game
  - Loss of power to game system
  - Holding/Moving your game system in a way that results in an unfixable frozen game state
    - Recommended penalty
      - Tier 1 – Game loss for the current game.
- Severe
  - Pokémon or item that does not match the team list.
    - Recommended Penalty
      - Tier 1 – Remove incorrect Pokémon or item from party and apply a game loss. Also use if Manual Hack Checking Appendix Case 3, 4 or 5 apply.
      - Tier 2 – If fewer than 4 Pokémon remain, apply a game loss and disqualify player from event. Also use if Manual Hack Checking Appendix Case 1 or 2 apply.

All rules in this document take precedence over the General Event Rules document. General Event Rules still apply where there is no contradicting information.