



How to Organize and Run Your Play! Pokémon League

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General League Rules

Welcome to the **Hoenn Gym** League cycle! We are very happy that you have elected to run this new league cycle. The Pokémon League is a great way for players to get together in a casual setting and make new friends, tune decks, and earn cool prizes.

Pokémon Leagues must be run in a clean, safe, public location. While we prefer leagues to be run in game stores, we realize that it is not always possible. Libraries, community centers, and malls all make great alternate locations. The most important thing to ask yourself when selecting a league location is, “Will my players feel comfortable playing here?”

1. Applying for a league

If there is a need for a league in your area and you decide to organize one yourself, there are a few things you will want to know first.

1.1 Create your Trainer Club account

Of course the very first thing anyone who is going to take part in the Play! Pokémon program will need is a Pokémon Trainer Club account. Setting up an account is as easy as going to [Pokemon.com](http://pokemon.com), clicking the “Join Now!” message in the upper-right corner of the page, and following the subsequent instructions.

1.2 Obtaining a Player ID as an organizer

In order to apply to run a league or a tournament, you will need to have a Player ID so you can activate the Organized Play portion of your account. Fortunately, getting your Organized Play account is easy!

- Use our Event Locator and find an event near you.
- Attend a league or tournament, where the organizer will give you a Player ID card.
- Follow the steps on the card to activate your full account.

You're done!

If you discover that there are no events near you, please contact us via <http://support.pokemon.com> with the kind of events you intend to apply for, plus any information on the venue and your plans that you feel will be helpful.

As long as:

- We can confirm that obtaining a Player ID near you is not feasible
- You have provided detailed and satisfactory information about your venue and league plans
- Your country takes part in our Play! Pokémon program

...we will review your request and determine whether or not we will assign a Player ID manually. Please note that you will need to log in using your Trainer Club account information in order to submit your request.

1.3 Application

The application itself may be one of the easiest parts of the whole process!

- 1) Simply log into your Trainer Club account and then click “View Profile.”
- 2) From your profile, select the “My Play! Pokémon” tab.
- 3) Using the Organized Play menu, click the “Apply for a New League” link in the Organizer Information section.
- 4) Fill out the form providing us with a clear idea of your plans and the suitability of your intended venue and submit it to us.

Tip: The best league applications have details about the venue’s play space, the benefits of its location, and the applicant’s plans to advertise and grow the league. This is your chance to impress us with your communication skills and ability to plan—make the most of it!

1.4 Background check

The Pokémon Company International is committed to helping to create a safe environment for children who participate in tournaments affiliated with Pokémon. To further that goal, The Pokémon Company International will be conducting regular and random background checks on people involved in running Pokémon tournaments.

Once you have submitted your league application, you will see a pop-up asking if you are willing to submit to a background check as well as a link to the background check paperwork.

Tip: It is worth noting that all League Owners and Tournament Organizers must submit to a background check in order to take part in our program. We completely respect any individual’s decision to choose not to submit to our background check process, but we ask for the same understanding when we choose not to grant those individuals’ requests to be organizers for our program.

When filling out the background check paperwork, be certain that you do not neglect to fill out all required fields. When paperwork is missing important details such as a person’s Player ID or Social Security Number, it can result in significant delays.

2. Scheduling and setting up your first league season

Once your background check results get back to us and your league application is approved, you will be notified via the email address you used to create your Trainer Club account. Once that happens, head to your “OP Tools Dashboard” and use it to get to your league page.

***Tip:** You will find OP Tools Dashboard on the same menu you used to apply for your league. Through the course of managing your league, you will be using the OP Tools Dashboard often, so we recommend that you bookmark it/ add it to your favorites for quick and easy access later.*

From your league page, you will see options to first add your play times, and then place your first order.

***Tip:** It is important to note that until you take those first two steps, no one will be able to find your league using our site's "Find League" tool. In fact, any league without upcoming league sessions scheduled cannot be found for the same reason, so it is important to always keep your schedule up to date!*

2.1 Scheduling play times

Picking appropriate dates and times is critical. It is important to make your league sessions accessible to as many players as possible. Weekday evenings or weekends are generally ideal for running your league sessions. We recommend at least one 2- to 4-hour session per week.

If another location in your area is also running a Pokémon League, we suggest getting together with the League Owner or Leader to ensure that league sessions don't conflict. Remember, the idea is to provide a fun place for people to play, not to "compete" with other league locations. We encourage players to participate at more than one league location so they can earn more rewards for playing Pokémon. You never know—working with other league locations in your area may even increase your attendance. Some of our largest and most enthusiastic player bases exist in areas where leagues cooperate to promote Pokémon!

2.2 Placing your first order for league materials

If this is your very first season, your maximum kit will contain enough materials for 10 players. You will want to make sure that the shipping address you have listed includes all necessary information needed for delivery, and note that the shipping address does not always have to be the same as the venue address. In cases like that, you may want to go ahead and save it as one of your favorite addresses.

We understand that some leagues will see rapid growth even in their first season. If you do not have enough materials to take care of all of your players, please make sure that you add the players to your roster so that we are able to see your league's growth. **Do not use the "Add Report" tool until the league season is over and you are ready to report the final results!**

Once your players are all added to your roster, contact us via <http://support.pokemon.com> in order to request more materials.

***Tip:** Be aware that if you have a large number of Masters or Senior Division players not signed up, or if you have to make this request often without showing an improvement in the number of players who are activating their Trainer Club accounts, we may have to turn you down from time to time. At the end of the day, the best way to make sure you have enough materials for your players is to encourage and assist them in activating their Trainer Club accounts with their Player IDs.*

2.3 Advertising your league

Be sure to post the date and time of each league session so that your players know when to show up. If your league is held at a location that does not allow you to put up flyers or clings, you can find a downloadable league flyer in the Organizer Resources section of your Organizer Information menu. We recommend making copies of this flyer and, with your location's permission, leaving them where potential league members can find them.

Many leagues also have web pages or even groups using social networking sites in order to coordinate with players and keep them in the loop about current league news. Be creative, and make sure that you keep the lines of communication open with your players in order to keep your league healthy and growing.

3. League materials

3.1 Quantities

Every five weeks or so, new league materials become available. If you've run any previous league seasons, your maximum kit order will be based on the number of players at your venue with fully active Pokémon Trainer Club accounts (PTC accounts). A league will always receive enough materials for all players with fully active PTC accounts, but there are two other factors that can affect the amount of materials that a league can receive.

3.1.1 Rounding up

When calculating the amount of materials to send to a league, we will always round up to cover the number of players with fully active PTC accounts. Because league supplies are shipped in increments of 10, a league with a total of 11 players who all have fully active PTC accounts would receive enough materials for 20 players.

3.1.2 Players without fully active PTC accounts

We understand that new players will not always activate their accounts in time for them to affect your league materials orders. In an effort to help you keep up with a growing player base, we will also send up to 50% more materials (rounded up) than we would send if we only counted players with active PTC accounts. It is important to note that these extra supplies will never result in having **more** materials than you need to cover your total players reported.

This means that if you report 70 players at the end of the first season, and only 32 of those players have active PTC accounts, you will be shipped supplies for 50 players.

It also means that if you report 80 players at the end of the first season, and 70 of those players have active PTC accounts, you will only be shipped supplies for 80 players.

3.2 Kit Contents

Lay out all of the league materials you received to familiarize yourself with them. This will make the rest of this document much easier to understand.

Each season features items themed for that season. Some are intended as marketing materials and some are prizes for your players. These items are:

- Season-specific scorecards (one per player, delivered in packs of 10)
- Promotional TCG Online code card (one per player, delivered in packs of 10)
- Promotional TCG promo card (two per player, delivered in packs of 20)
- Promotional Gym Patch (one per player, delivered in packs of 10)

Each season, players will receive a new scorecard, which will be used to track their progress during that season. For safety's sake, it is recommended that you hold on to each player's scorecard until that player has earned all of his or her prizes for that season. For your convenience, we recommend using a 4" x 6" index card container. These are relatively inexpensive and can be obtained at any office supply store. Should a player decide to keep his or her own scorecard, you should remind that player that you may not be able to replace it if it's lost.

Additionally, a league roster can be found in the Organizer Resources section of your Organizer Information menu. This downloadable PDF will help you track your players during a season and will assist greatly in speeding up your reporting.

These kits are offered with the understanding that they will be used as directed. **League Owners and Leaders who are found to be misusing league kits will lose the ability to host future Play! Pokémon events and may be suspended from the Play! Pokémon program entirely.**

4. Tracking players

4.1 Player registration

When a player comes to your league for the first time, record his or her name, Player ID, and date of birth. If that player has never added a Player ID to his or her PTC account, assign a Player ID card. Write the player's name on the Player ID card, remove it and the "Are you ready to play" section from the attached top stub, and give it to the player. Because the top stub should have the player's name and date of birth recorded, you should retain it for your records.

If the player is under the age of 13, his or her parents will need to follow the instructions printed on the back of the Player ID card and our website before the player's account will be fully activated.

If the player is 13 or older, the player should be encouraged to visit www.pokemon.com to register for a Pokémon Trainer Club account online.

***Tip:** If you do not have any Player ID cards to issue to new players, you can find the "Order More Player IDs" section of the Organizer Information menu. You have the option to order a booklet that can be mailed to you, or download a booklet that you can print on demand.*

Should you decide that you would like to participate in the Pokémon League as a player, you may play in your own league. If you choose to do this, your organizer responsibilities **must** take priority over your role as a player.

Once a player has been entered on your roster and has his or her scorecard, that player is ready to play!

It is a good idea to add players to your online league roster using the “Add Players” tool on your league page in order to save time later.

4.2 League fees

In some cases it will be necessary to charge players a small fee to participate in your league. Whether you collect this fee on a weekly basis or up front is entirely up to you. This fee should go toward covering the cost of venue fees or any additional prize support that you want to provide for your league. Since fees will vary from location to location, we recommend informing players what their money is going toward to aid in heading off complaints.

5. League play

The Pokémon League is not run like a sanctioned tournament. Players are responsible for finding someone to play, as they will not be paired by the person running the event. There are no rounds like in a tournament. Players can play as many or as few matches as they want, though leagues may limit how soon players are able to earn league prizes. Players may not play the same opponent twice in a row, if attendance allows. Prizes are based on the number of games that are played, not the number of games that a player wins.

5.1 Pokémon Trading Card Game play

League seasons can be run using any deck format you choose, though players’ decks must meet standard deck construction rules. It is a good idea to survey your players to determine their interest in formats before deciding. You should choose a format that is interesting to your players. If you have mostly new players, you should run your league using the Standard format, which allows decks to contain only cards from recent Pokémon TCG sets. For more information on different formats, check the Rules & Resources section of your Player Information menu.

The use of counterfeit cards is strictly prohibited when participating in a Pokémon League. Counterfeit cards are never allowed at Play! Pokémon events. If you find a player using counterfeit cards during a league session, that player is not to receive credit for the games he or she plays while using those cards.

***Tip:** In many cases, new players won’t even be aware of the fact that their cards are counterfeit. New players should never feel as though they are in trouble for showing up to your league with counterfeit cards. Take the time to explain that counterfeit cards are*

not allowed in official events, and help them learn how to spot and avoid counterfeit cards in the future.

5.2 Pokémon video game play

Pokémon Leagues also allow player to track games played vs. other players using Pokémon video games such as *Pokémon Omega Ruby* or *Pokémon Alpha Sapphire*. When battling using one of the Pokémon video games, players should agree ahead of time what rules they will play by. Solo video game play is not rewarded at league—only battles against other players count. Any player known to be using hacked Pokémon in league play is not to receive credit for the games he or she plays while using those Pokémon.

5.3 Tournaments during league sessions

It is very important to Pokémon Organized Play (POP) that players understand the difference between league play and sanctioned tournament play. Leagues are casual play environments, whereas tournaments are a more competitive setting. Leagues reward players for playing games, win or lose; tournaments reward players for winning. We are determined to provide events for players at all levels of competition, from casual league settings to the competitive Championship Series. However, we do realize that some players would rather participate in a more structured format, such as a tournament, while still earning league stamps.

Should your players decide that they would like to participate in a tournament but still earn league stamps for their matches, you may hold any non sanctioned tournament during a league session. Players who do not want to participate in a tournament that is run during a league session should still be allowed to participate in the standard league format during that session.

Tournaments run during league sessions may not be sanctioned. This will prevent your tournaments from appearing in the tournament locator, creating confusion for players who are looking for a tournament but are not members of your league. Additionally, prize support has already been delegated for your event via your league kits. Should you decide to reward additional prizes above and beyond the stamps that players earn on their scorecards, these prizes are to be provided by the League Owner or Leader, not POP. You should *never* award league stamps for matches played in a sanctioned event.

6. Scoring

Players earn one stamp for playing any Pokémon Trading Card Game or video game match. Stamps are tracked on each player's scorecard. Stamps are only accumulated for the current season or previous seasons still supported. No stamps may be added to the upcoming season's scorecard before that season has begun.

Each season's scorecard will list optional challenges that can earn players a bonus stamp at the end of the match.

If you find that your players are having a hard time earning their prizes, you may want to consider varying the reward structure to keep your players interested. Any variation in the reward structure should be done in a fair and consistent manner for all of your players. Some examples include:

- Hold a “Double Stamps” session the last week of a season.
- Award bonus stamps for playing against someone who has already earned all of the prizes for the season.

That said, players should be discouraged from working the system to earn additional stamps. If you feel that players are abusing the system, you may opt to not award League stamps for their matches.

7. Awarding prizes

Promotional TCG Online code card

Players have the opportunity to earn a promo TCG Online code card each season. Each of these code cards will unlock a preset selection of digital league promo cards.

Players can go to the following site to get set up for the Pokémon TCG Online:

<http://www.pokemontcg.com>

Promotional foil cards

Players have the opportunity to earn up to two of the promo cards offered each season. These cards are exclusive to Pokémon Organized Play.

Promotional Gym Patches

Players will also be able to earn cool Gym Patches. Every season of the Hoenn cycle will include a Patch with the image of the current season’s Gym badge on it. Players who actually reach *four* Poké Balls on their scorecard will earn one of these exclusive patches!

Earning prizes at league

Players can acquire the prizes listed above by earning stamps on their scorecards. The first two times a player earns enough stamps on his or her scorecard to reach the Poké Ball image, that player earns one Pokémon promo card. The third time a player earns enough stamps on his or her scorecard to reach the Poké Ball image, that player earns the TCG Online promo card. The fourth time a player earns enough stamps on his or her scorecard to reach the Poké Ball image, that player earns the Gym Patch for that season.

While each scorecard will have a total of eight Poké Ball images (four on the TCG track and four on the video game track), a player can only earn a maximum of four prizes. These are earned regardless of whether the player reaches a Poké Ball image on the TCG track or the video game track.

8. Earning previous seasons prizes

As new players join your league, they should be given the opportunity to earn awards from previous seasons, should you still have prizes remaining. Additionally, any of your regular players who have not earned all of their prizes for previous seasons should be given the opportunity to earn them. Be sure that you keep previous seasons' prizes in a safe place so that they can be awarded to new players as they earn them.

Stamps earned during the current season are awarded to players on a one-for-one basis for each previous season until that player earns his or her league promos from that previous season or until you run out of prizes.

Any leftover awards from previous seasons should be earned on a first-come, first-served basis by players earning previous seasons' prizes.

9. Reporting the existing season and ordering for the upcoming season

You will be able to report your current season and order materials for your next league season from about a week before the current season ends until about a week after the new season starts.

If you do not report and order in that time, the option to do so may no longer be available.

9.1 Reporting

If you have been keeping up with your league growth and adding new players to the roster on your league page after every league session, reporting your league will be as simple as reviewing your league roster and using the "Add Report" tool to confirm your league activity for the season. Don't get caught entering your entire roster the night before the league reporting window closes—the "Add Player" tool is there to help you!

Tip:** Players who have been entered to your roster in the past will be available on a list of past players that can be sorted by column. All you have to do to add them to the current season is select them and **update** your roster. **This list will reset at the start of a new cycle, but that means you should only have to enter the details for your regular players once a year.

Pokémon Organized Play is always looking at ways to improve our programs. To this end, we require a certain degree of reporting at the end of each season. The only mandatory information that we request is a Player ID, name, and date of birth for each player participating in your league, as well as which seasons those players have participated in. Collecting this information is beneficial to your league players, as they will earn additional prizes through the Player Rewards Program by participating in the league.

Reporting is done online through the league page. You cannot order league kits for an upcoming season until you have reported the current season's results. This means that you need to report each season's results one week prior to the end of that season if you want to receive your kits in time for the start of the following league season.

As noted previously, the amount of materials that are sent are primarily based on the number of players who have fully active PTC accounts. To ensure that you have enough supplies for your league attendees, be sure that you accurately report the results of each season and that as many of your players as possible get signed up for active Pokémon Trainer Club accounts.

9.2 Ordering for the upcoming season

Ordering for each new season will open two weeks before the start of that season. To ensure that you get your kits in time for the new season, be sure to use the “Enter Order” tool as early as possible. Failure to report previous seasons’ results may have adverse effects on your ability to order future seasons.

10. League Challenges

League Challenges are Premier Events that allow players to earn both Play! Points and Championship Points.

10.1 Who can organize the first League Challenges?

POP has looked at all active leagues and scored them based on a combination of their tenure and how reliably their participation has been reported. The leagues that scored best will have the first opportunity to host our new League Challenge events, but in 2015 we have added significantly more leagues to our LC approved list.

All League Owners who are connected to an approved league will find a “Create League Challenges” button for each season on their league page. Each league is only allowed to sanction on LC event for each league season.

If you are a League Owner or Leader for a selected league and you also have the Tournament Organizer role, please work together to determine who will be the one to sanction your League Challenge tournament each season. A league that creates multiple League Challenges in the same season may lose its ability to run such events in the future. Anyone who attempts to sanction League Challenges for a league that is not approved to hold such events may lose the ability to organize Pokémon events in the future.

10.2 How do I sanction a League Challenge?

We have come a long way since League Challenges have been launched. As long as your league has the “Create League Challenge” button and you are the League Owner or a League Leader with sanctioning permissions, you may simply click that button and fill in the required fields.

10.2.1 Tournament name

As always, please be sure that the name you choose for your event is family friendly and accurate.

10.3 League Challenge prizes

In addition to Play! Points and Championship Points, League Challenge events will be able to give out special promo cards for 1st–4th place in each age division. These promo cards will be shipped with league materials for that season. Promo cards that are not awarded at the event should be destroyed.

10.4 Event reporting

League Challenge event results will need to be reported within 7 days of the day the tournament was held.

Please note that due to the number of these events being held, POP will not be able to dedicate any significant amount of time attempting to fix TOM files. In the event of an issue that makes it impossible to upload accurate League Challenge event results, it will be your responsibility to explain to your players why they will not be receiving Championship Points for your event.