



2021 World Cup of Pokémon VGC – Ruleset

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1. Tournament format

The 2021 World Cup of Pokémon VGC (from now onwards, World Cup) is a tournament hosted by Victory Road (victoryroadvgc.com) aiming to showcase and promote talented players and high-quality matches of Pokémon VGC from players all around the world.

For the first time, the tournament features 55 different teams, representing countries, nations and territories of all Europe, Asia, Africa, Oceania, and the Americas.

1.1 Structure

The tournament will play out in three stages:

1. **Qualifiers:** all 55 teams will be randomly drafted in groups (there will be 9 groups of 3 teams each, and 7 groups of 4 teams each for a total amount of 16 groups) and will play in a round-robin format, where each team will be paired against all other teams of their group once. All pairings will be 8v8 sets of matches, with the possible results being win (+3 points), tie (+1 point) and loss (+0 points) for each team. Each set will be to the best-of-3 games (Bo3). At the end of the stage, the top two teams of each group will qualify for the group stage.
2. **Group stage:** the 32 remaining teams will be divided in 8 groups of 4 teams each, based on their standings from the qualifier round. Once again, teams will play in a round-robin format, where each team will be paired against all other teams of their group once. Results from the qualifiers round are set to zero before group stage, that is, they are only considered for seeding purposes.

Teams will be seeded as follows:

- **Group I:** 1A, 1E, 2I, 2M
- **Group II:** 1I, 1M, 2A, 2E
- **Group III:** 1B, 1F, 2J, 2N
- **Group IV:** 1J, 1N, 2B, 2F
- **Group V:** 1C, 1G, 2K, 2O
- **Group VI:** 1K, 1O, 2C, 2G
- **Group VII:** 1D, 1H, 2L, 2P
- **Group VIII:** 1L, 1P, 2D, 2H

All pairings will be 8v8 sets of matches with the possible results being win (+3 points), tie (+1 point) and loss (+0 points) for each team. Each set will be to the best-of-3 games (Bo3).

3. **Play-offs:** the 16 remaining teams will be seeded into a single-elimination bracket based on the results of the group stage. Teams will be seeded as follows:

○ 1-I vs 2-VIII	○ 1-II vs 2-VII
○ 1-IV vs 2-V	○ 1-III vs 2-VI
○ 1-VI vs 2-III	○ 1-V vs 2-IV
○ 1-VII vs 2-II	○ 1-VIII vs 2-I

All pairings will be 7v7 sets of matches with the possible results being win (advance onto the next round) and loss (eliminated from the tournament) for each team. Each set will be to the best-of-3 games (Bo3).

1.2 Schedule

The schedule for the tournament is as follows:

- **Qualifiers draft:** July 31 (Sat) at 6 pm UTC, streamed live on twitch.tv/victoryroadvgc and commented by Lou Cromie and Lee Provost.
- **Qualifiers:** from August 2 (Mon) at 6 pm UTC, to August 22 (Sun) at 11.59 pm UTC.
- **Group stage:** from August 23 (Mon) at 6 pm UTC, to September 12 (Sun) at 11.59 pm UTC.
- **Play-offs:** from September 13 (Mon) at 6 pm UTC, to October 10 (Sun) at 11.59 pm UTC.

These are the key deadlines for each week:

- **Line-ups:** each team must send a valid line-up of players for a week before it starts. The deadline will be on the previous week's **Sunday at 11.59 pm UTC**.
- **Pairings:** the staff will post all pairings for every week publicly on the tournament's hub on **each week's Monday at 6.00 pm UTC**. These pairings will respect the line-up order used by team managers.
- **Results:** after a match between two players is over, **the winning player and the team manager from the winning player's team** are responsible for reporting the match outcome and the 6 Pokémon used **by both players on the #results over on the World Cup Discord server**. All results for all matches must be submitted no later than **each week's Sunday at 11.59 pm UTC**. The #results channel is open to both players and managers.

Regarding results posting, please keep in mind:

- The staff will **update daily** the tournament hub with all new match results reported. Updates will be announced on Twitter (@VGCVictoryRoad).
- The results of any matches to be streamed by Victory Road will be kept **secret** until past the stream to keep the excitement going. We kindly ask all players to comply with this and **not report them on the #results channel**.

2. Participating teams

For the 2021 World Cup, 55 teams will compete. For the sake of convenience, they have been grouped as follows:

- **Europe and Africa:** Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The Netherlands, South Africa, and the United Kingdom.
- **The Americas:** Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Uruguay, United States, and Venezuela.
- **Asia and Oceania:** China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, Australia, and New Zealand.

2.1 Eligibility criteria

Players may apply to join any given team representing a country or region provided they:

- **Were born or hold citizenship rights** in said country/region or any of its territories.
- **Are currently living** in said country/region or any of its territories.
- **Both player's biological parents** were born or hold citizenship rights in said country/region or any of its territories.
- **In addition, OCI** (Overseas Citizen of India) are allowed to join the tournament and play for team India.

Players may only apply for a team provided they can prove at least one of the above criteria as true. Players eligible for multiple countries are free to choose where to apply but may only play for one team. Any applications not meeting the eligibility criteria will be **dismissed**.

2.2 Permanence for future events

Once a player joins any given team representing a country or territory, they are **locked** to said team for any future country-based events hosted by Victory Road.

This rule **gets priority** over any other eligibility criteria for players having participated in the 2020 European Cup of VGC by Victory Road, as well as any events in the future after the 2021 World Cup.

Players who are eligible for multiple teams and are affected by this rule are free to change teams **after skipping the first country-based event happening after the last one they took part in**. This means that, if player A played for team Austria in the 2020 European Cup and wants to now play for team Germany, they must skip the next country-based event hosted by Victory Road, in this case, the 2021 World Cup. Consequently, they will be free to play for Germany in the next event provided they comply with the eligibility criteria applicable for Germany on said future event. This rule is created to avoid abuse by players eligible from multiple countries as well as ensure a sense of community and belonging.

3. Match procedures

All matches must be played in ***Pokémon Sword* or *Pokémon Shield*** for the **Nintendo Switch** family of systems, using the game's **Series 10 ruleset** through Wi-Fi connection. Matches must be played using the console, and Pokémon Showdown or other simulators are not allowed. If you experience connection issues repeatedly, address any TO available to sort things out.

Highlight matches from all weeks of competition will be selected by the staff to be either streamed on [Victory Road's Twitch channel](#) or recorded to [upload on our YouTube channel](#). In both cases, we will communicate with the players affected and ask them to record their games using their own capture cards and provide us with the footage later. The use of the game's spectator mode through a "fake" LAN connection is reserved as a resource if capture cards are not available.

All players joining the tournament are expected to comply with having their games recorded and/or streamed for Victory Road's platforms. No webcams or personal information besides the name and provided picture will be shown on screen, unless clearly stated and agreed otherwise.

Matches **not selected** to be streamed by Victory Road **can be streamed** by any of the players taking part. However, we ask you to:

1. **State the name of the tournament** on the stream name.
2. If you're streaming on Twitch, **set the chat to "Emoji Mode"** during the matches. Any scouting or similar issues arising will not be addressed if the user has a different mode for the chat.
3. Refrain from streaming your matches from the World Cup while one of our streams is live.

4. Line-ups and pairings

Each team must send a valid line-up of players for a week before it starts. The deadline will be on the previous week's **Sunday at 11.59 pm UTC**. That is, if round 1 starts on August 2, you need to submit your week 1 line-up by August 1 at 11.59 pm UTC.

The staff will post all pairings for every week publicly on the tournament's hub on **each week's Monday at 6 pm UTC**. These pairings will respect the line-up order used by team managers and will be secret until the moment of publication.

Players are expected to get in touch with their opponents and schedule in their matches as soon as possible, preferable, from Monday to Wednesday. Matches can be played at any time during the week **before Sunday at 11.59 pm UTC**.

4.1 Substitute players

Managers are allowed to **substitute up to two (2) players** in their line-ups in case any unexpected issues arise, and they are unable to play for the week. This will be only possible **until Thursday at 11.59 pm UTC** on each round. For any other cases past this deadline please refer to our staff but keep in mind the rules are clear.

5. Reporting results

Players are expected to report the results of their matches **on the World Cup Discord as soon as the match is over**. By default, **the winning player** is responsible of reporting:

- **Score** (2-0 or 2-1) for the best-of-three set.
- **Team** (the 6 Pokémon used, including forms or variants, and yes, we also want to know the colour of your Gastrodon!) of both players involved.

6. Connection issues

If a connection error occurs during a match:

- Players will be allowed to consider the in-game situation of the match. This means that the player who would've won without the disconnect can win by mutual agreement.
- If players do not agree on a winner, **BOTH must report** the situation **to their managers and to any TOs available**.
- The player deemed to be the cause of the disconnect (even if it's because of their internet connection) will be assigned a **loss for that game**. This will be determined via a discussion with both players and a review of the screenshot/picture of the disconnect message each player receives.
- **BOTH players are required** to take said screenshot/picture and submit it to the TO they have contacted.
- For matches conducted through LAN connection, leniency measures will apply, and players will be encouraged to replay their match, if possible, by either keeping the same leads/choice of 4 Pokémon and/or repeating their sequence of moves. This will be determined via a discussion with both players.

For any other instances not covered here, we will follow the latest update of the Play! Pokémon rules.

7. Tie breakers

In case two teams are tied at the **same amount of match points** (referred on the website tables as "PTS") at the end of qualifier stage or group stage, the following tiebreakers will be sequentially applied:

1. **Number of sets won:** the team having won the most best-of-three sets throughout the entire stage advances. On the website tables, this is indicated as "SW".
2. **Set differential:** the team having the highest differential of sets (that is, having won the most best-of-three sets throughout the entire stage after considering the set losses) advances. On the website tables, this is indicated as "SD".
3. **Number of games won:** the team having won the most individual games throughout the entire stage advances.
4. **Games differential:** the team having the highest differential of games (that is, having won the most individual games throughout the entire stage after considering the game losses) advances.
5. **Head-to-head:** between two teams tied at this point, the one having won their 8v8 encounter during the regular course of the group stage advances.
6. **3v3 tie-breaker round:** if the 8v8 head-to-head between the two teams resulted in a tie (4-4), both teams must select three players out of their roster to play a tie-breaker round against the other team. The exact scheduling of this and the remainder of the tournament will be discussed with all teams involved.

8. Penalties

This is a non-comprehensive list of penalties for possible scenarios that may come up. Any non-specified scenarios will be evaluated case by case by the TOs.

- **Late line-up:** if a manager fails to send in a weekly line-up by the deadline, the latest line-up submitted will be used. Failure to provide line-ups on two or more consecutive weeks will result in two (2) random set losses applied on each week without line-ups. Failure to provide line-ups for the first week will result on random players being selected by the staff and one (1) random set loss applied.
- **Late shows/No shows:** agreeing on a date and time to carry out each match is up to both players. However, players not showing up to their match after **15 minutes** from the agreed time will be given a game 1 loss. The player waiting must prove they were present at the agreed time and tried to reach out for any penalties to be applied. Delaying the start of the game over a reasonable time span after showing up will also count as a late show. We will evaluate all situations in a case-by-case basis. After the 15 min and game 1 loss penalty is applied, the player not showing up is allowed **10 extra minutes** to come and play the remaining game(s). Failure to do so will result in an activity win for their opponent (2-0 for the player waiting).
- **Ghosting:** having anyone but the two players themselves carrying out a Bo3 set is strictly forbidden. No help must be provided by team managers, other team members or players alien to the tournament. Failure to comply with this rule may result in the player(s) affected being disqualified from the tournament.
- **Team changes:** any player found to have modified any of their team's Pokémon, Items, moves or any other characteristics during a Bo3 set may be disqualified and will receive a loss for the current game.
- **Match outcome manipulation:** coercion, bribery, or other means to determine the outcome of a match besides regular gameplay are strictly prohibited. Any player being found guilty of doing so will be disqualified.
- **Replacement of disqualified players:** teams will not be allowed to replace disqualified players with other players not being rostered at the beginning unless the team ends up with less than 8 players (for the group stage) or 7 players (for the top cut).
- **Match completion:** this tournament is aimed to be a showdown of top play from the best players from all around the world. As such, we aim to have all matches played in every round, despite a team having already lost their round. Any teams found not completing their matches will be subject to a warning and other penalties may apply at the TOs discretion.
- **Behavior:** all players are subject to the [Play! Pokémon standards of conduct](#).
- **Bans:** players with a ban from entering Victory Road events that affects any point of the tournament (from June 21 to October 10, 2021) will not be allowed to enter for any team. A player competing in the World Cup and receiving a ban from Victory Road tournaments during the duration of it will also be immediately removed, even if that ban was applied at another event. Team managers will be allowed to replace said player for their weekly line-up using one of the two substitute slots allotted weekly per team, ignoring deadlines but with preference for the opponent's availability. If both slots were already used, the team will receive a set loss.

9. Contact info

You can find how to contact any of the staff behind the tournament here.

- **Tournament organizers (TOs):**
 - David Olivar (d.avid#8639, @Davocyte)
 - Rubén Yanguas (Yanguas#8072, @Y4NGS)
 - Alberto Núñez (Ax#2258, @_Ax13_)
 - *Please keep in mind there is not a single head TO for the event, and all decisions and rulings will be taken in consensus.*
- **Scorekeepers:**
 - Abel Martínez (Abel#6918)
 - Nicolás Rodríguez (Nico.#4442, @noco2000ra)
- **Stream producers:**
 - César Peiré (Alrikone#0494, @Alrikone)
 - Sufián Dhiab (Sufi#1990, @DhSufi)
- **Translators:**
 - JP: Taka Maenishi (@taka_na_u)
 - CN: Yihui Xu (@YihuiVGC)
 - KR: Sanghyeon Na (@NashVGC)
- **Casters:**
 - Lou Cromie (@LouThePikachu)
 - Lee Provost (@OsirusVGC)
 - Jamie Boyt (@JamieBoytVGC)
 - Kosta Daidimos (@KoalaT_Kosta)
 - JJ-kun (@imjjkun)
 - Maeve O'Rourke (@MaeveODork)
 - Gabby Snyder (@GabbySnyder)
 - *Full list TBD*
- **Illustrator:** Lucia de Palau (@luciadepalau)
- **Music producer:** Qvilava (@qvilava)
- **Web developer:** Enzo Ferey (@enzo_ferey)