

Pokémon Trading Card Game

Penalty Guidelines for Judges

Ver.1.2

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Purpose of these *Penalty Guidelines for Judges*

This *Pokémon Trading Card Game Penalty Guidelines for Judge* document (henceforth, *Penalty Guidelines*) is intended as a guide for dealing with rule infractions – whether intentional or not – in the context of running a competitive Pokémon Trading Card Game event. These guidelines will detail types of infractions, corresponding penalties, and the reasoning behind them.

The purpose of these *Penalty Guidelines* is to offer players a fair and fun competitive environment, and to ensure the integrity of tournaments.

Your role as a Judge

Judges are expected to make sure rules are being strictly followed, in order to offer players a reliable competitive environment where they can fully focus on their games. That being said, in practice, there will also be situations where Judges might need to make decisions on the spot based on the circumstances and their best judgement.

These *Penalty Guidelines* are intended as a reference and as a complement to the *Pokémon TCG Competitive Floor Rules*, organizing rules and their reasoning, to help Judges make the best ruling decisions.

As Judges and organizers, our aim should always be to provide players with events where they can enjoy playing the Pokémon Trading Card game under shared values of fun, fairness, and mutual respect.

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Section 1: Public and Private Game Information

“Public information” refers to gameplay information both players have access to at any point during the game. “Private information” refers to any game information that is not public.

If a player asks their opponent about public game information, they must answer truthfully.

If an opponent does not comply with a player’s request to check public game information, that player may call for a Judge who will assess the situation.

Examples of public game information include:

- Name or details of face-up cards
- Number of damage counters placed on Pokémon
- Special Conditions on Pokémon
- Current state of any markers
- Number of cards either player has in play, in their deck, Prize cards, discard, hand, Lost Zone, etc.
- Players’ actions in the turn being played
- Active effects that have an impact on the current match

Game information that does not match any of the above, such as specific cards in hand or deck, are not considered public game information – and as such they are *private* game information. Examples of private game information include:

- Specific contents of a player’s hand
- Face-down cards in the deck
- Face-down prize cards

Section 2: Communicating Information Between Players

When communicating about public game information, players must convey that information truthfully.

If a player fails to convey truthful information, whether intentionally or not, they may receive a penalty. However, players have no obligation to answer their opponent’s questions regarding private game information.

If a Judge deems that a player’s actions were clearly based on inaccurate information from their opponent, the Judge may consider rewinding the game state.

▽ Examples of situations where rewinding and/or penalties could be considered:

- When asked how many cards they had in hand a player replied “five”, but they actually had six.
- When asked how much HP their Active Pokémon had remaining a player replied “100”, but it actually had 110 HP remaining.
- When asked what effects were currently affecting an Active Pokémon a player replied “none”, but it was actually affected by an effect saying “this Pokémon can’t attack”.
- A player had two Energy cards stacked together and attached to their Active Pokémon, and they told their opponent there was only one Energy card attached.

Section 3: Non-conventional Play Sequences

When using any effect of a card, players must resolve the effect in the proper order.
Play corresponding to categories 1 or 2 described below may not be allowed.

1. Using several cards at once

Players might not be allowed to use at once several copies of an Item card that searches specific cards in the deck.

Example:

- Not being able to use 2 copies of the Buddy-Buddy Poffin Item at once to search for 4 Basic Pokémon and put them on the Bench at the same time.

2. Switching up the order of effects written on a card

Players can't switch up the order of a sequence of effects, as that might give them access to extra usable information (ex: contents of their deck) they were not supposed to have.

▼ Example of a situation where extra usable information is obtained:

- If a player uses Team Rocket's Nidorina's *Dark Awakening* attack, they should not be able to look through their deck before choosing their Darkness Pokémon.

Cases where skipping or changing some steps of a sequence may be allowed

In cases where it would not change the final result in any way and would not grant players any additional information compared to the proper resolution sequence, skipping or combining some steps may be possible, so long as players communicate with their opponent in a clear way that does not leave room for any confusion.

▼ Example of skipping a shuffling step

- A player uses the Item *Secret Box* to put a Pokémon Tool, a Supporter, a Stadium and the Item *Buddy-Buddy Poffin* into their hand. They are allowed to then immediately use the Item *Buddy-Buddy Poffin* without first shuffling their deck.

▼ Example of steps done simultaneously

- A player is allowed to announce that they'll use their Team Rocket's Orbeetle's *Rocket Brain* Ability several times, and move several damage counters from their Team Rocket's Pokémon to their other Pokémon.

Section 4: Penalties

If a player does not follow the tournament's specific regulations or the rules written in the *Floor Rules*, in the *Penalty Guidelines for Judges*, and in the *Play Guide*, a Judge or Organizer has the authority to assign that player a penalty.

Judges and Organizers assign penalties based on the rules of the event and the degree and context of the infraction. The Master Judge and/or Head Judge and Event Organizer have the final say regarding all penalty rulings. Repeated infractions may lead to heavier penalties.

Types of Penalties and their Applications

* The applications of penalties below (① to ⑤) are just examples.

Similar infractions may incur lighter or more severe penalties, at the discretion of the Judge or Event Organizer.

① Caution

Cautions are given to prevent further, more severe infractions.

This type of penalty may be assigned for light infractions that do not fit the definition of other penalties, but that still could lead into more severe infractions impacting the result of the game.

(Example of infraction)

- Continuing play without waiting for the opponent's confirmation, etc.

② Warning

Warnings may be assigned for infractions that are easily reversible and give little to no advantage to the player who committed them.

(Examples of infractions)

- Accidentally drawing an extra card, but players can tell which was the extra card.
- Benching a Pokémon they shouldn't have been able to and trying to use its Ability.

③ Prize Penalty

Prize Penalties are given in cases where restoring the proper board state proves difficult.

They may also be assigned for repeated offenses that would normally incur a Warning, after a Warning has already been given.

After a player receives a Prize Card penalty from a Judge or Organizer, the offending player's opponent must take fewer Prize cards in order to win that game. The Judge or Organizer, after considering the context of the violation and its impact on the game, decides whether to assign a Single-Prize Penalty or Triple-Prize Penalty.

(Examples of infractions)

- Accidentally drawing an extra card, and it's unclear which was the extra card.
- Accidentally shuffling a card from the hand or discard into the deck without an effect allowing it.
- Accidentally using a second Supporter in a turn and continuing to play in that irregular state.

④ Match Loss

A Match Loss may be issued when a judge or Event Organizer rules that 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. When a Match Loss penalty is issued, the game is recorded as a loss for the player receiving the penalty.

* If both players receive simultaneous Match Loss penalties, the match is recorded as a loss for both players.

(Example of infraction)

- Using a different deck from the submitted deck list, etc.

⑤ Suspension

There are two kinds of Suspension penalties. Either or both may be issued in cases where a player's actions have significantly and negatively impacted the integrity or operation of the entire event.

■ Disqualification

Players who receive this penalty are removed from the tournament and become ineligible to receive any prizes.

(Examples of infractions)

- Intentionally drawing extra cards.
- Intentionally putting cards from the discard pile into the hand.
- Manipulating pace of play to influence the outcome of the match.
- Conspiring with one's opponent to manipulate the match or its outcome.
- Using marked cards or card sleeves, or stacking the deck (manipulating the order of cards in the deck) and/or any other behavior that negatively impacts the fairness of the event.

■ Ban

Players who receive this penalty are forbidden from attending or participating in any official event held by The Pokémon Company for the duration of the ban.

(Example of infraction)

- Behavior that would endanger other participants, deliberately damage event equipment, and/or go against public order and morals, etc.

In case of repeated penalties during a match

Master Judges and/or the Organizers have the final say regarding a penalty escalation due to repeated infractions.

If a player receives 2 Warnings during the same match, the second Warning gets escalated to a Single-Prize Penalty.

If a player receives 3 Warnings or more during the same match, after considering the game state as a whole, consider escalating to a Single-Prize Penalty or higher.

If a player receives 2 Single-Prize Penalties during the same match, the second penalty does not need to be escalated to a Triple-Prize Penalty. Instead, both should be applied as Single-Prize Penalties, meaning the opponent now needs to take 2 fewer Prize cards to win the game.

Section 5: Infractions Chart

Category	Ref. Number	Infraction	Penalty	Example
1. Gameplay Errors	1-1	Player saw extra cards	Warning	When using an effect that says “Look at the top 2 cards of your deck”, a player inadvertently saw 3 cards instead.
	1-2	Player took extra cards	Single Prize Penalty	A player used <i>Teal Mask Ogerpon ex's Teal Dance</i> Ability and inadvertently drew 2 cards instead of 1.
	1-3	Private information cards got shuffled into the deck	Single Prize Penalty	When using Drakloak's <i>Recon Directive</i> Ability, a player shuffled their deck by mistake.
	1-4	Impossible actions	Warning	A player retreated their Active Pokémon to the Bench when it didn't have the necessary Energy attached.
	1-5	Unresolved actions & Gameplay errors	Warning	A player forgot to put a damage counter on their Poisoned Pokémon during Pokémon Checkup.
	1-6	Damage miscalculations	Warning	A game progressed after the wrong amount of damage was inflicted to a Pokémon.
	1-7	Prize cards mistakes	Warning	Forgetting to take Prize cards, or forgetting to set Prize cards at the beginning of the game.
	1-8	Insufficient randomization	Warning	A player shuffled their deck, but then continued playing without offering their opponent to cut the deck.
	1-9	Dropped cards	Caution	A card fell from the match table.
	1-10	Slow play	Warning	A player looked through their opponent's discard pile an unreasonable number of times within the same turn
	1-11	Failing to notice the other player's gameplay errors	Warning	A player failed to point out to their opponent that they forgot to take a Prize card after Knocking Out a Pokémon.
2. Procedural Errors	2-1	Marked cards/sleeves	Match Loss	Not all cards in the deck are sleeved the same way – different sleeves, sleeve orientation, etc.
	2-2	Deck or deck list issues	Match Loss	A player had been using a 59-cards deck.
	2-3	Tardiness	Match Loss	A player wasn't seated at their match table when the round started. A player sat at the wrong table and played against the wrong opponent.
	2-4	External advice	Match Loss	A player checked a message on their smartwatch while playing.
3. Malicious Conduct	3-1	Stalling	Suspension	A player intentionally slowed their pace of play in order to force the game to time out.
	3-2	Intentional infractions	Suspension	A player noticed their gameplay error but didn't call a Judge. A player slid a card from their discard pile into their hand.
	3-3	Bribery, Complicity, Forgery	Suspension	A player offered monetary compensation in exchange for a concession.
	3-4	Aggressive behavior	Suspension	A player threatened their opponent.
	3-5	Theft	Suspension	A player attempted to steal their opponent's card.
	3-6	Deception	Suspension	A player deliberately lied to a Judge.
	3-7	Inappropriate conduct	Suspension	A player uttered abusive and/or discriminatory remarks towards another player.

Section 6: Ruling Decision Principles

1. Gameplay Errors

1-1. Player saw extra cards

Standard penalty: Warning

▽ Examples of infractions

- A player inadvertently flipped a card from their deck or Prize cards face up.
- **When using** an effect that says “Look at the top 2 cards of your deck”, a player inadvertently looked at the top 3 cards instead.
- When shuffling their opponent’s deck, a player inadvertently saw some of the cards inside.

▽ Restoring the game state

Aim to reduce any advantage gotten by the extra information as much as possible.

Aim to re-randomize the position of any cards that did not have a set position.

▽ Examples of restoration processes

Pattern A: The player had already seen the contents of their deck and/or Prize cards

• Having used an effect that lets them search their deck for a card or look at their Prize cards, the player already had information on which cards were in their deck and which were in their Prize cards.

- ① From the cards the player saw, for each extra card the player saw, pick a card at random.
- ② Check whether there are any cards that had been set to the bottom of the deck or another fixed position through an effect. (Example: cards put at the bottom of the deck with the effect of Drakloak’s *Recon Directive* Ability)
- ③ Put aside all such cards with a set position, and shuffle the card(s) you’ve picked with the rest of the deck.
- ④ Put all cards with a set position, if any, back in those respective positions.

Pattern B: The player had not previously seen

Any information advantage can be removed by shuffling the cards that were inadvertently seen back into the deck along with all Prize cards—excluding any cards that may have had a set position— and restoring them back to a random state.

- When a player inadvertently flipped a Prize card face up while setting up to play.
- When drawing a card at the start of their first turn, a player inadvertently flipped a second card face up.

- ① Put the card that was inadvertently seen back in its original position.
- ② Shuffle the deck and Prize cards together.
- ③ Set down Prize cards once more.

In cases—such as the ones listed below— where the player had some knowledge of where some cards should be (for example after putting a card back into their deck), do not shuffle the deck and Prize cards together if doing so could alter the state of the game. Instead, only shuffle either the deck or the Prize cards, depending on where the card that was seen belongs.

- After the player used an effect to see a number of cards from the top of their deck, then shuffle their deck.
- After a player used an effect to shuffle their hand into their deck, then draw from their deck.
- Any other game state where a player has some knowledge of specific cards being in the deck or in the Prize cards.

Pattern C: A player inadvertently saw cards from their opponent’s deck

- ① Put the card that was inadvertently seen back in its original position.

- ② Check whether there are any cards that had been set to the bottom of the deck or another fixed position through an effect. (Example: cards put at the bottom of the deck with the effect of Drakloak's *Recon Directive* Ability)
- ③ Put aside all such cards with a set position, and shuffle the card(s) seen by mistake with the rest of the deck.
- ④ Put all cards with a set position, if any, back in those respective positions.

▽ Criteria for a possible escalation to a Single Prize Penalty

If even after following the game state restoration process above and shuffling back the card that had been seen, it can be assessed that the player still gained an information advantage that cannot be compensated for just through the standard restoration process, consider escalating to a Single Prize Penalty.

1-2. Player took extra cards

Standard Penalty: Single Prize Penalty

▽ Examples of infractions

- A player inadvertently took two Prize cards instead of one.
- When using an effect to “Draw 1 card”, a player inadvertently drew a second card.

▽ Restoring the game state

Once the cards have been put into the player’s hand, it may be difficult to identify the specific extra card(s) – even restoring the proper number of cards in hand does not completely remove the potential advantage the player might have gotten from that infraction. As such, a Prize Penalty is used to compensate for any such potential advantage.

Additionally, when restoring the game state, make sure that any cards that are common knowledge between both players, or cards that have fixed positions – either in the deck or Prize cards – do *not* get randomized

▽ Example of restoration process

① At random, pick cards from that player’s hand matching the number of extra cards they drew.

※ If players agree on specific cards that they both know were already in that player’s hand, don’t pick from those cards.

② Check whether there are any cards that had been set to the bottom of the deck or another fixed position through an effect. (Example: cards put at the bottom of the deck with the effect of Drakloak’s *Recon Directive* Ability)

③ Put aside all such cards with a set position, and shuffle the card(s) you’ve picked with the rest of the deck or Prize cards, as relevant.

④ Put all cards with a set position, if any, back in those respective positions.

▽ Criteria for a possible de-escalation to a Warning

• If it is possible to tell apart the extra card(s) from the rest, a restored game state would not deviate meaningfully from its original state. As such, de-escalating the penalty can be considered.

Example ①: Players agree on which were the extra cards, and can tell them apart from the cards that were already in hand.

How to proceed: among the cards that were just drawn, randomly pick a card for each extra drawn card, then shuffle all cards picked this way into the deck.

Example ②: A player drew 6 cards with the Supporter “Carmine”, but immediately noticed their mistake after seeing their hand.

How to proceed: Randomly choose 1 card out of the 6, and shuffle it back into the deck.

▽ Criteria for a possible escalation to a Triple Prize Penalty

If any of the below applies, consider escalating to a Triple Prize Penalty.

- A player used a “*Search your deck for ____*” effect, took more cards than allowed, and the extra cards can’t be told apart from the rest of their hand.
- A player used a “*Search your deck for a Pokémon, reveal it, and put it into your hand*” effect but put it into their hand without revealing it.
- After the infraction the player has used several cards or effects, making restoring the game state difficult.

1-3. Private information cards got shuffled into the deck

Standard Penalty: Single Prize Penalty

▽ Examples of infractions

- When using an effect that should have put cards from their hand at the bottom of their deck, a player shuffled those cards into their deck instead.
- When shuffling their deck, a player inadvertently shuffled cards from their hand into their deck as well.
- A player dropped cards from their hand into their Prize cards and can't tell them apart anymore.

▽ Restoring the game state

It may be possible to restore the proper number of cards in hand, and/or any specific cards both players agree were in the hand.

However, it may be difficult to fully restore the full contents of the hand or the set positions some card had in the deck – as such, a full restoration should not be the goal here.

A change in the contents of the hand or in the order of cards in the deck may be advantageous for the player who caused the error—as a consequence, a Prize Penalty should be applied.

▽ Examples of restoration processes

Pattern A: Contents of the hand must be restored

(Ex: While shuffling their deck, a player inadvertently shuffled cards from their hand into their deck as well.)

- ① Confirm the number of cards in hand before they got shuffled into the deck.
- ② Check for any specific cards both players agree were in the hand.
- ③ Put those specific cards back into the player's hand, randomize the deck, and have them draw cards until they have in hand the number of cards confirmed in step ①.

Pattern B: Contents of the hand don't have to be restored

(Ex: Hand and deck have been shuffled after using the Supporter *Lucian*)

- ① Check for any specific cards both players agree were in the hand.
- ② Put any such cards at their proper position (bottom of the deck, etc...) and resolve the rest of the effect.

▽ Criteria for a possible escalation to a Triple Prize Penalty

- In instances where the hand can't be sufficiently restored, such as players not knowing how many cards were in the hand before it got shuffled, consider escalating to a Triple Prize Penalty.

1-4. Impossible Actions

Standard Penalty: Warning

▽ Examples of infractions

- Declaring an attack when the Pokémon doesn't have the necessary Energy.
- Retreating a Paralyzed Pokémon.
- Putting a 6th Pokémon on the Bench.
- Using the effect of the *Poké Pad* Item to reveal a Pokémon ex from the deck and put it into the hand.
- Using the *Glass Trumpet* Item without having a Tera Pokémon in play.
- Using the effect of the *Powerglass* Pokémon Tool to attach 1 Basic Energy from the discard pile to a Pokémon while the *Jamming Tower* Stadium was in play.
- Using *Judge* as the second supporter in a turn and shuffling the hand into the deck.

▽ Restoring the game state

When a player performed an impossible action, aim to rewind the board state in a way that has as little impact as possible on the game – ensuring the mistake does not give an unfair advantage to the player who made it, nor give a disadvantage to their opponent.

When attempting to restore the game state, keep the following points in mind:

- Deciding how far to rewind

Decide up to what point the game should be rewinded, depending on the timing of the mistake.

Rewind the game up to a state that you deem allows for the game to progress in a fair way. In general, the game will be rewinded up until just before the mistake was made.

- Handling private game information

Judges should try to cover for any advantage a player could get from previously private game information becoming public through the rewinding process. Depending on the situation, consider randomizing the decks and/or Prize cards to prevent the game from being influenced by additional information obtained through the rewind.

- Correcting card selection mistakes

If a player used an effect and chose cards they were not supposed to be able to select, undo and redo that selection. Even if part of the selection was correct in an effect that selects several cards, redo that full selection step. Do not redo previous steps that had correct targets (such as an effect discarding cards from the hand before searching the deck for other cards—those same cards should still be discarded).

- Fixing incorrect board states

Even if a game moves to a point where it cannot be fully rewinded, it should never be left in an improper state and should always be fixed.

Example ①: If a Pokémon has more Pokémon Tools attached to it than it should be allowed to, immediately discard excess Pokémon Tools.

Example ②: If a player has more Benched Pokémon than they are allowed to, immediately discard excess Pokémon.

Example ③: If there is more than one Stadium in play, leave the Stadium that was last put in play, and discard the other Stadiums.

▽ Criteria for a possible escalation to a Single Prize Penalty

If after rewinding the game state a player still ends up having gained knowledge of game information which should have been private, consider escalating to a Single Prize Penalty to compensate for that information advantage.

(Examples)

- A player used an Ability or card to look at their opponent's hand, when they shouldn't have been able to.

▽ Criteria for a possible escalation to a Triple Prize Penalty

If after the mistake was made the game has progressed, giving players access to additional game information (by drawing cards, etc.), and if it's impossible to get the necessary information for a sufficient rewind, consider assigning a Triple Prize Penalty instead of attempting to rewind the game state.

(Example)

- After Knocking Out their opponent's Pokémon with the effect of an Ability they shouldn't have been able to use, a player kept playing cards, including cards with drawing effects, to a point where the game state could not be rewinded.

1-5. Unresolved actions & Gameplay errors

Standard Penalty: Warning

▽ Examples of infractions

- A player forgot to put a damage counter on their Poisoned Pokémon during Pokémon Checkup.
- A player used Yanmega ex's *Jet Cyclone* attack but forgot to move Energy from Yanmega ex to one of their Benched Pokémon.
- A player forgot to take a Prize card after their opponent's Pokémon was Knocked Out, or they took fewer Prize cards than they should have.

▽ Restoring the game state

If the game state can be restored simply by completing the unresolved action, immediately resolve the full effect.

(Ex: "Forgot to put damage counters from an effect", "Forgot to resolve an effect putting Energy back into the hand", ect.)

As the forgotten action is resolved, other optional effects that could have been used along with that action cannot be used.

As the forgotten action is resolved, additional mandatory effects that should have been resolved along with that action must be resolved as well.

▽ Criteria for a possible escalation to a Single Prize Penalty

- In cases where play continued after the error and the player gained additional information (from drawing cards, etc.) that would influence any choice they might need to make when resolving the full effect: resolve the effect, and escalate the penalty.

(Ex: After their Active Pokémon was Knocked Out, a player forgot to choose which of their multiple Benched Pokémon to promote to the Active Spot and drew a card to start their turn.)

▽ Criteria for a possible escalation to a Triple Prize Penalty

- In cases where after the error occurred, the player gained access to several pieces of private game information, making restoring the game state difficult.
- In cases where resolving the missing effect would invalidate plays that were made since then.

(Ex: Because of a forgotten effect, a player drew cards with the Ability of a Pokémon which should actually have been Knocked Out.)

- When a player used an effect to shuffle cards from their discard pile into their deck but forgot to first show the cards to their opponent, and it's not clear to both players what those cards were.

1-6. Damage miscalculations

Standard Penalty: Warning

▽ Examples of infractions

- A player didn't notice their opponent's Active Pokémon's Weakness or Resistance, or other effects on that Pokémon, and the game progressed with the wrong amount of damage on that Pokémon.
- Players miscalculated the damage of an attack or forgot to take an effect into account, putting too many or too few damage counters.

▽ Reasoning

In principle, the player using an attack or effect is responsible for properly dealing the correct damage and/or putting the correct number of damage counters, as well as resolving any resulting Knock Outs.

However, the opposing player also shares some responsibility in double checking the board state and pointing out any obvious mistakes.

▽ Restoring the game state

Aim to restore the game to a fair state while trying to reduce the effect of the damage miscalculation as much as possible.

If players miscalculated damage, add or remove damage counters to adjust the board back to its proper state. There is no need to rewind the game to before the mistake was made: fixing the amount of damage on the spot is enough to then let the game proceed as normal.

▽Criteria for a possible escalation to a Single Prize Penalty

If fixing the mistake would invalidate a Knock Out, meaning a player ended up adding extra cards to their hand, the situation should be treated as an

instance of “Player took extra cards” and a Single Prize Penalty should be assigned.

∇Criteria for a possible escalation to a Triple Prize Penalty

- A player used an effect or Ability which relied on a Pokémon being Knocked Out, when that Pokémon actually should not have been Knocked Out.
- A player used the Ability or attack of a Pokémon which should have been Knocked Out.
- The damage miscalculation has impacted the resolution of some effects, and the proper game state can't be restored.

In such cases, if several pieces of otherwise private game information have deviated from the proper progression of the game, do not attempt to restore the game state, assign a penalty, and let the game proceed from its current state.

1-7. Game setup mistakes

Standard Penalty: Warning

▽ Examples of infractions

- A player put down the wrong number of Prize cards when setting up (more or less than 6)
- A player started the game with a card in the Active Spot or on their Bench that they were not allowed to play there.

▽ Restoring the game state

- When players notice a Prize cards mistake at the very start of the game or in the early game:

If the player has put down too many Prize cards, just put the extra Prize cards back into the deck to restore a normal game state.

If the player has put down too few Prize cards, or forgot to put down Prize cards altogether, just take from the deck the missing number of cards and put them down as Prize cards to restore a normal game state.

- When players notice at the very start of the game that a card that shouldn't be there was played in the Active Spot

① If there is at least one eligible card to put in the Active Spot in the player's hand:

Put the card that was erroneously put in the Active Spot back into their hand.

Reveal the player's hand to their opponent, then randomly choose 1 card among the eligible options in that hand, and put it in the Active Spot.

② If there are no eligible cards to put in the Active Spot in the player's hand:

Have that player take a mulligan as normal until they have a hand with an eligible card.

Their opponent may draw a card for each extra mulligan the player took.

To compensate for the advantage the player gets from choosing their Active Pokémon after seeing their opponent's cards, the penalty gets escalated to a Single Prize Penalty.

▽ Other criteria for a possible escalation to a Single Prize Penalty

- If the game has already progressed and it's unclear from which point there have been too many Prize cards.
- If a player put down too few Prize cards – or forgot to put down Prize cards altogether – while setting up, and has then used an effect to search their deck for a specific card.

1-8. Insufficient randomization

Standard Penalty: Warning

▽ Examples of infractions

- Purposefully reordering cards while searching through the deck, in a way that is not relevant to the current search.
- Reordering cards while searching through the deck, and not shuffling properly after that.
- Reordering cards to check specific card counts in the deck while looking through the deck.
- Trying to draw a card after shuffling the deck without first offering the opponent to cut the deck.

▽ Reasoning

Moving around a few eligible cards as potential options during a search is tolerated, but the deck must always be properly randomized afterwards.

However, players are not allowed to reorder their deck to check card counts in the deck or Prize cards, or to make specific cards more likely to be drawn. They are also not allowed to repeatedly re-check their deck after shuffling it.

▽ Restoring the game state

Re-shuffle the deck to randomize it.

▽ Criteria for a possible escalation to a Single Prize Penalty.

- If a player used an effect to look through their deck then drew a card without shuffling first.

1-9. Dropped cards

Standard Penalty: Caution

▽ Examples of infractions

- A card fell from the match table during a game.

* If a card fell face up from a deck onto the play table during a shuffle, that is not an instance of “Dropped cards” but rather an instance of “1-1. Player saw extra cards” and the relevant penalties should apply.

▽ Restoring the game state

Check with both players where the card fell from, and put it back in its proper place.

If the card fell from the deck or from the Prize cards, correct the game state as if it were an instance of “Player saw extra cards”.

▽ Criteria for a possible escalation to a Single Prize Penalty.

If it’s unclear where the card fell from, or when it fell, the mistake may have an effect on the progression of the game and a Single Prize Penalty should be considered.

1-10. Slow play

Standard Penalty: Warning

▽ Examples of infractions

- A player took longer than necessary to check the effect of a card.
- No new public or private information is being made available to a player, and yet they are not making any game-progressing actions.

※ If playing in a tournament with a time limit and where time running out could benefit that player, consider whether the situation could qualify as “3-1. *Stalling*”.

1-11. Failing to notice the other player’s gameplay errors

Standard Penalty: Warning

If a player’s opponent made a gameplay error and they both kept playing, the opponent will be assigned the corresponding penalty, but the other player may receive a penalty for “Failing to notice the other player’s gameplay errors”.

※ If it’s clear a player had noticed their opponent’s gameplay error but intentionally waited before pointing out the mistake – possibly expecting their opponent to get a more severe penalty –, consider treating the situation as an instance of “3-2. *Intentional Infractions*”.

2. Procedural Errors

2-1. Marked cards / sleeves

Standard Penalty: Match Loss

▽ Examples of infractions

- Some sleeves in the deck have damage making them recognizable, with an apparent pattern in what cards are marked.
- Only Energy cards are bent, making them recognizable.
- The Ace Spec in a deck, even face down, is easily recognizable from the rest.
- Not all cards in the deck are sleeved the same way – different sleeves, sleeve orientation, etc.

▽ Criteria for a possible de-escalation to a Warning.

- All sleeves have damage and there is no pattern in the damage that would make the cards recognizable.

▽ Criteria for a possible de-escalation to a Caution.

- A sleeve was damaged during a shuffle. It was immediately reported, and had no influence on the game.
- When drawing cards, a player noticed that some cards were upside down.

▽ Follow-up

If the player still gets to play matches after the penalty has been assigned, have them replace the problematic cards or sleeves so the deck doesn't have any recognizable marks or damage.

If a card gets damaged during the event in such a way it becomes recognizable, a Master Judge may create a proxy of that card for the player to use for the remainder of the tournament.

① Card sleeve issue before starting the game

- If a sleeve gets torn while setting up for the game, have the player replace the damaged sleeve with a spare one.
- Once a Judge has been able to confirm the new sleeve is unrecognizable from the rest, have the player resume setting up for the game.

② Mid-game card sleeve issue

- If a sleeve got damaged mid-game and it might be difficult to get a replacement immediately, swap it with the sleeve of a card that is unlikely to go back to a private information play area (ex: a discarded Pokémon Tool card that is unlikely to go back into the deck or hand).
- After the game, have the player replace the damaged sleeve with a spare.

③ Curved cards

Even if some cards have are curved, so long as there is no recognizable pattern among the curved cards, proceed with either of the following:

- Have the player try to physically flatten the cards.
- Have them swap each curved card with another copy of the same card (same name and effect).
- If necessary, have a Master Judge create proxy cards.

2-2. Deck or deck list issues

Standard Penalty: Match Loss

▽ Examples of infractions

- A player didn't submit their decklist within the allocated time.
- A player's registered deck list did not match the actual cards in their deck.
- A player didn't have their deck with them to start the match.
- A player had been playing with a deck that didn't have 60 cards.
- A player had been playing cards with illegal card backs.
- A player had been playing signed cards.

▽ Follow-up

If the player still gets to play matches after the penalty has been assigned, have them make sure their deck matches their registered deck list.

▽ Irregular cases

If a deck check gets requested during a game but a Judge deems that performing an immediate check would be difficult, the deck check can be performed after the game.

2-3. Tardiness

Standard Penalty: Match Loss

▽ Examples of infractions

- A player arrived at their match table after the start of the round and after a Judge had already recorded the match result.
- A player sat at the wrong table and played against the wrong opponent

▽ Follow-up

A player who got a penalty for Tardiness is considered as having dropped from the event.

As such, if they wish to re-join the tournament, they will need to go through the necessary process before the deadline set for that event.

2-4. External advice

Standard Penalty: Match Loss

▽ Examples of infractions

- Asking for advice from a spectator during a game.
- Checking previously written notes during a game.
- Checking a message on a smartwatch during a game.
- As a spectator, giving advice to a competitor while they're playing.

3. Malicious Conduct

3-1. Stalling

Standard Penalty: Suspension

▽ Examples of infractions

- A player intentionally slowing down their pace of play in a game with little time remaining, in order to force the game into a tie or win in their favor.
- A player performing unnecessary actions or checks during their turn just before time gets called, in order to influence the end of the game.
- A player performing clearly unnecessary actions to prevent their opponent from playing.
- A player intentionally taking longer than necessary to set up for a game, aiming for a time extension from a Judge.

※ If the player's conduct does not appear to be intentional, treat the situation as an instance of "*Gameplay error - Slow play*".

▽ Approaching the issue

Stalling, being an attempt to make use of the match time to one's advantage, is a severe infraction that goes against the fairness of the competition. Players are responsible for keeping an appropriate pace of play at all times, no matter the game state.

Especially when there is little time remaining in a match, purposefully slowing down one's pace of play is considered a type of cheating. To determine whether or not stalling is intentional, Judges should watch for the following points:

- Drastic changes in pace of play: a player considerably slowing down their pace of play in a specific situation compared to their usual pace of play.
- Repeated unnecessary checks or actions: a player checking the same information many times, or other such behavior that wastes time on actions that do not make the game progress.

3-2. Intentional infractions

Standard Penalty: Suspension

Players committing infractions with the deliberate intent to gain an advantage can severely damage the integrity of an event. If a player's conduct fulfills the two conditions below, the situation should be treated as an instance of *Intentional Infraction*.

- ① The action or conduct is intentional.
- ② The player has an advantage to get from that action.

▽ Examples of infractions

- Noticing one's own gameplay error but not saying anything in order to avoid a Penalty.
- Immediately noticing the opponent's mistake but waiting before pointing it out so that they might receive a more severe penalty.
- Sliding a card from the discard pile into the hand.
- Intentionally damaging the sleeves of only specific cards to be able to tell them apart from the rest of the deck.

3-3. Bribery, Complicity, Forgery

Standard Penalty: Suspension

▽ Examples of infractions

- A player offering their opponent a compensation, monetary or other, in exchange for a concession.
- Accepting an opponent's bribe.
- Offering to decide the winner of a match through a random means such as a coin flip.

▽ Approaching the issue

Bribery, complicity, and forgery of results are severe infractions that go against the fairness and integrity of an event.

Such conduct not only directly impacts the result of the match, but can also also impact other participants as well as the integrity of the whole event.

Bribery: offering one's opponent a compensation, monetary or other, in exchange for influencing the outcome of a match. Also accepting such an offer from one's opponent.

Complicity: agreeing beforehand on the result of a match with one's opponent.

Forgery: Intentionally reporting false information regarding the details or result of a match in order to wrongfully manipulate that result.

Such conduct may take the form of a verbal or unsanctioned agreement between players, or a material transaction.

3-4. Aggressive behavior

Standard Penalty: Suspension

▽ Examples of infractions

- A player hitting the table, or yelling at their opponent.
- A player hitting their opponent.
- A player crushing or ripping a card.
- A player coercing their opponent into a concession.
- Abusive and/or threatening language towards the event and/or any of its participants, on social platforms etc.

3-5. Theft

Standard Penalty: Suspension

▽ Examples of infractions

- Stealing someone else's possessions.
- Stealing material from the venue (ex: posters, table number markers, etc.)
- Purposefully hiding the fact an opponent's cards got mixed with one's own possessions.

3-6. Deception

Standard Penalty: Suspension

▽ Examples of infractions

- Answering falsely to a Judge's question.
- Lying to an opponent about rules they didn't know.

- Competing in an event under someone else's name.

3-7. Inappropriate conduct

Standard Penalty: Suspension

Conduct which endangers others, or which hinders the smooth running of the event, will not be tolerated.

▽ Examples of infractions

- Abusive and/or discriminatory remarks towards other people.
- Sexual harassment and/or stalking.
- Not complying with instructions from the Master Judge or Organizer.
- Gambling inside the venue.

Section 7: How to approach gameplay issues

1. When a player's declared actions do not match their actual actions

While players are expected to clearly declare their actions and communicate with their opponent, it is not rare for actual actions to differ from what is being declared. For example, players will sometimes inadvertently declare the wrong card or attack name when several similar sounding options are available, and proceed with an effect that does not match what they announced.

Although players are expected to always make sure their actual actions match what they declare, human error can never be completely prevented, no matter how careful players are with their actions.

In instances where a player announced a card name that differs from the one they actually meant to play, Judges should consider the context of the game—what effects were actually resolved, whether or not the conditions to use the cards were met, etc.—to decide if the action should be rewinded and corrected in order to restore a proper game state.

Example ①:

A player announced “I attach a *Basic Water Energy* to my Active Pokémon” while actually attaching a *Basic Grass Energy*. After hearing from that player, it appears they really meant to attach a *Basic Water Energy*, which they did have in their hand.

Approach ①: In such cases, return to the hand the card that didn't match what was announced, and let the player redo their action.

Example ②:

A player had *Cynthia's Garchomp ex* in the Active Spot with 2 Fighting Energy attached, and announced the “*Corkscrew Dive*” attack while discarding the 2 Fighting Energy as if resolving the effect of the “*Draconic Buster*” attack.

Approach ②:

Since the player resolved the effect of the “*Draconic Buster*” attack, it is fair to assume that was the attack they actually wanted to use. There is no need to rewind the action.

Example ③:

A player announced the Supporter “*Iris's Fighting Spirit*” while playing the Supporter “*Brock's Scouting*” from their hand, and discarded a card from their hand as if to use the effect of “*Iris's Fighting Spirit*”. However, they didn't have “*Iris's Fighting Spirit*” in their hand.

Approach ③:

This isn't a simple instance of declaring the wrong card, but instead should be treated as an instance of *Section 6: Ruling Decision Principles—1-4. Impossible Actions*.

2. When players disagree on what happened during a match

▽ General approach

Sometimes players will disagree on whether or not some once-per-turn actions have already been done, or on the board state (such as the number of damage counters on a Pokémon or the number of cards in hand), and a player hearing may not be enough to solve the issue. In such instance, Judges should make a ruling based on the following:

- Based on players' testimonies, try and retrace the players' actions such as cards that were played just before.
- Look at the current board state to find inconsistencies or elements that should not be possible.

▽ If you can confidently establish that there has been a gameplay error:

If you conclude that there was indeed a problem with the current game state or with the gameplay leading to it, treat the cause of that error as a gameplay error and apply the fitting penalties as described in the relevant sections of this document.

If you conclude that there was no gameplay error nor any rules violations, no penalties should be given to either player.

▽ In instances where the truth cannot be established

Even if a conclusion can't be reached on whose claim is true or false, Judges should still make a ruling from what limited information is available. In such instances, no penalties should be given to either player. This does not however mean that the players' conduct was correct—only that no infraction can be confirmed, and that as such no penalties can be applied.