EDUCATION

Pokemon Stadium Guide

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Welcome to the ultimate **Pokémon Stadium Guide**, your one-stop resource for mastering the classic Nintendo 64 battler that brought three-dimensional Pokémon battles to life. Whether you're a nostalgic trainer revisiting Kanto or a newcomer eager to understand what made this title so iconic, this comprehensive walkthrough will cover everything from battle mechanics and rental Pokémon strategies to unlocking the mysterious Mew and dominating the Gym Leader Castle. Prepare to step into the stadium and claim your place as a true Pokémon Champion.

What Is Pokémon Stadium? A Brief Overview

Released in 1999 (2000 in North America), **Pokémon Stadium**was more than just a spin-off; it was a full-fledged battle simulator that connected with your Game Boy Pokémon Red, Blue, and Yellow cartridges via the Transfer Pak. While the game allowed you to use your own trained monsters from the handheld games, it also offered a robust rental Pokémon system for those who didn't own the cartridges. The core of the experience centered on four primary cups (Pika Cup, Petit Cup, Poke Cup, and Prime Cup), each with specific level and species restrictions, alongside the formidable Gym Leader Castle and a collection of entertaining mini-games. This guide will help you navigate each challenge with confidence.

Getting Started: Modes and Menus

Before diving into battle, understand the main menu options. The **Stadium Mode** is where you'll compete in cups to earn medals and unlock new features. The **Gym Leader Castle** tasks you with defeating each of the eight Kanto Gym Leaders in sequence, culminating in a battle against your rival and the Elite Four. The **Free Battle** mode allows you to set custom rules, and the **Mini-Game**mode offers a delightful break from competitive play. For the best experience, start with the Pika Cup, which restricts Pokémon to those that are unevolved and under level 15—a perfect introduction to the game's mechanics.

Using Your Own Pokémon vs. Rental Pokémon

If you have a Game Boy cartridge, you can transfer your own team. However, the rental Pokémon are specifically designed to be viable within each cup's restrictions. For new players or those without a cartridge, mastering the rental system is essential. The key is to recognize that rental teams are not created equal; some are far more effective than others. In this **Pokémon Stadium guide**, we'll break down which rentals give you the best chance of victory.

Mastering the Battle System

Pokémon Stadium introduced 3D battle animations, but the underlying mechanics remain true to Generation I. However, there are subtle differences: the Speed stat determines turn order more strictly, and certain glitches from the handheld games (like the 1/256 miss chance for moves like Swift) are fixed. Critical hits are also more frequent in Stadium, so moves with high critical-hit ratios (like Slash or Karate Chop) become even more valuable. Understanding these nuances will give you an edge in every match.

Key Battle Mechanics You Need to Know

- Speed Tie-Breaker: If two Pokémon have equal Speed, the turn order is random in Stadium, unlike the

handheld games where the player's Pokémon always moved first. Plan accordingly.

- Sleep and Freeze Duration: In Stadium, sleep lasts between 1 and 3 turns (random), while freeze lasts indefinitely until thawed. This makes moves like Ice Beam and Hypnosis powerful but unpredictable.
- OHKO Moves (Sheer Cold, Horn Drill, Fissure, Guillotine): These moves have a 30% accuracy (not based on level difference) against targets of the same level or higher. Against lower-level opponents, accuracy improves. They can be a risky but rewarding strategy.
- Substitute and Protect: While Protect didn't exist in Gen I, Substitute works much the same. Use it to scout enemy moves or to stall for status healing.

The Four Cups: Strategies for Each

To earn all medals and unlock everything, you must conquer each cup. Here is a breakdown of each cup's restrictions and the optimal rental Pokémon to use.

Pika Cup (Level 15-20, Unevolved Only)

The Pika Cup limits Pokémon to those that are unevolved and between levels 15 and 20. This means no evolved forms whatsoever (so you cannot use a Raichu or a Charizard). Speed and type coverage dominate here. The best rental picks include **Gastly** (excellent Ghost-type offense), **Machop** (strong Fighting-type moves), and **Magnemite** (Electric/Steel type resists many attacks). Avoid Pokémon with poor move pools like Mr. Mime or Jigglypuff (unless used for sing).

Petit Cup (Level 15-20, Small Pokémon Only)

The Petit Cup is similar but restricts participants to "small" Pokémon—those that weigh less than a certain threshold (roughly 20 kg). Many of the same Pokémon from the Pika Cup qualify, but you also get access to certain species like **Voltorb** (high Speed, good for Explosion) and **Ponyta**(fast Fire-type). The same strategies apply: prioritize Speed and use super-effective moves.

Poke Cup (Level 50-55, No Restrictions)

Here, things get serious. The Poke Cup allows any Pokémon between levels 50 and 55, including fully evolved forms. This is where you'll face real threats. The best rental team includes **Alakazam** (fast, special sweeper), **Rhydon** (physically bulky with Earthquake), and **Exeggutor**(powerful Grass/Psychic coverage). Be prepared to switch frequently, as type disadvantages are punishing at this level.

Prime Cup (Level 50-55, Legendaries Allowed)

The Prime Cup is the ultimate test. You can use any Pokémon, including the Legendary Birds (Articuno, Zapdos, Moltres) and Mewtwo. However, rental rentals are available, and you'll need to counter the AI's frequent Legendary usage. The best strategy is to use your own Pokémon from the Game Boy games if possible, but if using rentals, consider **Mewtwo** (Psychic, Recover), **Zapdos** (Thunderbolt, Drill Peck), and **Snorlax**(high HP, Body Slam, Amnesia). The AI is predictable but packs a punch, so save often.

Gym Leader Castle: Defeat Each Leader in Order

After earning at least one medal, you can challenge the Gym Leader Castle. This mode pits you against the eight Gym Leaders from the handheld games, each using their signature teams at higher levels (around level 30-50). You must defeat them in sequence: Brock, Misty, Lt. Surge, Erika, Koga, Sabrina, Blaine, and Giovanni. After that, you face your Rival and then the Elite Four (Lorelei, Bruno, Agatha, Lance) and finally the Champion (your Rival again with an upgraded team).

Key Strategies for Each Gym Leader

- Brock: Use Grass or Water moves against his Rock/Ground types. A Vileplume or Starmie works wonders.
- Misty: Use Electric or Grass moves. A Jolteon or Exeggutor can sweep.
- Lt. Surge: Ground moves are your best friend. A Dugtrio or Sandslash will dominate.
- Erika: Fire, Ice, Psychic, or Flying moves. Use a Flareon or Charizard.
- Koga: Psychic moves are super effective against his Poison types. A Hypno or Mr. Mime (with Psychic) is great.
- Sabrina: Use Bug, Ghost, or Dark (though Dark didn't exist in Gen I). Instead, use strong physical attackers like Snorlax with Body Slam.
- Blaine: Water, Rock, or Ground moves. A Blastoise or Golem is ideal.
- Giovanni: Water, Ice, or Ground moves for his Ground types. Watch out for his Dugtrio's Earthquake.
- Rival (first battle): His team varies based on your starter choice in the handheld game, but generally cover Fire, Water, and Grass.
- Elite Four: Level up to at least 50 and bring a balanced team. Lance's Dragonites are weak to Ice.

Mini-Games: How to Unlock and Win

One of the most enjoyable aspects of Pokémon Stadium is the mini-games. You can access them from the main menu after earning at least one medal. The mini-games include Clefairy Says (a memory game), Squeaky Mouse (Pikachu jumping on platforms), Rock Harden (Geodude rolling), and more. To win, focus on timing and pattern recognition. Winning mini-games earns you coins that can be used to purchase Trainer Cards and other cosmetic items.

Tips for Each Mini-Game

- Clefairy Says: Watch the sequence and repeat it. The sequence gets longer each round. Use the D-pad and A button.
- Squeaky Mouse: Press A as Pikachu approaches the platform. The timing window is narrow; practice the rhythm.
- Rock Harden: Press A and B rapidly to harden the rock. Speed is key.
- Magikarp Splash: Just mash A. But it's random, so luck matters.

Unlocking Mew and Other Secrets

Many trainers wonder: can you get Mew in Pokémon Stadium? The answer is yes, but only in the Japanese version and through a specific event. In international versions, Mew is not obtainable through normal gameplay. However, you can trade Pokémon from the Stadium to your Game Boy games (via the Transfer Pak) to complete your Pokédex. Additionally, by earning all medals and defeating the Gym Leader Castle, you unlock the ability to battle the Gym Leaders with their "rematch" teams, which are much tougher.

Bonus: Using the Transfer Pak Effectively

If you own a Transfer Pak (or the Nintendo 64 accessory), you can play your Game Boy games on the big screen. More importantly, you can earn "Pokémon Stadium Stickers" for number of wins, and you can teach your Pokémon moves they could only learn via Stadium's "Prime Cup" tutors. For example, a Clefable can learn **Substitute** or **Counter** through this method. This was pivotal for competitive play in the early days.

Advanced Strategies for Competitive Play

For those looking to optimize their performance, consider these advanced tips:

1. Use Speed to Determine Matchups: In Stadium, if your Pokémon has higher Speed, you can force the AI into unfavorable swaps by predicting its moves.

2. Learn the AI Patterns: The computer tends to use super-effective moves whenever possible, but it can be baited. For example, if you switch to a Fire-type, the AI might use Water, giving you a chance to switch again to an Electric-type.

3. Explosion and Selfdestruct: These moves are powerful finishers. Pair them with a Pokémon that has low HP or is about to faint. However, note that in Stadium, if Explosion KOs the opponent, your Pokémon still faints (it's a one-for-one trade).

4. Focus on Coverage: Given the limited move pools of Gen I, ensure each Pokémon has at least one move that hits multiple types. For instance, Ice Beam covers Grass, Flying, and Ground, while Thunderbolt covers Water and Flying.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Even seasoned trainers make errors. Here are the most frequent pitfalls in **Pokémon Stadium**:

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