

ESPORTS WORLD CUP

Esports World Cup 2026

VALORANT Rulebook

1. General

- 1.1 Rule changes
- 1.2 EWC Global Rulebook
- 1.3 Validity of the rules
- 1.4 Local laws
- 1.5 Communication

2. Participants

- 2.1 Age Restriction
- 2.2 Roster
 - 2.2.1 Roster Size
 - 2.2.2 Travel & Accommodation Coverage
 - 2.2.3 Roster Eligibility
 - 2.2.4 Substitute Rules
- 2.3 Roster submissions
- 2.4 Multiple teams
- 2.5 Replacements
 - 2.5.1 Replacements
 - 2.5.2 Replacement Tiebreakers
 - 2.5.3 Replacement deadline
 - 2.5.4 Before the replacement deadline
 - 2.5.5 After the replacement deadline

3. Format

- 3.1 Structure
 - 3.1.1 Series Size
- 3.2 Seeding Rules
 - 3.2.1 Group Stage Seeding Method
 - 3.2.2 Playoffs Seeding Method
 - 3.2.3 Determining the higher seed

4. Schedule

5. Game Specific Rules

5.1 Patch

5.1.1 Patch version

5.1.2 Map Pool

5.1.3 Additional Restrictions

5.2 Player Accounts

5.3 Setup Time

5.3.1 Match Setup

5.3.2 Equipment Issues During Match Setup

5.3.3 Resolving Technical Issues During Match Setup

5.3.4 Ready Check

5.4 Game Lobby

5.4.1 Lobby Settings

5.4.2 Server Selection

5.5 Pre-Match procedures

5.5.1 Map selection

5.5.1.1 Map selection process for Best of Three Matches

5.5.1.2 Map selection process for Best of Five Matches

5.5.1.3 Skirmish Side Selection

5.5.2 Agent Selection

5.5.3 Match Start After Agent and Map Selection

5.5.4 Controlled Match Start

5.5.5 Slow Client Load

5.6 Pauses

5.6.1 Timeouts

5.6.1.1 Timeout Protocol

5.6.1.2 Timeout Agent Control

5.6.2 Technical Pauses

5.6.2.1 Technical Pause Protocol

5.6.2.2 Technical Pause Agent Control

5.6.2.3 Invalid Technical Pauses

5.6.3 Player Emergency Pause

5.6.3.1 Player Emergency Protocol

5.6.3.2 Illness, Injury, or Disability

5.7 Bugs

5.7.1 Types of Bugs

5.7.1.1 Play Through Bug

5.7.1.2 Major Bugs

5.7.1.3 Unknown Bugs

- 5.7.1.4 Game Breaking Bugs
- 5.7.2 Tournament Official Initiated Round Rollback
 - 5.7.2.1 Pre-Damage
 - 5.7.2.2 Post-Damage
 - 5.7.2.3 Round Rollback for Game Breaking Bugs
- 5.8 Exploit Adjudication
 - 5.8.1 Agent Specific Exploits
 - 5.8.1.1 Cypher
 - 5.8.1.2 General Agent Utility Rule
 - 5.8.1.3 Agent Character Model Boosting
 - 5.8.2 Assessment of Penalties
 - 5.8.2.1 Exploit Classification
 - 5.8.2.2 Prior Communication
 - 5.8.2.3 Impact
 - 5.8.2.4 Intent
 - 5.8.3 Types of Penalties
 - 5.8.3.1 Warning
 - 5.8.3.2 Round Rollback
 - 5.8.3.3 Round Loss
 - 5.8.3.4 Map Forfeit Loss
 - 5.8.3.5 Match Forfeit Loss
 - 5.8.4 Finality of Judgment on Bug and Exploit Adjudication
- 5.9 Challenge
 - 5.9.1 Requesting Challenge
 - 5.9.2 Challenges Per Map
 - 5.9.3 Official Review
 - 5.9.4 Successful Challenge
 - 5.9.5 Unsuccessful Challenge
 - 5.9.6 Game Pause for Challenge
- 5.10 Crashes and Interruptions of Gameplay
 - 5.10.1 Discontinuity of Gameplay
 - 5.10.2 Individual Player Gameplay Interruptions
 - 5.10.2.1 Transient Interruptions
 - 5.10.2.2 Multiple Player Crash/Interruption of Gameplay
 - 5.10.2.3 Single Player Crash/Interruption of Gameplay
- 5.11 Post-Game Process
 - 5.11.1 Result Confirmation
 - 5.11.1.1 Results of Forfeiture
 - 5.11.2 Reporting of Technical Issues
 - 5.11.3 Joining the Upcoming Game Lobby

- 5.11.4 Game Break
- 5.11.5 Post-Game Media Obligations

6. Misconduct

- 6.1 Punctuality Penalties
 - 6.1.1 Player punctuality
 - 6.1.2 No show

7. Prize Distribution

- 7.1 Prize Distribution

8. Other

- 8.1 Equipment
- 8.2 Flags and country identifiers
- 8.3 Internet access

9. Privacy and Data Protection

1. General

1.1 Rule changes

EWC reserves the right to amend, remove, or otherwise change the rules, without prior notice. EWC also reserves the right to make judgments on cases not specifically covered by the rulebook in order to preserve the spirit of fair competition and sportsmanship.

1.2 EWC Global Rulebook

VALORANT at 2026 Esports World Cup is additionally under the jurisdiction of the [EWC Global Rulebook](#).

1.3 Validity of the rules

If a provision of this rulebook is or becomes illegal, invalid or unenforceable in any jurisdiction, that shall not affect the validity or enforceability in that jurisdiction of any other provision of this rulebook or the validity or enforceability in other jurisdictions of that or any another provision of this rulebook.

1.4 Local laws

If any rules or procedures are in conflict with local laws, they will be adjusted to be aligned with the laws in a way that stays as close as possible to the originally intended effect.

1.5 Communication

The main communication method for the Esports World Cup event is email. When contacting participants of Esports World Cup events, the tournament administration will use contact email addresses that have been supplied to them. Alternatively, where a contact email address is not known or not working, the tournament administration may use the email addresses registered to participants on tournament platforms, including but not limited to their FACEIT profiles.

Further communication channels such as Discord will be used throughout the tournament.

2. Participants

2.1 Age Restriction

All participants of the Esports World Cup 2026 VALORANT have to be at least 18 years of age at the time of their first match of the competition.

2.2 Roster

Teams must submit their rosters at a request of the Tournament Organizer before a specified deadline. Each Team Member may be assigned a maximum of two (2) of the organizational roles listed below:

1. Player
2. Substitute Player
3. Team Coach
4. Team Manager

2.2.1 Roster Size

Team rosters at all times must consist of:

- Five (5) Players with up to one Substitute Player.
- Between one (1) and two (2) Team Coach(es).

In addition, Teams may, but are not required to, enlist one (1) Team Manager as part of their Team roster.

2.2.2 Travel & Accommodation Coverage

EWC will cover Travel & Accommodation for up to 8 team members per team, distributed as below:

- Obligatory 6 position covered
 - 5 Main Players
 - 1 Coach
- Optional 2 positions covered
 - 0-2 Coaches
 - 0-2 Substitutes
 - 0-2 Additional Staff Members

2.2.3 Roster Eligibility

Each Team must submit a Player list that consists of a minimum of three (3) Players who were part of the Starting Line-Up used in the majority of their completed Matches during the tournament from which they received their invitation.

At least one of the coach(es) enlisted by the Team must be the same person who was used in the majority of the Team's completed Matches during the 2026 qualifying phase.

No such restrictions apply to the Team Manager(s). The Teams are free to indicate any physical person(s) as their Team Manager(s) at their sole discretion.

2.2.4 Substitute Rules

A Team may substitute a Player between Games of a Match. The Team must notify a League Official and have the substitution approved, no later than 5 minutes after the conclusion of the previous Game. A Team may also change their on-stage coaches by notifying a League Official and having the change approved, no later than 5 minutes after the conclusion of the previous Game.

2.3 Roster submissions

Roster submissions must include the following information:

- Team name & shorthand
- Team logo (when requested)
- Contact person and details
- Starting line-up
- Substitute players, if applicable

2.4 Multiple teams

It is not allowed for a team to participate in an EWC VALORANT tournament if another team of the same organisation has been invited or qualified to the main event.

2.5 Replacements

2.5.1 Replacements

If a participant is, for any reason, unable to compete anymore in the event, a replacement will be called up. If this happens before the replacement deadline, the replacement will inherit any financial benefits like paid flights and hotels from the replaced participant.

Usually competition groups or brackets will not be reseeded if they were already publicly announced before the drop-out happened. In special cases, when the fairness of the competition is in jeopardy, the tournament administration can still change or even re-draw the competition.

2.5.2 Replacement Tiebreakers

If participants have an identical score/position on/in the relevant invite list or qualifier, the one with the smallest change in lineup since then will be preferred.

If that leaves several options, the tournament administration will make a choice based on other criteria, including potential played tiebreakers.

Replacement participants will be considered and contacted to ask whether or not they want to participate.

2.5.3 Replacement deadline

A replacement deadline will be set by the tournament administration. Its passing does not mean that there will be no further replacement, but the rules for replacing are different from that point on. If no replacement can be found, the stage may start with one less participant instead.

If no earlier deadline has been set, the public announcement of the competition drawing is usually the replacement deadline.

2.5.4 Before the replacement deadline

Title Defender will be replaced by the best ranked, non-qualified EMEA Qualifier team.

For everything else, next in line will replace from the same qualifier or invite list. If no one from the final stage of the same qualifier is available, the qualifiers of the other regions will be considered, starting with the home region. EWC reserves the right to forgo this option if they deem it necessary.

2.5.5 After the replacement deadline

The tournament administration will try to find any replacement by all available means.

3. Format

3.1 Structure

Sixteen (16) Teams compete in the Group Stage, which features four GSL groups. The top two teams from each group advance to a Single Elimination bracket, where they will be joined by the other groups' top two teams.

GSL is a group-style tournament where teams have three (3) attempts to qualify out of the group. If a team wins two (2) matches, they progress in the tournament. If a team loses two (2) matches, they are eliminated.

Single Elimination is a tournament format in which a team is eliminated after losing one match.

3.1.1 Series Size

In the context of this competition, a Match denotes a scheduled fixture wherein exactly two (2) Teams engage in direct competition against each other. Within each match, a series of individual Games is played to determine the overall outcome.

- Matches in the Group Stage are Best of 3 (Bo3) matches
 - Quarterfinal, Semifinal and 3rd place matches are Best of 3 (Bo3) matches
 - The Grand Final is a Best of 5 (Bo5) match.
-
- Best of 3 (Bo3) - the first Team to win 2 individual Games is considered the winner.
 - Best of 5 (Bo5) - the first Team to win 3 individual Games is considered the winner.

3.2 Seeding Rules

3.2.1 Group Stage Seeding Method

Teams have been seeded into the tournament to start in one of three draw pools:

- Pool 1: VCT Americas #1, VCT China #1, VCT EMEA #1, VCT Pacific #1
- Pool 2: Americas Qualifier Upper Bracket winners (2 teams), APAC Qualifier Upper Bracket winners (2 teams), China Qualifier Upper Bracket winner, EMEA Qualifier Upper Bracket winners (2 teams), EWC Title Defender
- Pool 3: Americas Qualifier Lower Bracket winner, APAC Qualifier Lower Bracket winner, China Qualifier Lower Bracket winner, EMEA Qualifier Lower Bracket winner

In case the EWC Title Defender team also places #1 in the VCT EMEA, they get the higher starting seed and VCT EMEA #2 inherits the EWC Title Defender seed.

Teams will be drawn into groups by random selection. Each group will feature one team from Pool 1, two teams from Pool 2 and one team from Pool 3, and each group will only be allowed a single team per region. For the purposes of this, the Title Defender team is not considered to be part of any region.

3.2.2 Playoffs Seeding Method

The eight (8) Teams advancing from the Group Stage shall be seeded into a Single Elimination bracket. The Upper Bracket winners will be matched against the teams advancing from the Lower Brackets. These matchups will be determined by a random draw; however, teams from the same group are precluded from meeting prior to the Grand Final. If an invalid draw occurs, the most recently drawn Team shall be moved into the next eligible Match within the bracket.

A dedicated broadcast moment is planned to introduce the competition playoffs. Teams qualified to Playoffs are required to make one (1) player available for this broadcast segment.

The specific schedule will be communicated in line with the overall daily schedule. The broadcast production team may require a specific player to be present, which will be communicated at least 3 hours prior to the segment.

3.2.3 Determining the higher seed

- Group Stage
 - Round 1 matches: based on initial tournament seeding
 - Round 2 matches: the higher seed will be based on a random draw
 - Round 3 matches: the team entering the match from the Upper Bracket will be the higher seed
- Playoffs
 - Quarterfinals: The team entering the match as the #1 seed from their GSL Group will be considered the higher seed
 - Semifinals, Third Place Match, Grand Final: The higher seed will be based on a random draw

4. Schedule

Date	Stage
July 2nd, 2026	GSL Upper Bracket Round 1 - 4x Bo3
July 3rd, 2026	GSL Upper Bracket Round 1 - 4x Bo3
July 4th, 2026	GSL Upper Bracket Round 2 and Lower Bracket Round 1 - 4x Bo3
July 5th, 2026	GSL Upper Bracket Round 2 and Lower Bracket Round 1 - 4x Bo3
July 6th, 2026	GSL Lower Bracket Round 2 - 2x Bo3
July 7th, 2026	GSL Lower Bracket Round 2 - 2x Bo3
July 9th, 2026	Quarterfinals - 2x Bo3
July 10th, 2026	Quarterfinals - 2x Bo3
July 11th, 2026	Semifinals - 2x Bo3
July 12th, 2026	Third Place Match & Grand Final - Bo3 & Bo5

Scheduled start times for each of the individual Matches within a given day will be announced by the Tournament Organizer at a later date in official designated Tournament communication channels.

The Tournament Administration may, at its sole discretion, modify the schedule of the Matches. In the event of a schedule modification the Tournament Administration will notify all Teams at the earliest convenience.

5. Game Specific Rules

5.1 Patch

5.1.1 Patch version

The patch used for the main event will be 13.00.

5.1.2 Map Pool

The tournament's map pool includes Ascent, Breeze, Fracture, Haven, Lotus, Split and Sunset.

5.1.3 Additional Restrictions

Additional restrictions (e.g. disabling certain weapons) may be added by Tournament Officials at any time before or during a Match, if there are known bugs with any items, agents, skins, or abilities.

5.2 Player Accounts

Players will be provided with accounts ("Tournament Realm Accounts") for use in all official Matches of the Esports World Cup.

5.3 Setup Time

5.3.1 Match Setup

Players will have a designated time frame prior to their Match to ensure they are properly prepared. The Tournament Administration will inform the Players and Teams of their scheduled preparation time frame as part of their Match schedule. The Tournament Administration may change the schedule at any time. Setup Time is considered to have begun once Players enter the Match Area, at which point they are not allowed to leave without permission of the on-site Referee. Setup is comprised of the following:

- Ensuring the quality of all pieces of equipment provided by the Tournament Organiser
- Connecting and calibrating peripherals
- Ensuring proper function of the voice chat system
- Adjusting in-game settings
- Limited in-game warm-up

5.3.2 Equipment Issues During Match Setup

If a Player encounters any equipment issues during Setup Time, the Player must notify the Tournament Administration immediately

5.3.3 Resolving Technical Issues During Match Setup

It is expected that Players will resolve any issues during the Setup Time within the allotted time and that the Match will begin at the scheduled time. Delays due to setup issues may be permitted, at the sole discretion of the Tournament Administration. Penalties for tardiness may be assessed at the discretion of the Tournament Administration.

Designated Technician Crew will be available to assist during the Setup Time and to troubleshoot any technical problems encountered.

5.3.4 Ready Check

No fewer than two (2) minutes before the Match is scheduled to begin, the Tournament Administration will confirm with each Player that their setup is complete.

Once all ten (10) Players in a Match have confirmed completion of setup, Players will be asked to join the Game lobby before leaving the stage and may not enter a warm-up game.

5.4 Game Lobby

5.4.1 Lobby Settings

The official Match lobby will be set to "Tournament" mode with "Overtime: Win by Two" turned on.

5.4.2 Server Selection

Matches will be hosted on the Tournament Realm on the Paris server.

The Tournament Administration may, at its sole discretion, modify the server location a match is played on. In the event of such a change, the Tournament Administration will notify all Teams at the earliest convenience.

5.5 Pre-Match procedures

5.5.1 Map selection

The higher-seeded team will decide if they are either Team A or Team B. If the match in question has no predetermined seeding, the “better-seeded team” for purposes of this Section will be determined by a [Skirmish match](#). When instructed in the map selection process, the Team must ban a map and cannot choose to skip the map ban. Team A starts the process and the map for the Match will be selected according to the following procedure:

5.5.1.1 Map selection process for Best of Three Matches

1. Team A bans one map
2. Team B bans one map
3. Team A picks map 1
4. Team B picks starting side for map 1
5. Team B picks map 2
6. Team A picks starting side for map 2
7. Team A bans one map
8. Team B bans one map
9. Map 3 is only map remaining
10. Team A picks starting side for map 3

5.5.1.2 Map selection process for Best of Five Matches

1. Team A bans one map
2. Team B bans one map
3. Team A picks map 1
4. Team B picks starting side for map 1
5. Team B picks map 2
6. Team A picks starting side for map 2
7. Team A picks map 3
8. Team B picks starting side for map 3
9. Team B picks map 4
10. Team A picks starting side for map 4
11. Map 5 is only map remaining
12. Team B picks starting side for map 5

5.5.1.3 Skirmish Side Selection

- Each team will be required to submit a participating player/head coach for the Skirmish alongside starting rosters (including head coaches) prior to each match. This player or head coach must be part of the starting roster for the match.
- Winners of the skirmish are defined as the first participant to reach a score of 5 rounds.
- There are no restrictions on weapon or agent selection. Abilities are disabled by default.
- League officials have the right at any point to impose gameplay restrictions including but not limited to the use of certain agents, weapons, tactics.
- League officials have the right at any point to assign victory based on new point win thresholds communicated to teams prior to match day.
- League officials have the right to utilize a coinflip in the event of a technical or network failure that prevents the skirmish from being played.
- Failure to arrive by specified timings for skirmishes outlined by league officials may result in penalties including but not limited to forfeiture of draft choice.

5.5.2 Agent Selection

Once Agent Select has started, players will have 85 seconds to pick their agent, with both Teams picking simultaneously. If a player picks an agent by mistake during this phase, the player must notify a Tournament Official of their intended selection before the Agent Select timer expires. In this case the Agent Select process will be restarted with the same picks up until the mistake occurred, after which the player must choose their intended agent. In the case the player notifies a Tournament Official after the timer has expired, the Agent Select process will not be restarted and the player will be required to play through.

5.5.3 Match Start After Agent and Map Selection

A Match will start immediately after the agent/map Selection process is complete, unless otherwise stated by a Tournament Official. Players are not allowed to quit a map during the time between the completion of picks/bans and map launch, also known as "Free Time."

5.5.4 Controlled Match Start

In the event of an error in Match start or a decision by Tournament Officials to separate the pick/ban process from Match start, a Tournament Official may start the Match in a controlled manner and all maps will be selected in accordance with the previous valid completed pick/ban process.

5.5.5 Slow Client Load

If a Game crash, disconnect, or any other failure occurs which interrupts the loading process and prevents a player from joining a Match on Match start, the Match must be immediately paused until all ten players are connected to the Match.

5.6 Pauses

5.6.1 Timeouts

Teams are allowed to call timeouts of sixty (60) seconds in duration ("Timeouts") two times per map during the first 24 rounds of the map ("Regulation"), at any time not limited by half. In the event of overtime, each team will be granted one Timeout to use for overtime. Unused Timeouts from Regulation will not carry over to overtime.

5.6.1.1 Timeout Protocol

Communication will be limited to players and coaches. All Timeouts must be initiated through the in-game timeout function. Timeouts must be requested within the first ten (10) seconds of a Buy Phase. Any request initiated after the ten (10) second mark will automatically be queued by the game client for the following round.

The successful triggering of a timeout is solely determined by the game. Tournament officials will not manually intervene or rollback rounds for missed timeout windows. Teams are responsible for ensuring their requests are submitted within the game's technical parameters.

Should a technical issue occur during a Timeout preventing communication between the coaches and players, the team must immediately inform their stage referee. Upon verification, the Tournament Management will implement a technical pause at the conclusion of the in-game Timeout. The additional time granted will be at the Tournament Management's discretion, and stage referees will notify both teams of the extension duration.

Players are not allowed to leave the Match Area at any time during a Timeout.

5.6.1.2 Timeout Agent Control

During a Timeout, players are prohibited from controlling their agent (i.e., players can not move or use utility during a Timeout).

5.6.2 Technical Pauses

5.6.2.1 Technical Pause Protocol

If a player has a problem that prevents the player from continuing play, the player must pause the game and notify Tournament Officials about the reason for the pause. The player must announce the reason when requesting a technical pause, and the Head Referee will pause the game if the reason is determined to be valid. Players are not allowed to initiate a technical pause in-game on their own. If a player uses the in-game function to initiate a technical pause, the player's Team may be sanctioned for delay of game. Players are not allowed to leave the Match Area at any time during a technical pause.

5.6.2.2 Technical Pause Agent Control

During a technical pause, headsets have to stay on and players are prohibited from controlling their agent (i.e., players can not move or use utility during a Timeout). Any form of communication including

but not limited to text and voice communication between players and coaches is forbidden during a technical pause, unless instructed to do so by a Tournament Official.

5.6.2.3 Invalid Technical Pauses

Technical pauses will not be granted for the following non-exhaustive reasons:

- Accidentally hitting power button of monitor;
- Minor audio adjustments; or
- In-ear headphone adjustments.

5.6.3 Player Emergency Pause

5.6.3.1 Player Emergency Protocol

Teams will be granted a maximum of one (1) pause for an emergency situation (“Player Emergency Pause”) per map in a Match for a maximum aggregate total of ten (10) minutes across the Match. If a Team requires more than ten (10) minutes of Player Emergency Pauses, and the players using the Player Emergency Pause will become ineligible to continue play, the team shall forfeit the Match unless a Tournament Official, in his/her discretion, determines that victory in the Match shall be awarded to one of the Teams. Teams that misuse the Player Emergency Pause for non-emergencies will be sanctioned.

5.6.3.2 Illness, Injury, or Disability

Minor player illness, injury, or disability is not an acceptable reason for a Player Emergency Pause. Players may inform Tournament Officials prior to the start of a Match to reserve the right to use the Player Emergency Pause. Tournament Officials may grant a Player Emergency Pause during the Match in order to evaluate the issue and to determine whether the player is ready, willing, and able to continue playing.

5.7 Bugs

5.7.1 Types of Bugs

A bug is an error, flaw, or fault in the Game that produces an incorrect, unintended, or unexpected result. Bug classification will be communicated via the Esports Bug List shared with each patch.

5.7.1.1 Play Through Bug

A “Play Through Bug” is defined as a bug that does not significantly alter the competitive integrity of the game. This may mean that there are mitigation steps available or the impact has been deemed insufficient to warrant a disable or remake.

All Play Through Bugs are not eligible to be challenged for evaluation according to the process in the [Challenge](#) section.

5.7.1.2 Major Bugs

A “Major Bug” is defined as a bug that has the potential to significantly impact a player’s ability to compete in the game, significantly alters game stats or gameplay mechanics, and has no reasonable mitigation steps. The determination of impact will be at the sole discretion of Tournament Officials. Major Bugs are eligible to be challenged for evaluation according to the process in the [Challenge](#) section.

5.7.1.3 Unknown Bugs

An “Unknown Bug” is defined as a bug that is not on the Esports Bug List shared with the current patch. Any unknown bugs that significantly impacts a player’s ability to compete in the game, significantly alters game stats or gameplay mechanics, and has no reasonable mitigation steps, is eligible to be challenged for evaluation according to the process in the [Challenge](#) section.

5.7.1.4 Game Breaking Bugs

A “Game Breaking Bug” is defined as a bug whose occurrence undermines the competitive integrity of a round as a whole, and causes the outcome of the round to become undeterminable. Any bugs that fall within this category will be explicitly listed in the Esports Bug List shared with each patch.

5.7.2 Tournament Official Initiated Round Rollback

5.7.2.1 Pre-Damage

If, at the time that a bug occurs in a round, no damage has been directly caused by any player to an opponent in the round, then Tournament Officials may initiate a round rollback for bugs that impact a player’s ability to compete in the game for reasons outside of the player’s control.

5.7.2.2 Post-Damage

If, at the time that a bug occurs in a round, damage has already been directly caused by a player to an opponent in the round, then Tournament Officials will not initiate a round rollback outside of the Challenge process defined in the [Challenge](#) section.

5.7.2.3 Round Rollback for Game Breaking Bugs

If a Game Breaking Bug occurs at any time during a round, Tournament Officials will initiate a round rollback to restore the game to the start of the round.

5.8 Exploit Adjudication

A player-caused bug that has the potential to significantly alter the competitive integrity of the game and provide an unintended competitive advantage. As a standard, regardless of impact, exploit usage is not permitted and if found will result in a penalty, as outlined below.

5.8.1 Agent Specific Exploits

Non-limiting examples of “Agent Specific Exploits” are detailed in the Esports Bug List. Any use of a bug or exploit specifically listed in the Esports Bug List, or covered under a blanket prohibition will be considered a violation of these rules.

5.8.1.1 Cypher

All Cypher cam placements that afford an unfair competitive advantage via abusing map textures and/or geometry to prevent the Cypher cam from being destroyed or seen are considered banned exploits. All Cypher cam placements must result in a Cypher cam that is destructible, that is viewable by both teams, and that does not exploit map textures and/or geometry to create a one-way view that

provides an unfair advantage. Any other uses of a Cypher cam that are determined by a Tournament Official to provide an unfair competitive advantage will also be considered banned exploits.

5.8.1.2 General Agent Utility Rule

All uses of agent utility that afford an unfair competitive advantage via abusing map textures and/or geometry to prevent the agent utility from being destroyed or seen are considered banned exploits. Agent utility cannot be used in areas that are outside of map boundaries while potentially providing any useful information or advantage at any point. Areas that are within map boundaries are defined as areas where all utility is (1) destructible as intended for that utility, (2) has the ability to be seen by both teams as intended for that utility, and (3) does not exploit map texture and/or geometry to provide an unfair competitive advantage.

A player shall not alter the utility's intended purpose and scope of usage by abusing map textures and/or geometry, abusing unintended interactions with other utility, unintended interactions with weapons, or other types of unintended interactions to gain an unfair competitive advantage. Any other uses of an agent's utility that are determined by a Tournament Official to provide an unfair competitive advantage will also be considered banned exploits.

SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS: KAY/O's ZERO/POINT ability is intended to be usable outside of map boundaries, and is a special exception regarding these rules. KAY/O's ZERO/POINT ability is allowed to be placed outside of map boundaries, and at other locations that cause KAY/O's ZERO/POINT ability to be indestructible and/or unviewable by the enemy players. However, the knife model of KAY/O's ZERO/POINT ability cannot abuse or exploit map textures and/or geometry to travel to unintended locations. For example, the knife model of KAY/O's ZERO/POINT ability may not travel through or inside map textures and/or geometry that are intended to be solid. Teams should clear specific trajectories or end locations for KAY/O's ZERO/POINT ability with Tournament Officials prior to usage if the Team is unsure whether that usage complies with this special exception rule.

5.8.1.3 Agent Character Model Boosting

Players are prohibited from using another agent's character model to boost to a location out of intended jumping range.

5.8.2 Assessment of Penalties

When a player or team is found to have used an exploit, Tournament Officials must determine the appropriate disciplinary action. This process involves a careful evaluation of several factors, and the weight given to each factor may vary depending on the specifics of the situation.

5.8.2.1 Exploit Classification

- Is the exploit on the Esports Bug List, and how is it classified?
- If the exploit isn't in the Esports Bug List, is it similar enough to another that a reasonable person would assume that the classification would be the same?
- If the exploit isn't in the Esports Bug List and isn't similar to another known exploit, League Officials should use the other criteria to help inform any action.

5.8.2.2 Prior Communication

- Has the Esports Bug List been shared with the team and/or player?

- Was the Esports Bug List for the patch version designated by the League Officials for the event shared within a reasonable timeframe for them to inform themselves and make necessary adjustments?
- If the Esports Bug List hasn't been communicated at all or in a reasonable timeframe, this should be a mitigating factor.

5.8.2.3 Impact

- What impact did the exploit have on the round and/or outcome of the map - e.g., Damage dealt, info gained (vision, sound etc.), prevented opponents actions (bomb defusal/plant).
- What impact could this exploit have on the perception of the sport? Could it bring the sport into disrepute?

5.8.2.4 Intent

- How hard is it to use the exploit accidentally? Does it require a specific set of actions that don't occur in the normal course of play?
- Has the player or Team received penalties for the same exploit in the past?
- Did the player or Team discuss usage in voice comms?
- Did the player or Team notify a referee immediately after the exploit had occurred?

5.8.3 Types of Penalties

The following list of penalties is a non-exhaustive list. Tournament Officials may, at their sole discretion, issue other types of Disciplinary Actions such as Fines or Suspensions on a case-by-case basis.

5.8.3.1 Warning

Tournament Officials may issue warnings for a low impact first offense in order to prevent widespread usage of low impact exploits. Warnings may be issued for unintended bugs that did not give a competitive advantage, or bugs deemed small enough to not have a significant impact on the competitive integrity of the Match.

5.8.3.2 Round Rollback

Tournament Officials may perform a round rollback when an exploit has had a significant impact on the outcome of the round, but the intent of the player that performed the exploit cannot be determined, or for low impact second offenses. Round rollbacks may be used for unintended exploits that give a competitive advantage. Tournament Officials shall evaluate the intent of the player that performed the exploit on a case by case basis. If a player contacts an official immediately after the unintended exploit occurs, then Tournament Officials shall consider issuing a round rollback. Round rollbacks may also be issued for a major exploit that impacts the integrity of the round, but is not the fault of any player or coach.

5.8.3.3 Round Loss

Tournament Officials may issue a round loss when an exploit has a significant impact on the outcome of the round, and Tournament Officials have determined that the player or team intended to perform the

exploit. Round losses may also be issued if a round rollback threshold has been exceeded, as determined by Tournament Officials.

Round losses may be applied using the following methods:

- Roll back to the round where the exploit was used and award the Team that did not perform the exploit the round win via elimination in round rollback settings.
- If rolling back isn't an option, round loss should be applied at the start of the next round. If the current round could result in the map ending, the loss should be applied to the current round.

Round losses may be issued for intended exploits that give a competitive advantage. Intent will be assessed by Tournament Officials. If the exploit is listed on the current Esports Bug List given to Teams in a reasonable timeframe, the exploit will automatically be classified as an intended exploit if considered egregious.

5.8.3.4 Map Forfeit Loss

Tournament Officials may issue a forfeit loss for a map of the Match in the following scenarios:

- An exploit had a significant impact on the outcome of a map or provided a significant unintended competitive advantage, but the map has concluded and round rollback and/or remake is not possible.
- Second offenses for low impact exploits where round rollback and/or remake is not possible.
- Second offenses for high impact exploits while the map is still being played, and a round loss has already been applied.
- Egregious cases that warrant an immediate escalated penalty, as determined at the sole discretion of the Tournament Officials.

5.8.3.5 Match Forfeit Loss

Tournament Officials may issue a forfeit loss for a Match when the actions of the Team Personnel of one of the participating Teams has irreversibly undermined the competitive integrity of the Match, including, but not limited to, cheating and match fixing. Tournament Officials may issue a forfeit loss for a Match where one of the Teams used an exploit that would have resulted in a map forfeit loss, but was not caught until the Match had already concluded, and no reasonable mitigation steps are available.

5.8.4 Finality of Judgment on Bug and Exploit Adjudication

Tournament Officials have the right to assess and make final calls on all exploit decisions. All decisions regarding the interpretation of this section ("[Exploit Adjudication](#)") lie solely with the Tournament Officials; such decisions are final, cannot be appealed, and shall not give rise to any claim for monetary damages or any other legal or equitable remedy.

5.9 Challenge

A request for an official review ("Challenge") for one of the following categories of issues that occurred during a round. A successful Challenge will result in action depending on the severity of the issue.

The following categories of issues are eligible for challenge by a Team:

- Major Bugs
- Any unknown bugs that are not on the Esports Bug List
- Exploits

5.9.1 Requesting Challenge

Only the Match Coach of a Team may request a Challenge. All Challenges must be taken within the first twenty (20) seconds of a Buy Phase of the round immediately subsequent to the impacted round.

Challenges may not be requested for rounds other than the immediately preceding round.

In order to use a Challenge, the Team must have at least one (1) remaining Timeout for the map. If the Team does not have any remaining Timeouts, the Team may not request a Challenge. If a Challenge is made when the Team does not have any Timeouts, the Challenge will not be granted and the Team may be subject to sanction if a delay of game is caused.

5.9.2 Challenges Per Map

Teams are given one (1) Challenge per map of a Match. Challenges do not carry over to subsequent maps in a Match.

5.9.3 Official Review

When possible, Tournament Officials will review the preceding round to determine whether any event in the round falls into one of the Challenge eligible issues. During the official review, Tournament Officials may instruct players and/or coaches to provide details regarding the issue under review. Tournament Official decisions with respect to the official review of an issue cannot be appealed.

Players are highly suggested to record their screens to be able to submit these during investigations, if needed.

5.9.4 Successful Challenge

A Challenge is successful if the issue is determined to be a Challenge eligible issue. If the Challenge is successful, Tournament Officials will take action depending on the severity of the issue, which may include, but is not limited to, no action taken, a round rollback, a round forfeit, and a map forfeit. The Team will retain their Challenge and the staked Timeout.

5.9.5 Unsuccessful Challenge

A Challenge is unsuccessful if the issue is determined to not be a Challenge eligible issue. If the Challenge is unsuccessful, the Team's one Challenge for the map and one of the Team's remaining Timeouts for the map are consumed.

5.9.6 Game Pause for Challenge

During a Challenge the game will be paused. Players are prohibited from controlling their agent (i.e., players can not move or use utility during a Challenge pause). Any form of communication including but not limited to text and voice communication between players and coaches is forbidden during a Challenge pause, unless instructed to do so by a Tournament Official.

5.10 Crashes and Interruptions of Gameplay

5.10.1 Discontinuity of Gameplay

If a Match is interrupted for reasons beyond the control of the players (e.g., server crash, internet outage, power outage, DDOS, etc.), the Tournament Official will restore the round using the in-game round restore feature to the beginning of the most recent round.

5.10.2 Individual Player Gameplay Interruptions

Matches will not be stopped and rounds will not be restored or replayed in cases where the issue is clearly a player's fault (e.g., mis-buying a weapon, alt-tabbing, turning off monitor, etc.).

5.10.2.1 Transient Interruptions

Rounds will not be replayed due to issues that cause a short-term interruption in gameplay that does not persist for the remainder of the round (e.g., alt-tab, client minimization, transient packet loss, transient networking issues, etc.). If multiple players experience transient interruptions to gameplay in the same round for reasons beyond their control, Tournament Officials may, at their discretion, determine that a discontinuity of gameplay has occurred.

5.10.2.2 Multiple Player Crash/Interruption of Gameplay

If two or more players in a round of a Match have an issue that causes an interruption to the gameplay that prevents those players from playing out the round for reasons beyond their control (e.g., client crash, computer crash, internet outage, power outage, etc.), Tournament Officials will restore the round using the in-game round restore feature to the beginning of the most recent round. Interruptions to gameplay that occur after a player's agent has been eliminated will not count.

5.10.2.3 Single Player Crash/Interruption of Gameplay

If only a single player in a round of a Match has an issue that causes an interruption to the gameplay that prevents the player from playing out the round, Tournament Officials may restore the round using the in-game round restore feature to the beginning of the most recent round in the following scenario:

- "Start of Round Crash" All of the following conditions are met:
 - (a) issue occurred during the first minute of the round,
 - (b) issue occurred before any damage was caused to any player's agent by the opposing Team, and
 - (c) the referee was immediately notified.

If a Start of Round Crash occurs, Tournament Officials may stop the round early and restore the round. For all other interruptions to gameplay, both Teams must play out and finish the round. Tournament Officials will evaluate the circumstances of the interruption to gameplay at the end of the round during a technical pause. Failure by a Team to play out the round to the best of their ability will not be considered as grounds to restore a round. Interruptions to gameplay that occur after a player's agent has been eliminated from the round will not be considered.

Awarded Round Victory: Tournament Officials, at their sole discretion, may award a round victory if an interruption to gameplay caused a Team to lose a round that the Team had already undisputedly won at the time of the interruption, as determined by Tournament Officials at their sole discretion.

5.11 Post-Game Process

5.11.1 Result Confirmation

The Tournament Administration will confirm and record the Game's result.

5.11.1.1 Results of Forfeiture

Matches won by forfeit will be reported by the minimum score it would take for one Team to win the Match (i.e. 2-0 for Best of Three Matches, 3-0 for Best of Five Matches). All forfeited map results will be reported as a 13-0. No other statistics will be recorded for forfeited Matches.

5.11.2 Reporting of Technical Issues

The Players are obliged to inform the Tournament Administration of any technical difficulties they may have encountered during the Game directly after its completion.

5.11.3 Joining the Upcoming Game Lobby

The Referees may log into Player Accounts to join the next Game's lobby.

5.11.4 Game Break

The Tournament Administration will inform Players of the remaining time before the next Game's scheduled start time.

5.11.5 Post-Game Media Obligations

After a Match Players will be informed of any post-match obligations including, but not limited to, media appearances, interviews, or further discussion of any other matters.

6. Misconduct

You can find the EWC Misconduct rules in the [EWC Global Rulebook](#). Additional points that apply for this specific tournament are as below:

6.1 Punctuality Penalties

6.1.1 Player punctuality

For delays with players being ready at the start of a match, or between maps or breaks, participants will be punished with 2 penalty points for every five minutes after the deadline. From 10 minutes onwards, a no show will be awarded.

6.1.2 No show

Participants that won't be ready to play their match until 10 minutes after the scheduled start of the match, will lose it with the worst score possible and receive 10 penalty points.

7. Prize Distribution

Prize money payment will be made no earlier than 5 weeks after the end of the competition. Please refer to the Tournament Participation Agreement regarding the details of the prize money payment procedure for EWC 2026.

7.1 Prize Distribution

Placement	Prize money
1	USD 600,000
2	USD 340,000
3	USD 220,000
4	USD 140,000
5-8	USD 90,000
9-12	USD 55,000
13-16	USD 30,000
MVP	USD 25,000

8. Other

8.1 Equipment

EWC always provides monitors, computers, SSDs and noise-cancelling headphones. Participants have to bring their own peripherals (in particular: keyboard, mouse, mousepad, in-ear headphones with long enough cables, sound cards if needed). Our machines do not support PS2-keyboards. All player equipment is subject to the approval of the tournament administration. EWC reserves the right to deny the use of any equipment and/or device if they deem it to be providing an unfair competitive advantage. Participants might be asked to hand in their equipment for additional checks. Participants who want to use more than one piece of the same equipment need to ask the tournament administration for approval.

Where not provided, competitors are responsible for their personal hardware device, where personal hardware is permitted during the competition. Competitors are furthermore responsible to maintain a set of replacement hardware in the instance that their primary device(s) fail.

8.2 Flags and country identifiers

No flags and country identifiers are allowed to be present as part of player apparel or individual items during the tournament.

8.3 Internet access

Internet access on tournament computers is disabled for all participants.

9. Privacy and Data Protection

By participating in the Event, each Participant acknowledges that EF and/or the Tournament Organizer may process personal data as needed for the administration, operation, integrity, and enforcement of the Event and these Rules. Further information is set out in the applicable [Privacy Policy](#) made available on the EWC event website or otherwise provided to Participants.