



Esports World Cup 2026

Counter-Strike

Rulebook

Foreword

This document outlines the general rules and regulations that must be adhered to at all times when participating in an Esports World Cup Counter-Strike competition. Non-compliance with these rules may result in penalties as outlined herein.

Please note that this document may be supplemented or superseded by additional regulations where explicitly stated.

It is important to note that the tournament administration retains the final authority in all matters. In exceptional cases, decisions may be made that are not explicitly supported or described in this rulebook - or that may even deviate from it - in order to uphold the principles of fair play and sportsmanship.

We sincerely hope that you, as a participant, spectator, or member of the press, enjoy the competition. The tournament administration is committed to ensuring the event is fair, engaging, and enjoyable for everyone involved.

Sincerely,

The tournament administration team

1 Definitions	6
1.1 EWC Global Rulebook	6
1.2 Participants	6
1.3 Tournament administration	6
2 General	7
2.1 Communication	7
2.2 Conditions of participation	7
2.2.1 Age restriction	7
2.2.2 Home country/region	7
2.3 Sponsor restrictions	8
2.4 Player details	8
2.4.1 Nicknames	8
2.4.2 Game account	8
2.5 Roster submissions	8
2.5.1 Standards	8
2.5.2 Team names	9
2.5.3 Changes to the team or roster	9
2.6 Event licences	9
2.6.1 Team licence	9
2.6.1.1 Multiple teams	10
2.6.2 Withdrawal of licence	10
2.7 Penalties and consequences of leaving the event	10
2.7.1 Withdrawing from the event	10
2.7.1.1 Leaving an event during the playoff stage	10
2.7.2 Deletion of matches	11
2.8 Match start	11
2.8.1 Punctuality in offline matches	11
2.8.2 Not being punctual for an offline match	11
2.8.3 Repeated lateness	11
2.8.4 Participants not showing	11
2.9 Tournament Seeding	12
2.9.1 Determining the “better seed”	12
2.9.2 Seeding based on Valve Regional Standings	13
2.10 Video presentation	13
2.11 Voice communication & recording	13
2.12 Valve Regional Standings invitation slot priority	13
2.13 EWC Counter-Strike wildcard slot transfer protocol	13
2.14 Roster retention	14
2.15 Valve’s Tournament Operating Requirements	14
2.16 Valve Regional Standings invites	14
2.17 Travel & Accommodation Coverage	14
2.18 Internal team communications during a live match	15

2.19 Absences from playing area	15
3 Replacement rules	16
3.1 Replacements	16
3.1.1 Differentiating drop-outs and ineligible teams	16
3.1.2 Replacement tiebreaker	16
3.1.3 Reseeding	16
3.2 Offline events replacement rules	16
3.2.1 Events with multiple stages	16
3.2.2 Events with multiple VRS invitation criteria	17
3.2.3 Global Valve Regional Standings slots	17
3.2.4 Sub-list Valve Regional Standings slots	17
3.2.5 Qualifier slots	17
3.2.6 Last minute replacements	18
4 Event rules	19
4.1 Equipment	19
4.1.1 SOCD features	19
4.2 Configs and drivers	19
4.3 Player and tournament brief	20
4.4 Technical checklist	20
4.5 Arrival day	20
4.5.1 Unnecessary items	20
4.5.2 Internet access	20
4.6 Setup period	20
4.7 Event credentials	21
4.8 Publisher bans	21
4.9 Additional team personnel	21
4.10 Seating order	21
5 Roster Restrictions	22
5.1 Lineup	22
5.1.1 Roster submission deadline	22
5.2 Substitutions	22
5.2.1 Substitutions in offline competitions	22
5.2.2 Coach substitutions	23
5.3 Lineup restrictions during an event	23
5.4 Lineup restrictions during a match	23
6 Game Specific Rules	24
6.1 Game version	24
6.2 Anti-cheat	24
6.3 Map selection procedures	24
6.3.1 Map pool	24
6.3.2 Process	24
6.3.3 Best-of-one (Bo1) matches	25
6.3.4 Best-of-three (Bo3) matches	25

6.3.5 Best-of-five (Bo5) matches	25
6.4 Match settings	26
6.4.1 Overtimes	26
6.5 Match server	26
6.6 In-game chat	26
6.7 Coaching	27
6.7.1 Banned coaches	27
6.8 Usage of pause function	28
6.8.1.1 Technical pause	28
6.8.1.2 Timeout	28
6.8.2 Tournament administration pause	28
6.9 Player settings	28
6.9.1 Configuration files	28
6.9.2 Warmup maps	28
6.9.3 Scripts	29
6.9.4 Graphics drivers	29
6.9.5 Overlays	29
6.9.6 Custom data	29
6.9.7 Device drivers	29
6.9.8 In-game items	29
6.10 Match procedures	29
6.10.1 Match breaks	29
6.10.2 Number of players	29
6.10.3 Match interruptions	30
6.10.4 Use of bugs and glitches	30
6.10.4.1 New positions	31
6.10.5 Reconnecting	31
7 Copyright notice	32

1 Definitions

1.1 EWC Global Rulebook

Counter-Strike 2 tournament is under the jurisdiction of the EWC Global Rulebook:

<https://esportsworldcup.com/en/global-rulebook>

1.2 Participants

An event participant is a team or a player that is taking part in an EWC CS2 competition. Any member of an EWC CS2 team is a participant of that team and is locked to it, regardless of whether or not the person has played for said team. No player can at the same time be a part of more than one organisation taking part in the EWC CS2 tournament.

1.3 Tournament administration

The event is administered by EFG and shall have the following administrators:

Michał 'michau' Słowiński	Head of Global Tournament Management
Matt 'mattsp' Spencer	Senior Tournament Manager Counter-Strike
Matt 'Molive' Olliff	Tournament Manager Counter-Strike
Renan 'Sefirofe' Mesquita	Tournament Manager Counter-Strike
Aisling 'Aisling' Klimoski	Tournament Manager Counter-Strike

2 General

2.1 Communication

The main communication method for the EWC Counter-Strike event is email. When contacting participants of the EWC Counter-Strike event, the tournament administration will use contact email addresses that have been supplied to them. Where a contact email address is not known, the tournament administration may use the email addresses registered to participants on their FACEIT profiles.

Discord servers may also be utilised to facilitate match coordination, broadcast management, and event operations. In such cases, the relevant Discord servers will be explicitly communicated via email by the tournament administration.

All inquiries must be directed via email to the following address: csref@efg.gg.

2.2 Conditions of participation

The following conditions must be met in order to participate in the event.

2.2.1 Age restriction

All participants of an event must be sixteen (16) years of age at the time of the first mandatory day of the competition, including media days and qualifiers.

2.2.2 Home country/region

A participant's home country is determined by the citizenship of the majority of its players. The corresponding home region is the region to which this country belongs (as outlined in Appendix 6.1). If no majority exists due to a tie, the team will be assigned to the region with greater representation in the Major (i.e. Europe, then Americas, then Asia). For example, a team with two European players, two Americas players and one Asian player would be assigned to Europe. For mixed-region rosters that include a player whose citizenship does not fall under one of the three main regions, that player will be assigned to the lowest "priority" region represented on the team. For example, a team with two European players, two Americas players and one South African player would be assigned to the Americas. If a full roster consists of players whose citizenships do not fall under one of the three main regions (Europe, Asia, Americas), the team may participate in European competitions. For competitions divided into subregions (e.g. North America and South America under the Americas), a roster must have a plurality of players with citizenship from the relevant subregion. If no plurality exists due to a tie, the team will be placed into the stronger region, based on Major performance. In the Americas, the priority is South America > North America, while in Asia, the priority is East Asia > Oceania > West Asia. For example, a team with two North American players, two South American players and one European player would be assigned to South America.

All invitations will adhere strictly to the regional classifications outlined in the Valve Regional Standings and will follow the invite priority specified in the 2.22 Valve Regional Standings invitation slot priority rule. For example, a team classified as European in the Valve Regional

Standings will only be eligible for a European Valve Regional Standings invitation (whether to the main event or a closed qualifier). Similarly, if a team is classified as both European and Asian in the Valve Regional Standings, the invitation slot priority will determine which of the two invites they will receive.

2.3 Sponsor restrictions

Sponsors that violate Valve's IP, including companies that interact with players' Valve game inventories, are also prohibited.

2.4 Player details

When requested, players are required to send us all requested information including, but not limited to: full name, contact details, date of birth, address, game account and photo.

2.4.1 Nicknames

Players are only allowed to use their own official nicknames - without any additions - during EWC matches. Every player that has officially registered their nickname with Valve for sponsored events is required to use the same nickname for all EWC matches. Players that have not registered their nickname for Valve sponsored events may request a nickname change by emailing the tournament administration team. All nicknames must be in line with the EWC Code of Conduct. EWC may reject nicknames that include political, religious or offensive matters or sentiments, as judged by EWC.

2.4.2 Game account

Participants are required to submit game account information during the roster submission process or FACEIT sign up page for the event. Where a participant has submitted a game account for a past event and wishes to use a different game account, they must resubmit their game account information. Unless specifically allowed by the tournament administration prior to the start of a match, participants may not use a different game account to the one submitted for the event.

2.5 Roster submissions

2.5.1 Standards

Roster submissions must include the following information:

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

EWC reserves the right to request additional team information as required. Failure to provide any of this information may render the participant ineligible to compete in the tournament.

2.5.2 Team names

Team names may not have any extensions such as “CS team”. They may only consist of the team name and, if allowed, a title sponsor. EWC reserves the right to shorten team names where necessary or appropriate. All team names must be in line with the EWC Code of Conduct. EWC may reject team names that include political, religious or offensive matters or sentiments, as judged by EWC.

2.5.3 Changes to the team or roster

Any changes to the team or roster must be approved by the tournament administration before the changes are allowed to be implemented. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Adding or removing players
- Changing the team name
- Changing the team logo

2.6 Event licences

2.6.1 Team licence

Event licences will be awarded to a legal entity (registered association/organisation, Ltd company, and so on). Any legal entity is only allowed to hold one licence in the same competition. No other legal entity controlled by the same person/people is allowed to hold more than one licence. An organisation or team may only hold a licence for 1 roster throughout the entirety of an event. It is strictly forbidden for an organisation to change which lineup represents them during an event.

If no such entity exists for the team in question, or the existing entity has never been reported to and accepted by the tournament administration, a restricted licence may be awarded to the team where the team leader or organiser will be the designated contact person. This person will be responsible for keeping the team information up to date.

Regardless of the license type, the license remains valid only if the majority of players who either received the invitation or actively participated in the event or its qualifiers remain together as a team. In cases where a team used more than five players during the event or the qualifier that resulted in obtaining the license, the majority will be determined based on the players with the highest number of matches played.

The licence holder or representative is responsible for all actions and commitments of the team. Any changes in the team licence must be reported to and accepted by the tournament administration before they can be implemented. The licence holder decides who the recipient of any prize money won under its licence will be.

Any participant surrendering their event licence by choice may be precluded from being granted another licence in the same competition.

2.6.1.1 Multiple teams

Organisations are not permitted to operate multiple squads participating in the EWC CS event.

2.6.2 Withdrawal of licence

EWC reserves the right to withdraw an event licence from any participant(s), if EWC feels that they have not behaved within the guidelines set out by EWC and its governing organisation.

2.7 Penalties and consequences of leaving the event

2.7.1 Withdrawing from the event

Participants are considered to have withdrawn from the event if they leave during the ongoing stage, between the two stages of the event, including its qualifying stage (e.g., qualifier and main event), or if they leave after accepting the invitation. In such cases, the participants will forfeit all prize money accumulated for the event and will be penalised with a ban from receiving an invitation to the next event of the same tier (for example, withdrawal from a Tier 1 event will result in ineligibility for the next Tier 1 event for which the participant would otherwise have been invited). This ban applies only to invitations that have not yet been awarded. If a participant is already confirmed for a future event, the ban will take effect from the subsequent event. If a team becomes ineligible for an invitation, it will also be prohibited from participating in any qualifying stages, where applicable. In addition, the ban applies only to invitations issued via the VRS and does not affect wildcard invitations.

The team that withdraws will also be fined to cover the cost of their replacement (including, but not limited to, flight expenses for the replacement team and any additional costs incurred). If EWC is unable to find a replacement, the original matches assigned to the team will be forfeited.

Additionally, in exceptional cases, tournament administration will waive penalties (excluding the cost of replacement) in the event of a medical emergency or visa complications. To qualify for an exemption:

- For medical emergencies, the team must provide a letter from a licensed doctor explicitly stating that the participant is unable to travel to the event.
- For visa complications, the team must provide official documentation confirming that the visa was denied for reasons outside the participant's control (e.g., not due to an incorrectly submitted or incomplete application).

2.7.1.1 Leaving an event during the playoff stage

A team is considered to have left the event if they forfeit an elimination match during the playoff stage. If a team forfeits before the first round of the playoffs, they will be replaced by the next highest ranked team from the previous stage of the tournament, when possible. If a team forfeits during a later elimination round of the playoffs, the participant will be given a final placing as if they had lost in the previous elimination round, only earning the prize money or rewards from that placing.

2.7.2 Deletion of matches

All matches involving participants that have left a stage of the event after it has started will be reset and deleted. In playoff brackets, the most recent or the next upcoming match (depending on the situation) of the participant will be considered a default win for their opponent.

2.8 Match start

2.8.1 Punctuality in offline matches

Players are expected to arrive at their designated tournament area no later than fifty (50) minutes before their scheduled match start time, unless otherwise explicitly stated by the tournament administration. Coaches are expected to arrive at their designated tournament area no later than thirty (30) minutes before their scheduled match start time, unless otherwise explicitly stated by the tournament administration. If a participant knows that they will not be on time to their tournament area, they must notify the tournament administration at the earliest point possible. Mitigating circumstances and attempts to inform EWC about the lateness and minimise its impact may be taken into account when applying penalties. It is the participant's responsibility to monitor the tournament schedule, and any announcements made about changes to it, in order to avoid lateness.

2.8.2 Not being punctual for an offline match

On the first occasion that a participant fails to arrive at their designated tournament area within the first ten (10) minutes of their expected arrival time, they will receive a warning. After that point, for every five (5) minutes the participant is late, they will receive one (1) penalty point, for a maximum of eight (8) penalty points.

If the lateness continues beyond the scheduled match start time, or if an issue occurs as a result of the late arrival of the participant which delays the match start time such as not yet being ready to play, participants will be awarded one and a half (1.5) penalty points for every two (2) minutes until fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled start time of the match, for a maximum of twelve (12) penalty points. At that point, the participant will be considered a no-show.

2.8.3 Repeated lateness

If a participant is late in more than two matches in the same competition, they will be considered a repeat offender and the standard punishments will be increased as follows:

Match 3 and further incidents: +100%

In case a participant is considered a repeat offender on multiple occasions, they will be subject to the increased penalties at the start of the next EWC competition they attend. This will be communicated to the participant before their first match.

2.8.4 Participants not showing

Participants who are not ready to play within 15 minutes of the scheduled match start time will forfeit the match. For single-map matches, failure to be ready within this timeframe will

result in a full match forfeit. For multi-map series, a partial forfeit will apply after the initial 15 minutes, with the opponent being awarded one map. The participant will then be granted a further 15 minutes to be ready to play. If the participant remains unready after this second 15-minute period, additional maps will be awarded to the opponent at 15-minute intervals until the opponent has been awarded the number of maps required to win the series, at which point a full series win will be declared.

In the event of a match forfeit, teams will automatically receive an additional five (5) penalty points, in addition to any penalty points incurred for lateness. During offline competitions, if a team attends the event but forfeits all of its matches, it will be considered withdrawn from the event and will be subject to the same consequences as a pre-event withdrawal. Where delays are caused by circumstances beyond a participant's control, and where the schedule permits, the match may be rescheduled at the discretion of the tournament administration.

2.9 Tournament Seeding

2.9.1 Determining the “better seed”

Whenever a clear seeding can be given, one participant will be declared the “better seed”. This participant then has the choice of who starts the map-veto process.

- For the LCQ, groups will be drawn using the snake seeding method based on the VRS rankings declared for seeding in the Additional Information announcement. These seedings will remain fixed for the duration of the entire stage.
- For the LCQ playoffs stage, matchups will be drawn randomly, with group winners facing group runners-up. The only restriction is that teams from the same group cannot face each other in the first round. Group stage standings will determine the higher seed, meaning group winners will always be seeded above group runners-up. In the event of a tie in the later rounds, the same VRS rankings will be used as the tiebreaker.
- For the main event group stage, groups will also be drawn using the snake seeding method based on the VRS rankings declared for seeding in the Additional Information announcement. These seedings will remain fixed for the duration of the stage.
- For the main event playoffs, matchups will again be determined randomly, with group winners facing group runners-up. The only restriction is that teams from the same group cannot face each other in the first round. Group stage standings will determine the higher seed, with group winners seeded above group runners-up. In the event of a tie, the same VRS rankings will be used as the tiebreaker.
 - 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.

If a case is not covered here or still unclear for any reason, contact the tournament administration.

2.9.2 Seeding based on Valve Regional Standings

If the tournament uses Valve Regional Standings for seeding, the specific version of VRS indicated in the Additional Information announcement will be applied. Points will remain unchanged regardless of roster changes.

The seeding date is typically two weeks prior to the start of the event.

2.10 Video presentation

In videos (e.g. interviews, feature videos, camera feeds or similar) that happen from an environment not controlled by EWC, the visible surroundings/background should be kept neutral, clean and presentable. Any plans to showcase sponsors, logos or advertisements (e.g. in a background banner or placed items) need to be approved by EWC beforehand. Obvious promotion of sponsor products (including consumption) is not allowed. Brand logos may never appear bigger than the players' faces on screen.

2.11 Voice communication & recording

The voice communication tool used by EWC is TeamSpeak. Communication during matches is limited to the five players on the server and one coach. EWC will provide and monitor a local TeamSpeak server.

EWC reserves the right to record all communication during the matches. The tournament administration will join the TeamSpeak channel thirty (30) minutes before the start of the match, and will start recording the communications fifteen (15) minutes before the start of the match.

2.12 Valve Regional Standings invitation slot priority

Where an EWC Counter-Strike event includes multiple Valve Regional Standings invitation criteria, regional Valve Regional Standings slots for each event stage will be allocated before global Valve Regional Standings slots. In the event that a team would be invited to a particular stage of the event based on more than one regional Valve Regional Standings, the invitation will align with Valve's Major process and be attributed to the region with the greater representation in the Major (i.e., Europe, followed by Americas, and then Asia). Similarly, for competitions with subregional divisions (e.g., the Americas split into North America and South America), invitations will follow a similar logic, with Major performance determining the subregional priority. Within the Americas, teams eligible for both subregions will be placed in South America. In Asia, the priority order will be: East Asia > Oceania > West Asia.

2.13 EWC Counter-Strike wildcard slot transfer protocol

Only the winning team of an EWC Counter-Strike competition, affiliate event, or any other event with an allocated slot is eligible to receive a direct invitation. If the winning team has already secured a direct invitation or declines the invitation to the EWC Counter-Strike competition, the slot will be transferred to the Global Valve Regional Standings pool for global events or to the relevant Regional Valve Regional Standings pool for regional events. The slot does not pass down to the second-place team from the qualifying tournament.

2.14 Roster retention

Participants must keep a majority of players that match the criteria of the qualifier from which they qualified for the event. For example, a participant who competes in and wins a Germany qualifier must keep a majority of German players for the event. Similarly, a participant that competes in a Europe qualifier must keep a majority of European players.

For participants who are invited to an event, they must retain a majority of players that match the criteria for which the team was invited. For example, a participant invited in the Valve Regional Standings South America slot must keep a majority of South American players.

Participants who have received a special exception to compete in another region's qualifiers, or who have moved regions in the time since qualifying for or being invited to an event, are not held to this standard but they must still keep a majority of the players they used to qualify or that were a part of the invited line-up.

2.15 Valve's Tournament Operating Requirements

EWC event is classified as Ranked Event under Valve's Tournament Operating Requirements. As such, all rules outlined in these requirements are applicable to the EWC event. The full set of rules can be reviewed here:

https://github.com/ValveSoftware/counter-strike_rules_and_regs/blob/main/tournament-operation-requirements.md

2.16 Valve Regional Standings invites

EWC event will determine their Direct Valve Regional Standings invitations based on the monthly publication provided by Valve, available here:

https://github.com/ValveSoftware/counter-strike_regional_standings/tree/main/invitation

The invitation date will be communicated in an official announcement prior to the event.

Teams invited based on the Valve Regional Standings must retain at least three out of the five core players listed in the VRS on the Invite Date. Additionally, the team must satisfy the original regional criteria (e.g., for a European VRS invite, at least three of the five players must hold European citizenship).

2.17 Travel & Accommodation Coverage

EWC will cover Travel & Accommodation for up to 7 team members per team, distributed as below:

Obligatory 6 position covered

- 5 Main Players
- 1 Coach

Optional 0-1 position covered

- 0-1 Coach
- 0-1 Substitute
- 0-1 Additional Staff Member

2.18 Internal team communications during a live match

Communications between members of the same team during a live match remain subject to this rulebook. The private nature of team communications does not exempt participants from the standards of conduct set out herein. Hate speech or discriminatory language of any kind is strictly prohibited in internal team communications. Participants who engage in such conduct may be subject to penalties at the discretion of tournament officials, including warnings, fines, or further disciplinary action.

2.19 Absences from playing area

Toilet breaks and any other non-emergency absences from the playing area are not permitted unless an exemption has been requested and approved by the tournament team via email prior to the event, or in the case of an unforeseen medical emergency. During live matches, players must remain seated for the duration of each map.

3 Replacement rules

3.1 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.

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

3.1.1 Differentiating drop-outs and ineligible teams

A drop-out is defined as being a participant who accepted an invitation to an EWC Counter-Strike competition but, at a later date, is unable to attend and therefore must be replaced. For example, a team who qualified but is unable to obtain travel visas in time.

An ineligible team is defined as being a participant who an invitation is not extended to due to other factors. For example, a team who is already qualified to a specific EWC competition is not eligible to receive a second invitation.

3.1.2 Replacement tiebreaker

If participants have identical scores or positions on the relevant invitation list or qualifier, preference will be given to the participant with the higher ranking in the Valve Regional Standings.

If that leaves several options, the tournament administration will make a choice based on other criteria or/and a random draw.

3.1.3 Reseeding

If any dropouts occur more than 10 days before the event's start date, the tournament will be reseeded. If the dropout happens within 10 days of the tournament's start, the replacement team will inherit the dropped team's position in the tournament. However, they will be assigned the lowest available seed in that stage for the purposes of the map veto. All teams seeded below the dropped team will move up one spot in the seeding for the map veto.

3.2 Offline events replacement rules

3.2.1 Events with multiple stages

For events with multiple stages, if a team withdraws from a later stage before the start of the event, the highest-ranked team in the global Valve Regional Standings at the time of withdrawal will be promoted from the earlier stage. The vacant slot in the earlier stage will subsequently be filled following the guidelines outlined in the rules below.

3.2.2 Events with multiple VRS invitation criteria

For events that include multiple Valve Regional Standings invitation criteria (e.g., VRS Global and VRS Asia), the defined invitation priority stipulates that regional invites take precedence over global ones. In the event of a withdrawal, any vacated regional slot will first be filled by a team already accepted into the event via a global VRS invite - provided they meet the relevant regional criteria. The resulting vacant global slot will then be filled according to the replacement guidelines outlined below. For example, if an Asian team originally invited through VRS Asia withdraws, the next best Asian team already accepted through VRS Global will be moved to fill that regional slot, and a new team will be invited to replace the vacated global slot.

3.2.3 Global Valve Regional Standings slots

If a team invited via the global Valve Regional Standings withdraws more than two months prior to the event's start date, their slot will be awarded to the next highest-ranked team from the latest available global invitation Valve Regional Standings at the time of the withdrawal.

For withdrawals occurring less than two months before the event's start date, invitations will be extended only to teams with valid visas for the region or country in which the tournament is taking place. Invited teams will have 24 hours to provide proof of these visas unless a valid reason is provided to justify an extension.

3.2.4 Sub-list Valve Regional Standings slots

If a team invited via one of the sub-lists of the Valve Regional Standings withdraws more than two months prior to the event's start date, their slot will be awarded to the next highest-ranked team from the latest available invitation sub-list of the Valve Regional Standings for the same region at the time of the withdrawal.

For withdrawals occurring less than two months before the event's start date, invitations will be extended only to teams with valid visas for the region or country in which the tournament is taking place. Invited teams will have 24 hours to provide proof of these visas unless a valid reason is provided to justify an extension.

If no such team exists, the slot will be reassigned to the next highest-ranked team from the latest available global invitation Valve Regional Standings at the time of the withdrawal.

3.2.5 Qualifier slots

If a team qualified via one of the regional qualifiers withdraws more than two months prior to the event's start date, their slot will be awarded to the next highest-placed team from the closed qualifier of the respective region (e.g., if the winner of the European closed qualifier withdraws, the slot will pass to the second-placed team from the same qualifier).

For withdrawals occurring less than two months before the event's start date, invitations will be extended only to teams with valid visas for the region or country where the tournament is taking place. Invited teams must provide proof of these visas within 24 hours, unless a valid reason is provided to justify an extension.

If no such team exists, the slot will be reassigned to the next highest-ranked team from the latest available global invitation Valve Regional Standings at the time of the withdrawal.

3.2.6 Last minute replacements

Any withdrawal occurring less than two weeks prior to the event's start date will result in the invitation being granted to the highest-ranked team on the Valve Regional Standings from the host region of the event. Only teams with valid visas for the region or country where the tournament is being held will be considered. Invited teams must provide proof of these visas within 24 hours, unless a valid reason is provided to justify an extension.

4 Event rules

4.1 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.

It is expressly prohibited to attempt to modify any BIOS settings on computers provided by EWC, in tournament or practice areas.

4.1.1 SOCD features

The use of Simultaneous Opposing Cardinal Directions (SOCD) features, including but not limited to Snap Tap, Rappy Snappy, or any similar mechanisms that produce equivalent outcomes, is strictly prohibited. Non-compliance with this rule may result in penalties, ranging from a default map loss to disqualification from the tournament.

4.2 Configs and drivers

All participants must send in their configs and list of required drivers (software names and version numbers) by a specific deadline set by the tournament administration before the event. If any participant doesn't send in their configs and drivers, they may have to manually set up their config on site and play with default drivers. The team will not receive additional time to set up their config manually.

Submitted config folders may only include:

CS2 Convar Configs:

Steam\userdata\YOUR_ID\730\local\cfg\cs2_machine_convars.vcfg

Steam\userdata\YOUR_ID\730\local\cfg\cs2_user_convars_0_slot0.vcfg

CS2 Key Bind Config:

userdata\YOUR_ID\730\local\cfg\cs2_user_keys_0_slot0.vcfg

CS2 Video Settings:

userdata\YOUR_ID\730\local\cfg\cs2_video.txt

Additionally, each participant is allowed to submit one other configuration file with any required aliases, along with a text file with any other settings, e.g. launch options, NVIDIA or monitor settings, or a requested spotify playlist.

4.3 Player and tournament brief

The player and tournament briefs are documents that are sent to the participants by mail before the tournament. They are meant as extensions to the rulebook for a specific event and are equally binding.

4.4 Technical checklist

After completing their setup process the player will sign the technical checklist. This process exists to ensure the integrity of the system used to compete before the match starts. Technical pauses caused by problems that should have been noticed if the checklist had been properly followed will be punished with one (1) penalty point, as well as any relevant penalties for delays caused. By signing this document, participants confirm that they are ready to start their match as scheduled. Participants may be forced to start the match even if a technical issue arises that would have been resolved during the checklist process.

4.5 Arrival day

Participants must arrive at the player hotel by the date designated as the Arrival Date by EWC. Failure to do so will result in the same penalties that a team would receive if it withdrew from the competition. No penalties will be imposed where delayed travel is caused by circumstances beyond the participant's control (e.g. cancelled flight) or where a participant resides locally and is therefore not required to stay at the player hotel.

4.5.1 Unnecessary items

Items that are not immediately necessary (e.g. clothing that is not being worn, bags etc) have to be stored out of sight as indicated by EWC.

Paper versions of documents for tactical purposes are allowed on desks in reasonable sizes and numbers (e.g. a notebook).

4.5.2 Internet access

Internet access on tournament computers is disabled for all participants.

4.6 Setup period

A setup period of at least thirty (30) minutes will be provided before an offline match. This period covers the setup of peripherals, configuration of settings and warm-up time. The setup period begins at the conclusion of the previous match and ends before teams are taken off stage for the walk-ons.

Both teams will be offered the same amount of setup time and will only be allowed into the tournament area at the same time. An exception to this is when one (1) participant is late due to something within their control (i.e., arriving late for their shuttle). Where a participant is late due to circumstances not within their control (i.e., traffic on route to the tournament venue),

the other participant will not be given access to the tournament area until they are both on site.

Any time spent away from the tournament area during this thirty (30) minute period will still be considered as part of the setup period. Additional setup time may be given, at the discretion of the lead referee, if a technical issue arises over the course of the setup period that could not have been foreseen beforehand. Any technical issues caused by player equipment (i.e., peripherals or in-ears) will not result in extra setup time being given, nor will it be given for technical issues that arise after a player has chosen not to start setting up when the tournament area was opened for them.

4.7 Event credentials

Participants will be issued with credentials granting access to the event location. These credentials are issued to a specific individual and must not be transferred to another person. Participants are responsible for the safekeeping of their own credentials and any loss of credentials will result in a fine of \$500.

4.8 Publisher bans

Counter-Strike VAC bans are specifically honoured, but only for five (5) years after they have been issued.

4.9 Additional team personnel

Any additional team personnel granted access to the tournament area or other non-public event areas by EWC are bound by this rulebook and must comply with all applicable rules and requirements. This includes, but is not limited to, standards of conduct, apparel requirements and sponsorship restrictions. For the avoidance of doubt, additional team personnel may not wear clothing or apparel displaying sponsors that are prohibited under these rules. Any additional team personnel granted access to the tournament area during a match (e.g. content team personnel) must wear all-black attire unless otherwise approved by EWC.

4.10 Seating order

Participants are allowed to change their seating order on a per match basis, if they wish to. In order for any changes to be made, the participant must notify the Tournament Manager via email no less than 4 hours prior to the scheduled start time of the match where they wish to make the change detailing the new seating plan for that match. Where no notification has been made, the seating plan will be assumed to be that which was registered on the Media Day. In situations where a change notification cannot be sent 4 hours prior to the scheduled match start time, for example when the opponent in the match has not yet been determined, seating plan changes must be notified no later than 10 minutes after the end of the match that will determine the opponent. Outside of the above mentioned scenarios, no seating plan changes will be accepted within 4 hours of a match's scheduled start time. Any notifications not sent via email will not be considered or permitted.

5 Roster Restrictions

5.1 Lineup

Teams have to submit their lineup for offline and online events before the deadline given by the tournament administration.

- The lineup must contain five (5) starter players
- In addition, the lineup may contain a single coach and up to five (5) substitute players for the event

All players and coaches will be considered part of the lineup, even if they have not participated in any of the matches. Where a team does not have the maximum number of substitutes registered (5), the registered coach may be used as a substitute player.

It is suggested that every EWC team has substitutes added in their roster to compensate for any potential player losses during an event.

Each participant shall publicly announce its roster once the roster submission deadline has passed. If a participant fails for any reason to announce its roster by that time, EWC retains the right to publish said roster through its own marketing activities promoting the competition.

5.1.1 Roster submission deadline

The final roster that will be used at the event has to be reported before the deadline given by the tournament administration for that event (usually 14 days before the start of the first match of the event). The roster must contain five (5) starters, up to five (5) substitute players if applicable, and one (1) coach if applicable. EWC considers contracts or agreements between players and teams to commence two (2) days before their first tournament match.

During the qualifiers, players can be added to the roster any time before the check-in deadline, but not at all once it has started, unless there is a period of at least 24 hours without matches.

Emergencies (e.g. medical ones) will be handled outside this rule on a case-by-case basis. Where an emergency results in an addition after the roster submission deadline has passed, a \$1,000 fine will be given.

5.2 Substitutions

Only players that are a part of the submitted roster can be substituted in. The opposing team and tournament administration have to be informed beforehand.

5.2.1 Substitutions in offline competitions

Participants are allowed to substitute players between maps in a series or between matches. Any changes to the starting lineup for the upcoming map have to be reported to the tournament administration after the map veto or immediately after the end of the previous map, whichever is later.

Substitutes will be required to set up right after the end of the preceding map and will not receive additional time to set up.

In case this is the first match of an offline event (or of a new stage of an offline event with a break of over 30 hours between stages), the lineup has to be reported to the tournament administration at least 24 hours before the scheduled start of the match.

5.2.2 Coach substitutions

Participants registered on a roster are allowed to be substituted for the coach during their match. A coach substitution can only be made in-between matches, and must be reported to the tournament administration after the map veto for the relevant match.

5.3 Lineup restrictions during an event

Once a participant plays for the first time in a qualifier, their lineup has to contain a majority of that first lineup until the end of the main event, throughout all qualifiers and stages of the event. This also implies that an organisation that tried and failed to qualify with one team is not allowed to sign a new team to still take part in the event.

The above lineup restriction also applies for participants that were invited to the event or a later stage of the qualifiers, in that case the default lineup of the participant at the time of the invitation or a specific lineup named in context with the invitation is relevant. Invited participants are considered the same as if they had played throughout the entire qualifier process up until the stage that they have been invited to.

5.4 Lineup restrictions during a match

Participants are required to comply with all eligibility rules for the duration of the match. This includes, but is not limited to, roster restrictions (e.g. maintaining a majority of the invited or qualified roster at all times) and regional restrictions (e.g. ensuring the roster complies with regional requirements). These rules apply to the entire team throughout the match. If an eligible player is unable to play, they may only be replaced by another eligible player. Failure to comply with this rule will result in a match forfeit.

6 Game Specific Rules

6.1 Game version

The competition will use the latest available version of the game client. If the latest available version is considered unplayable due to bugs or extreme balance changes within close proximity to the event by the tournament administration, an older version might be used if it's available for rollback. Any update during the event may result in a rollback to the initial version (if possible).

6.2 Anti-cheat

The FACEIT Client is mandatory for all players to use for the full duration of all matches played online and offline. If a player cannot use the FACEIT Client, then they are not allowed to take part in a match. Players are responsible for having their login credentials available to them and their 2-factor authentication setup correctly at the time of the competition.

6.3 Map selection procedures

6.3.1 Map pool

The competition will be played on the current competitive map pool (Valve Active Duty Map Group) which consists of the following maps:

- Cache
- Inferno
- Mirage
- Nuke
- Dust2
- Ancient
- Anubis

6.3.2 Process

The offline map selection process has to start 60 minutes before the scheduled match start. If a participant is 5 minutes late for the announced map selection process time, their remaining picks and/or bans will be randomised by the tournament administration. In all instances, the time at which the map selection process is completed does not necessarily indicate the exact start time of the match. The map selection process may be completed (potentially significantly) earlier if ordered so by the tournament administration. Completed map vetoes must not be made public before EWC has done so.

Each participant has a total of 150 seconds to make all of their picks and bans, which can be split up on the single steps as they prefer. When the time expires, the remaining picks and/or bans will be randomised by the tournament administration.

When done in person, only two members of each team can participate in the map selection process. Otherwise the whole team can be part of the map selection process. During the

map selection process, the first statement coming from the participant towards the tournament administration will count as their ban or pick and it cannot be reverted.

Participants will be given access to the veto platform on their arrival and should make note of the password they are given. This password should never be shared with anyone outside of their team.

If a participant experiences a bug or issue with the vetobot system during the process of completing a match veto, they must make it known to the tournament administration immediately. The veto will be restarted and the bans and picks must be identical to any made in the original veto, up until the point of the issue occurring. If the tournament administration is not made aware of any issues with the veto until the process has fully concluded, the result will stand and the veto will not be remade.

6.3.3 Best-of-one (Bo1) matches

The better seeded team decides whether they will be Team A or Team B. Team A starts the process and the order of the ban/pick is as follows:

1. Team A removes one map.
2. Team B removes two maps.
3. Team A removes two maps.
4. Team B removes one map.
5. The remaining map will be played.

The starting sides on the map are determined by a knife round.

6.3.4 Best-of-three (Bo3) matches

The better seeded team decides whether they will be Team A or Team B. Team A starts the process and the order of the ban/pick is as follows:

1. Team A removes one map.
2. Team B removes one map.
3. Team A picks one map.
4. Team B picks one map.
5. Team A removes one map.
6. Team B removes one map.
7. The remaining map is played as a decider, if required.

Every team decides the starting sides on the map choice of their opponent. The starting sides on the last map are determined by a knife round.

6.3.5 Best-of-five (Bo5) matches

The better seeded team decides whether they will be Team A or Team B. Team A starts the process and the order of the ban/pick is as follows:

1. Team A removes one map.
2. Team B removes one map.
3. Team A picks one map.
4. Team B picks one map.
5. Team A picks one map.
6. Team B picks one map.
7. The remaining map is played as a decider, if required.

Every team decides the starting sides on the map choice of their opponent. The starting sides on the last map are determined by a knife round.

6.4 Match settings

The following match settings will be used for tournament matches:

- Rounds: Best out of 24 (mp_maxrounds 24)
- Round time: 1 minute 55 seconds (mp_roundtime 1.92)
- Start money: \$800 (mp_startmoney 800)
- Freeze time: 20 seconds (mp_freezetime 20)
- Buy time: 20 seconds (mp_buytime 20)
- Bomb timer: 40 seconds (mp_c4timer 40)
- Overtime rounds: Best out of 6 (mp_overtime_maxrounds 6)
- Overtime start money: \$12,500 (mp_overtime_startmoney 12500)
- Round restart delay: 5 seconds (mp_round_restart_delay 5)
- Break during half time for Challenger level tournaments and above: 3 - 4 minutes
- Break during half time in overtimes: disabled
- Prohibited items: none (mp_items_prohibited "")

6.4.1 Overtimes

In case of a draw after all 24 regulation rounds have been played, overtime will be played in best out of 6 mode (mp_maxrounds 6) and with \$12,500 start money (mp_startmoney 12500). At the start of each overtime, teams will stay on the side from which they played the previous half - during half-time sides will be swapped. Teams will continue to play overtimes until a winner has been found.

6.5 Match server

Matches are played on servers provided by EWC. Teams are required to check all necessary game aspects (including skins, bugs on load etc.) and network components (latency and server variance) no later than 5 minutes before the scheduled match start. Failure to do so, and to let the match start, will mean that both teams have accepted the state the map and server is in, and the match might be continued under these conditions.

6.6 In-game chat

Usage of the in-game chat during the match is limited to communication with the tournament administration only. Any sort of advertisement or unrelated comments are not allowed before

or after the match. Penalties may be applied if the in-game chat function is used to the goal of annoying the opponent or interrupting the flow of play.

Pre-match communication with opponents is only allowed in a respectful manner.

6.7 Coaching

Participants are allowed to have their registered coach behind them during their official matches. During the match, the coach will be connected to the voice communication system and will only be allowed to talk to the players during tactical pauses and half times. The coach is not allowed to communicate in any other way including, but not limited to, shouting or non-verbal communication (e.g. touching) with players outside of the specified time windows.

Any coach found to be in breach of the communications restrictions outlined in this section will receive one (1) warning from the referees. This warning stays in place for the duration of the event. If this rule is breached again, or the first instance is severe enough, the coach will be ejected from the game and forfeits their right to coach for the remainder of the match. The administration team will pause the match for the duration of the removal and this pause is considered to be equal to a technical pause for communication purposes.

Teams may be given a preemptive warning in case they are considered repeat offenders. In case of a preemptive warning, the first incident will result in the coach being ejected.

An ejected coach cannot be replaced via the coach substitution method laid out in Coach substitutions rule.

Warnings are logged by the tournament administration and may be reviewed for sanctioning purposes.

If the incident has clearly and relevantly impacted the game, the consequences for the coach and/or the team will be accordingly more severe.

6.7.1 Banned coaches

Coaches that have been banned by EWC have the following restrictions applied to them:

- Must not actively or passively communicate with the team starting 15 minutes prior to the official match start time and until the end of the match
- Must not be physically present around the team starting 15 minutes prior to the official match start time and until the end of the match
- Must not be on the game server during official matches
- Must not be on the official match channel on the Discord server
- Must not be part of the official map veto process nor be in communication with the team during it

Additional restrictions may be applied as needed by the tournament administration.

6.8 Usage of pause function

The pause function can be used at any time, but it will only come into effect during freeze time (immediately if used during freeze time, else at the beginning of the next freeze time).

6.8.1.1 Technical pause

If a participant has a problem that prevents them from playing on, they are allowed to use the pause function. The technical pause function can be called by typing ".tech". The participant has to announce the reason for the pause before or immediately after they paused the match. During a technical pause, headsets have to stay on. Unless the tournament administration specifically instructs the participants otherwise, any form of communication including, but not limited to, text, voice or any form of non-verbal communication between players and coaches is strictly forbidden during a technical pause.

6.8.1.2 Timeout

Each participant is allowed to invoke a timeout of thirty (30) seconds up to three (3) times in regulation rounds per map. Timeouts can be called by participants via the in-game vote system (ESC → Call Vote → Call Tactical Timeout). Participants are allowed to take all three timeouts at once by calling them all individually once the previous timeout expires.

If a map reaches overtime (OT), all remaining timeouts will be removed and each team will receive one (1) timeout to be used in that OT (OT1) period. If the map progresses to another OT (OT2), the same process will happen - any remaining timeouts will be removed and each team will receive one (1) more timeout. Banked timeouts cannot be stacked higher than one (1) in overtime.

6.8.2 Tournament administration pause

The tournament administration can pause the game from their station, or from a participant station, when it is required. Communication is only allowed with the tournament administration.

6.9 Player settings

6.9.1 Configuration files

All configuration changes are allowed as long as they do not give an unfair advantage comparable to cheating. A player or team may be penalised for disallowed settings in any config file, regardless of if it is in use, or even stored in the game folder in question. Participants are required to contact the tournament administration if they are unsure on the validity of a command and its value.

6.9.2 Warmup maps

Only the Steam workshop maps 'CSStats Training Map (CSGOHUB)' and 'Aim Botz - Aim Training (CS2)' are available on the tournament image. No other maps will be added upon player request.

6.9.3 Scripts

All scripts are strictly prohibited, with no exceptions. This includes any in-game binds that execute more than one movement and/or attack action. Participants may be penalised for forbidden scripts in any config file, regardless of if it is in use, or even stored in the game folder in question.

6.9.4 Graphics drivers

Any modification or changing of the game using external graphics solutions or other 3rd party programs are strictly prohibited and may be punished as cheating.

6.9.5 Overlays

All kinds of overlays which will show the usage rate of the system in any way in-game (e.g. Discord overlay, Rivatuner Overlay) are forbidden. Overlays which show only the frames per second (FPS) are not forbidden and can be used.

6.9.6 Custom data

Players are not allowed to use any form of custom game files during their official matches. Counter-Strike skins are allowed to be changed, but “Agent” player skins are forbidden. Any other changes including, but not limited to, modification of sprites, radars, HUDs and scoreboards are strictly forbidden.

6.9.7 Device drivers

Using device drivers to pre-install/pre-script illegal macros on the participant’s devices (keyboards, mice, sound cards) is forbidden and may be punished as cheating.

6.9.8 In-game items

All in-game items, including skins, nametags, and stickers (or any combination of stickers), must fully comply with the code of conduct and sponsor restrictions outlined in the General Rules.

6.10 Match procedures

6.10.1 Match breaks

Participants will have at least a 10 minute break between matches and 8 minutes between maps in a best of three (Bo3) and best of five (Bo5) match. In Bo5 matches, teams will also get a break of at least 20 minutes between maps 3 and 4. The exact length of these breaks will be communicated by the tournament administration.

6.10.2 Number of players

All matches have to start with five players per team (5vs5), no other combinations are allowed. If a participant fails to show up with enough players, the match will be counted as a no-show.

If a player disconnects during an ongoing round, the current round will be finished. If the map is not over at that point, the game should be paused until the player can return or be

replaced by a substitute. If the original player is unable to return and no replacement can be brought in, the team has the choice to forfeit the series or to continue it with four players.

If a participant would have to play on with less than four players, the opposing participant will receive a default win.

6.10.3 Match interruptions

If a match is interrupted for reasons beyond the control of the participants (e.g. server or player crash), the tournament administration will restore the round using Counter-Strike's backup & restore feature, but in some scenarios, as detailed below, may decide to replay the round or even a whole match:

- If the issue takes place before any damage or significant gameplay has occurred, and the opponent or referee has been immediately notified, the round will be restored.
- If the issue takes place during a round and after damage has been made, and the outcome of the round can still be determined (e.g. a single player has dropped but others remain), then the round will not be replayed or restored. The round will continue to be played and will count. Special exceptions can be made if the damage dealt was ruled insignificant e.g. accidental teammate damage dealt at the start of the round or if the damage dealt was by the team that was affected by the crash.
- If the issue takes place during the round, after damage has occurred and the outcome of the round cannot be determined (e.g. due to server crash), the match will be restored to the beginning of the round.
- If the issue takes place during the round, after damage has occurred and the outcome of the round is obvious (e.g. one team is saving with 10 seconds remaining), but it cannot be continued due to, for example, a server crash, then the round can be awarded to the team that was likely to win that round.

Matches will not be stopped and/or rounds will not be restored or replayed in cases where it is clearly a participant's fault (e.g. mis-buying a weapon).

6.10.4 Use of bugs and glitches

The intentional use of any bugs, glitches, or errors in the game is forbidden. It is at the tournament administration's discretion as to whether or not the use of said bugs had an effect on the match, and whether or not they will award rounds, or the match, to the opposing team, or if they will force a rematch. The usage of the following bugs is strictly forbidden. If any bug used is not listed here, it is at the tournament administration's discretion whether or not a punishment is necessary:

- Moving through clipped areas where the movement is not intended by the design of the map (any walls, ceilings, floors etc).
- The bomb may not be planted in a location where it cannot be defused
- Planting the bomb in such a way that no one can hear the beeping sound, or the planting sound.
- Pixel walking. A player is considered to be pixel walking if they sit or stand on invisible pixels on the map, where there is no visible edge.

- Disrupting any map features with the use of items (e.g. stopping the train on Overpass).

It is recommended to check with tournament administration whether or not a certain bug or glitch is considered illegal.

The following bugs are explicitly allowed:

- Defusing the bomb through walls and items etc.
- Covering the bomb with objects in the map or graffiti spray
- Using graffiti spray to track the bomb timer
- Silent drops
- So called “surfing” on tubes
- Molotovs that spread through terrain
- So called “infinite” grenade distance throws

The tournament administration reserves the right, retroactively or otherwise, to add more bugs to the list of explicitly allowed bugs.

6.10.4.1 New positions

If any participant wants to use a new position which is not commonly known, it is strongly recommended to contact the tournament administration to check if that position is allowed before using it in any official match. Participants have to consider that it takes time to check new positions and therefore they have to contact tournament administration in a reasonable timeframe before an official match. An exhaustive list of allowed bugs & pixel walks will be maintained [here](#).

6.10.5 Reconnecting

Participants are not allowed to reconnect during the live round. If they encounter a technical issue that requires a reconnect, they should pause the game, state the reason and only then reconnect. If a participant has crashed during the round, they should wait until the round is over and paused before reconnecting. Any breaches of this rule will result in at least one (1) penalty point being awarded.

Joining the wrong team on the server when reconnecting is strictly forbidden.

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