

GETTING INTO COMPETITIVE POKÉMON

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So you think just because you beat the Elite Four you're the champion of the Pokémon world now? Yeah, so are millions of others. If you truly want to prove yourself to the entire Pokémon community take on competitive battling – where real men and women battle it out with tamed creatures.

Competitive Pokémon is a lot like chess, where you'll need to think a few steps ahead if you really want to reach the top. As for the complex mechanics, leave that to me. I'll try to give you as much information as I can. First of all, remember all the things you used to do while playing a Pokémon game? All attacking moves, no switching Pokémon; pick all those up and put them in your cat's litter box. Now, let's start.

Where to Play Competitive Pokémon?
 One of the best places to play is at Pokémon Showdown. It's a simulator which lets you pick any six Pokémon of your choice and maximise their stats along with full freedom to choose items, abilities and moves for them. This means that you don't need to waste your time training them. In other words, everyone battles with perfect genetically engineered Pokémon.



Stats:

Kind of self-explanatory. Stats determine how hard your Pokémon hits, how much beating it can take and how fast it moves. Let's get technical.

- HP: The amount of damage it can take.
- Attack: Determines the power of physical attacks (only used for physical moves).
- Defence: How well it can shield physical attacks.

- Special Attack: Determines the power of special attacks (Only used for special moves).
- Special Defence: How well it can shield special attacks.
- Speed: A Pokémon with a higher speed stat will attack first. Speaking of stats...
IVs: Some people are ugly, others are more gifted; that's exactly what this is. IVs are like genetic points for Pokémon. They are completely random and range from 0-31 for each stat. You can't change them no matter how hard you train them. But you don't need to worry about this since we'll be battling with perfect Pokémon that have 31 IVs in all of their stats.
EVs: This one's even more complicated. EVs are the reason your Pokémon get stronger. Whenever you defeat a Pokémon, it gives you a variable amount EV points. When you get 4 EV points for a particular stat, that stat will increase by 1 point. Different Pokémon give different amounts and EVs corresponding to different stats. A Pokémon can get a maximum of 510 EVs. In competitive Pokémon, people usually divide their EVs into two of the stats to maximise them. Maximise the stats which are already high. Advanced players experiment with this EV thing but I'm a noob.

Natures: Natures modify specific stats

by increasing or decreasing them. Every Pokémon has a nature.

Abilities: Every Pokémon has abilities it can use during a battle. Abilities range from utterly useless to game-winning. They're so important that certain abilities determine the viability of a Pokémon.

Items: Using items (potions, antidotes) are not allowed in competitive Pokémon. Items you give Pokémon to hold are essential. Do a little research on the different items used in competitive battling, things like Choice Bands, Life Orbs and Leftovers.

Moves: Moves are divided into physical and special. Don't give a physical move to a Pokémon whose attack stat is abysmal. Same goes for the other way around.

Advice: When your Pokémon is in danger, switch, no shame in switching. Sometimes you need to predict what the other player will do in order to get an edge. There are a lot of essential non-attacking moves. For all information regarding competitive Pokémon, including tier lists, visit smogon.com. If you want to learn from and battle with local players, have a look at the Facebook group: Bangladeshi Pokémon Battlers. Also, check out the Pokémon World Championships on the official Pokémon Youtube channel.

Shoaib Ahmed Sayam doesn't need coffee because he stays up all night anyway, doing the things he should be doing during the day. Send him John Cena memes at [facebook.com/oribabamama](https://www.facebook.com/oribabamama)

GAME REVIEW

NEED FOR SPEED

MORE LIKE NEED FOR INTERNET

NONY KHONDAKER

Developer: Ghost Games
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Engine: Frostbite
Platforms: PS4 (review platform), XB1
Release Date: November 3, 2015

The Need for Speed franchise went from 100 to 0 after *Carbon*. But the latest entry in the series, simply titled *Need For Speed*, is not only the best NFS game in the recent past but also one of the best ever, provided you have a speedy and stable internet connection.

Need For Speed tells the story of a small but ambitious street racing crew which wants to become the best in Ventura Bay. This game not only brings back the iconic story-telling technique of *Most Wanted* (2005) where live-action cutscenes were used to drive the story forward but also improves on it since the graphics of the game has reached uncanny valley making the transition between cutscenes and gameplay seamless.

The photorealism of the game is its main highlight. Even though NFS has been stale in recent years, the graphics was



making small advances every year. But this year, EA took things to the next level. The PS4 manages to run this game in 1080p at 60fps making it a treat to watch and play. The game has no day-time sequences but the time does go from dusk to dawn and though there are noticeable differences in the lighting of the different time phases, NFS manages to look stunning at all

times.
 The gameplay of the game is where EA made big amends and it certainly has paid off. The deep customization mechanism from the Underground games is back and I shed tears of joy as I could mod my ride after a long, long time. The handling of the car can be customized too and it is a lifesaver. The cars are very few

in number and as an Audi fan, I was disappointed by the absence of Audi. The sandbox-style gameplay from recent entries has made its way into this game as well but the purposelessness hasn't. The story of the game, though nothing special, has removed the morose feeling of a robotic female voice giving you instructions.

The game however has a major downside. This game requires a constant Internet connection and a PS Plus or Xbox Live membership. So, you'll be able to play the game only when your internet, the PS/Xbox server, the EA servers and the NFS servers are all stable at once. This is a rare occurrence and so I can barely play a couple of hours a day.

So, if you think you have a connection stable enough for this game and you are a PS Plus/Xbox Live member, this game is a must buy for you. Otherwise, skip on it and get something that isn't so "needy".

Nony Khondaker is an introvert with immense passion for tech and music. Feel free to send your constructive feedback at nonykhondaker@live.com or follow him on twitter.com/NonyKhondaker