

Nintendo shuts down Super Smash Bros. tournament for using mods to play online

A major *Super Smash Bros.* tournament is canceling plans to move online amid the coronavirus pandemic, following a legal order by Nintendo. As *Polygon* reports, The Big House – typically one of the year’s biggest *Smash* competitions – announced yesterday that it’s shutting down its early December event and offering refunds. “The Big House is heartbroken to share we’ve received a cease and desist from Nintendo,” the organizers wrote on Twitter. “We are forced to comply with the order and cancel The Big House Online.”

Nintendo objected to the organizers using Slippi, a software tool that makes *Super Smash Bros. Melee* playable online. The 2001 GameCube title is a mainstay in competitive *Super Smash Bros.*, and translating its hyper-fast-paced gameplay from an in-person tournament requires unofficial modding.

But in a statement to *Polygon*, Nintendo rejected the decision. “Nintendo appreciates the love and dedication the fighting game community has for the *Super Smash Bros.* series. We have partnered with numerous *Super Smash Bros.* tournaments in the past,” a spokesperson said.

“Unfortunately, the upcoming Big House tournament announced plans to host an online tournament for *Super Smash Bros. Melee* that requires use of illegally copied versions of the game in conjunction with a mod called ‘Slippi’ during their online event. Nintendo therefore contacted the tournament organizers to ask them to stop. They refused, leaving Nintendo no choice but to step in to protect its intellectual property and

brands. Nintendo cannot condone or allow piracy of its intellectual property.”

The Big House Online, held annually since 2011, also included a *Super Smash Bros. Ultimate* tournament. That competition has been canceled as well.

Nintendo has a complicated relationship with both the *Smash* community and the larger world of video games, largely because of its aggressive copyright enforcement. (The company hasn’t actually sold *Melee* or the GameCube for over a decade.) In 2013, it ordered Evo – the world’s largest fighting game tournament – to shut down a planned *Melee* event before quickly reversing its decision. So it’s not a surprising move for the company, but its approach to copyright has hindered taking a long-running event online at a time when there’s really no other option.

<https://www.theverge.com/2020/11/20/21579392/nintendo-big-house-super-smash-bros-melee-tournament-slippi-cease-desist>