

What to watch this weekend (if you like Pokémon)

This weekend, if you want something to keep on in the background that's not just infinite reruns of *The Simpsons* (you know who you are), why not check out these esports-y events: *Pokémon* World Championships 2022 and Games Done Quick's Flame Fatales.

What is Pokémon World Championships 2022?

The *Pokémon* World Championships started Thursday, where the best players across various *Pokémon* games compete to be the very best, like no one ever was. (You see, I am Of A Certain Age, so I had to.) Though live *Pokémon* competitions have been slowly returning, with this year's regional championships happening in-person throughout North America, Europe, and Latin America, *Pokémon* Worlds 2022 marks the return of the biggest championship tournament since the pandemic shut everything down.

No matter what your favorite flavor of *Pokémon* is, there's something for you to watch at Worlds. There's the trading card game, the *Pokkén Tournament DX* fighting game, and, of course, *Sword / Shield* (denoted as VGC). 2022 also marks the first year that *Pokémon Go* and *Pokémon Unite* will get their own categories as well.

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Pokémon esports is a strangely compelling watch. I find the disconnect between how the anime depicts pokémon battles versus the actual games in which you pokémon battle highly

amusing. In the anime, pokémon battles are fast-paced, exciting affairs where the decisions made on a moment's notice are the difference between victory and defeat. Actual *Pokémon* VGC competitions are... nothing like that at all. They're more like chess matches. They're very slow: players input commands within a time limit before they play out on the screen.

And rather than battles being reactive, they are highly proactive. To win a VGC battle, you have to construct a strategy designed to predict what your opponent will do. A lot of the battle happens before pokéballs are even thrown, with the difference between a win and a loss being what 'mon are fielded, what abilities they have, and what items they hold. That sounds kinda boring on paper, but watching it in practice is fascinating.

Conversely, if you want a game that more accurately depicts what the anime thinks pokémon battles are, it's *Pokkén Tournament DX*. It's in this game that you can actually control your 'mon the way Ash has been for the last 25 years. Also, the commentating is some of the most hype you can hear in all of esports.

When is Pokémon World Championships 2022?

Worlds has already started, but you can check the remaining schedule [here](#). The event takes place in London, so if you're across the pond, you'll have to get up early to watch the events live. Thankfully there are VODs on the official *Pokémon* YouTube page, and they're uploaded pretty quickly. The *Pokkén Tournament DX* championship just finished, and you should watch it – it's fantastic.

Flame Fatales 2022

If *Pokémon* isn't your thing, there's also Flame Fatales, an all-women Games Done Quick charity speedrun event. Games Done Quick events are like gaming Christmas. It's the perfect background noise for when you're working, or if it's later in the day when the good stuff gets run, it's the perfect capstone to an evening.

So what, where, and when do I watch Flame Fatales 2022?

Flame Fatales starts on Sunday, August 21st, at 12:30PM ET on Twitch and lasts until the 27th. It's not 24 hours of wall-to-wall speedrunning with breaks taking place at night for sleep, but the stream will still run, mimicking the strange but fascinating rise of "sleep streams."

I appreciate Flame Fatales and Games Done Quick's other events because we get the chance to see games that aren't normally speedrun during the main S- and AGDQ events. Perusing the schedule, an *Unpacking* and *Stardew Valley* speedrun on the 21st jump out as must-watches, as well as a "boyfriendless" run of *Boyfriend Dungeon*. On the final day, a certified banger of a finale features runs of *Celeste*, *Bayonetta 2*, *Titanfall 2*, a *Super Mario World All-Stars* randomizer run, and a *Super Mario World* ROM hack that sounds like it's a mashup between *SMW* and rhythm game *Sayonara Wild Hearts*.

You're spoiled for choice this weekend if you enjoy competitive video game events. And if neither *Pokémon Worlds* nor Flame Fatales appeal to you, well, there's always the *Overwatch* League.

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