



VALORANT Professional Esports

First Strike Qualifier Rules

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1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Riot Games, Inc., the owner of the game VALORANT (“**Riot**”), has engaged *Blast* (“**Tournament Operator**”) to operate the VALORANT First Strike (“**First Strike**”) event in *Europe* (“**Region**”) as part of VALORANT Professional Esports. Riot has delegated to the Tournament Operator the responsibility for developing these rules, which will apply to First Strike Qualifiers and all of its games, matches and tournaments that are held in the Region (“**First Strike Qualifier Rules**”).

These First Strike Qualifier Rules apply to and are binding on: (1) the individual (natural person), entity and/or group (“**Owners**”) who registered a team to participate in a First Strike Qualifier event (“**Team**”), and (2) to each Team’s players, managers, coaches, owners and other representatives. A Team’s players, managers, coaches, Owners and other representatives are referred to as the “**Team Members**.”

These First Strike Qualifier Rules are in addition to, and not in lieu of, the VALORANT Professional Esports Global Competition Policy (“**Global Policy**”) and the VALORANT Professional Esports First Strike Competition Rules (“**First Strike Rules**”). In the event of a conflict between the Global Policy and these First Strike Qualifier Rules, the provisions that are most protective of Riot (as determined by Riot in its sole discretion) will govern. Capitalized terms used herein and not otherwise defined herein shall have the meanings assigned to them in the Global Policy, unless the context shall otherwise require.

These First Strike Qualifier Rules form a contract between a Team Member and the Tournament Operator and Riot is a third-party beneficiary of that contract.

****Each Team Member must read, understand, and agree to these First Strike Qualifier Rules, the First Strike Rules and the Global Policy before participating in any First Strike Qualifier event.****

2. First Strike Qualifier Structure

2.1. Definitions of Terms

2.1.1. “Round”

A Round is an instance of competition in a VALORANT map that is played until a winner is determined by one of the following methods, whichever occurs first:

- Spike detonation
- Spike defusal
- Team eliminated before planting or defusing the spike
- Team forfeit

2.1.2. “Map”

A Map means a set of Rounds that is played until one Team wins 13 Rounds, provided that a Map will continue past the 13-Round limit until a Team wins by a margin of at least two Rounds.

2.1.3. “Match”

A Match means a set of Maps that are played until one Team wins a majority of the total maps (e.g., winning two maps out of three in a best-of-three series).

2.2. First Strike Qualifier Format

2.2.1. Qualifier Stage

Up to 512 teams will compete in a best-of-one, single-elimination bracket played over two days. Two Qualifiers will be held per week with thirty-two teams advancing to the Play-In Stage for the respective week, sixteen from each Qualifier.

2.2.2. Play-In Stage

The top thirty-two teams from the Qualifiers will be seeded into a best-of-one, single elimination bracket. The top eight teams will advance to the Playoff Stage

2.2.3. Playoff Stage

The top eight teams will face off in a best-of-three, single-elimination bracket played over two days. The winners of each series will advance to the First Strike Main Event.

First Strike Qualifier Schedule

2.2.4. Week One

Day 1 (November 9) - Qualifier A (Up to round of 64)

Day 2 (November 10) - Qualifier A (Top 16 advance to Play-In)

Day 3 (November 11) - Qualifier B (Up to round of 64)

Day 4 (November 12) - Qualifier B (Top 16 advance to Play-In)

Day 5 (November 13) - Play-In (Two best-of-one maps)

Day 6 (November 14) - Playoff (Two best-of-three matches)

Day 7 (November 15) - Playoff (Two best-of-three matches)

2.2.5. Week Two

Day 1 (November 16) - Qualifier C (Up to round of 64)

Day 2 (November 17) - Qualifier C (Top 16 advance to Play-In)

Day 3 (November 18) - Qualifier D (Up to round of 64)

Day 4 (November 19) - Qualifier D (Top 16 advance to Play-In)

Day 5 (November 20) - Play-In (Two best-of-one maps)

Day 6 (November 21) - Playoff (Two best-of-three matches)

Day 7 (November 22) - Playoff (Two best-of-three matches)

3. Team Member Eligibility

3.1. Player Age

No player shall be considered eligible to participate in any Match comprising a First Strike event before his or her [16th] birthday, defined as having lived [16] full years.

3.2. Ranking Requirement

All players on a Team's roster must have held a ranking for VALORANT of "Immortal 1" or above at the time of registration, or during the preceding Act, for any Official Competition.

3.3. Multiple Teams

Players may not play for or contract with more than one Team at a time. If a player enters such an arrangement or contract, Tournament Officials reserve the right to bar the player from playing any future matches until the situation has been resolved and the player is in compliance with the requirements in this Section.

4. Roster Rules

4.1. Starting Lineups

Teams must set their starting roster for their first Match of the day from the roster submitted to the Tournament Operator pursuant to Section 3.4 of the Global Policy (as modified by any roster changes made pursuant to Section 3.5 of the Global Policy) as follows:

- Deadline will be 1PM CEST each match day

Rosters and starting lineups are considered public at the submission deadline.

4.2. Roster Lock

Teams participating in First Strike Qualifiers may not add or drop players from their roster at any point after November 05, 2020 for Qualifier Week 1, and after November 12, 2020 for Qualifier Week 2.

4.3. Interregional Movement Policy Roster Restrictions

Teams must have at least three of the players on its Starting Roster be Residents of the European Competitive Region, defined as: Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom (UK), Vatican City (Holy See).

4.4. Emergency Substitutions

In the event of an emergency at any point during a Match, a Team will be given up to ten minutes to produce an eligible Substitute. If a replacement cannot be found, then the Team will forfeit. Tournament Officials will determine if an incident qualifies as an emergency. Any substitute must be a member of the Team roster.

4.5 Roster Size

A team must consist of five (5) players who are on the main roster and one (1) substitute.

Coaches will also be counted as substitutes if they are eligible to play.

4.6 Player Equipment

For all online matches, Players will be expected to provide all their own equipment. This includes, but is not limited to computers, keyboards and mice. As the Matches will not be played on an offline server, Players will also need to account for their own DDOS and other computer protection. Exclusive responsibility for protection will fall upon the Players and Teams. Additionally, the stability of the Player's hardware and internet connection are the responsibility of the Player.

4.7 Native Programs

Players may use the native programs MS Paint and Notepad during and before Matches. The following restrictions apply:

- Any language or imagery created by players on native programs will be held to the same conduct standards laid forth in Section 7 of the Global Policy.
- Any advertisement or mention of Teams, sponsors, and brands is prohibited on native programs, including advertisement of personal brands and social media or communication accounts.
- Any strategy notes on native programs created in Pre-Match Setup (Section 6.5) must be deleted before the Match begins.
- Any pause that Tournament Officials deem is a direct or indirect result of players using native programs will be considered impermissible and will be sanctioned. Tournament Officials will not offer round restarts or remakes (as described in Section 8) for bugs that occur due to usage of native programs. For clarity, usage of native programs includes the act of switching application windows to access native programs.

Tournament Officials may sanction players for violations of these restrictions and may prohibit players from accessing native programs in cases of abuse.

5. Match Process

5.1. Changes to Schedule

Tournament Officials may, at their sole discretion, re-order the schedule of Matches within a given day and/or change the date of a Match to a different date or otherwise modify the schedule of Matches. In the event that the Tournament Officials modify a Match schedule, they will notify all Teams as soon as possible.

5.2. Arrival in Lobby

Members of a Team's Active Roster who are participating in a Qualifier held as part of a First Strike event must join the Match Lobby no later than 10 minutes from the time you find out who your opponents are.

5.3. Role of Referees

5.3.1. Head Referee.

The “**Head Referee**” is a Tournament Official who is responsible for the judgments on every Match-related issue, question and situation which occurs before, during, and immediately following Match play. Their oversight includes, but is not limited to:

- Checking the Team's lineup before a Match.
- Checking and monitoring player peripherals and Match Areas, if applicable.
- Announcing the beginning of the Match.
- Ordering pause/resume during play.
- Issuing sanctions and disciplinary action in response to rule violations during the Match.
- Making all Match-related determinations under these First Strike Qualifier Rules and the Global Policy, including with regard to pauses and stoppages of play.
- Confirming the end of the Match and its results.

5.3.2. Referee Responsibilities.

“**Referees**” are Tournament Officials who work on behalf of the Tournament Operator and are subject to the direction, review and oversight of the Head Referee. Referees are responsible for:

- Admitting or denying access to the Match Areas, if applicable.
- Carrying out security protocols directed by the Head Referee and other Tournament Officials, and/or in support of these First Strike Qualifier Rules or the Global Policy.
- Administering the player checklist and enforcing these First Strike Rules and the Global Policy, including directing players to take or refrain from taking any action.
- Communicating with players about any issues experienced, in-game and out.
- Upon request, explaining any bug exploits.

5.3.3. Finality of Judgment.

All decisions regarding the interpretation of these rules, player eligibility, scheduling and staging of the event, and penalties for misconduct, lie solely with the Head Referee, the decisions of which are final. Head Referee decisions with respect to these Rules cannot be appealed and shall not give rise to any claim for monetary damages or any other legal or equitable remedy.

5.4. Competitive Patches

Matches will be played on the current patch available on VALORANT's live service.

5.4.1. New Agents

New Agents will be automatically restricted for two weeks starting from their availability in ranked queues. Example: Agent A was released on February 5, so Agent A will become eligible to be used in all Matches on February 19.

For the First Strike Qualifiers Skye will be available in Week Two (2) of the Qualifier.

5.4.2. New Maps

New Maps will be automatically restricted for four weeks starting from their availability in ranked queues. Example: Map A was released on February 5, so Map A will become eligible to be used in all Matches on March 5.

Ice Box will be available in the Main Event for First Strike.

5.4.3. Additional Restrictions

Additional Restrictions (e.g. disabling certain weapons) may be added by Riot representatives at any time before or during a match, if there are known bugs with any items, Agents, skins, or abilities.

5.5. Pre-Match Setup

5.5.1. Player Accounts.

Players will use their own online accounts and Riot IDs during play of First Strike events. Players must use their team tag in front of their name for consistency during all broadcast matches. Example: *G2 Mixwell*

5.5.2. Setup Time.

Players will have designated blocks of time prior to their Match time to ensure they are fully prepared. Tournament Officials will inform players and Teams of their scheduled setup time and duration as part of their Match schedule. Tournament Officials may change the schedule at any time. Setup time is considered to have begun once players enter the Match Lobby, at which point they are not allowed to leave without permission of a Tournament Official or Referee. Setup is comprised of the following:

- Ensuring the quality of all equipment.
- Connecting and calibrating peripherals.
- Ensuring proper function of voice chat system.
- Selecting skins.
- Adjusting in-game settings
- Limited in-game warm-up.

5.5.3. Technical Failure of Equipment.

If a player encounters any equipment problems during any phase of the setup process, player must notify a Referee or Tournament Official immediately.

5.5.4. Timelines of Match Start.

It is expected that players will resolve any issues with the setup process within the allotted time and that the Match will begin at the scheduled time. Sanctions for tardiness may be assessed at the discretion of Tournament Officials.

5.5.5. Player Ready State.

Once all ten players in a Match have confirmed completion of setup, players may not enter a warm-up Match and a Tournament Official will instruct the Match to start.

5.5.6. Match Lobby Creation.

Following the instructions on the Challengermode site, the designated Team Captain will be required to create the Match Lobby within the required time.

5.5.7. Pre-Match Obligations.

Players will be informed of any pre-Match obligations, including, but not limited to, media appearances, interviews, or further discussion of any Match matters.

5.6. Match Setup and Play Restrictions

5.6.1. Lobby Settings.

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

5.6.2. Server Selection.

Prior to each Match, the Match Lobby host will select the server which is as close to equidistant from the teams as possible. If both teams can’t agree on a server then Frankfurt 1 is the default.

5.6.3. Start of Map Selection Process.

Once all ten players have reported to the official Match lobby, a Referee or Tournament Official will request confirmation that both Teams are ready for the map selection process. Once both Teams confirm readiness, a Referee or Tournament Official will instruct the room owner to start the map selection process outlined in this Section 6.6. Under no circumstances may a map be played twice in one Match unless all other available maps have been played. The Tournament Operator may modify the Map Selection Process prior to an event but must provide advance notice in writing to all participants and Riot Games before doing so.

5.6.4. Map Pool.

The map pool consists of Bind, Haven, Split and Ascent. Icebox will be disabled for First Strike Qualifier Events, but will be enabled for the First Strike Main Event.

5.6.5. Map Selection Process for Best-of-One Matches.

The better-seeded team will decide if they are either Team A or Team B. If the tournament in question has no predetermined seeding, the “better-seeded team” for purposes of this Section will be determined at random. Team A starts the process and the map for the Match will be selected according to the following procedure:

- Team A removes one map.
- Team B removes one map.
- Team A removes one map.
- Team B selects the starting side on the remaining map.

5.6.6. Map Selection Process for Best-of-Three Matches.

The better-seeded team will decide if they are either Team A or Team B. If the tournament in question has no predetermined seeding, the “better-seeded team” for purposes of this Section will be determined at random. Team A starts the process and the map for the Match will be selected according to the following procedure:

- Team A removes one map.
- Team B selects the first map.
- Team A selects the starting side on the first map and selects the second map.
- Team B selects the starting side on the second map
- The third map, if required, will be played on the remaining with the sides for each Team on such map to be determined by coin flip.

5.6.7. Map Selection Process for Best-of-Five Matches.

The better-seeded team will decide if they are either Team A or Team B. If the tournament in question has no predetermined seeding, the “better-seeded team” for purposes of this Section will be determined at random. Team A

starts the process and the map for the Match will be selected according to the following procedure:

- Team A selects the first map.
- Team B selects the starting side on the first map and selects the second map.
- Team A selects the starting side on the second map and selects the third map.
- Team B selects the starting side on the third map and selects the fourth map, if required.
- Team A selects the starting side on the fourth map, if required.
- The fifth map, if required, will be chosen at random from the full Map Pool with the starting sides for each Team on such map to be determined by coin flip.

5.6.8. Start of Agent Selection Process.

Once Agent Select has started, Players will have eighty-five 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.

5.6.9. 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. At this point, Teams must remove any printed materials from the Match Area (if applicable), including any notes written by Team Members. 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.”

5.6.10. 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.

5.6.11. 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 upon Match start, the Match must be immediately paused until all ten players are connected to the Match and a Tournament Official informed immediately.

5.6.12. Restrictions on Gameplay Elements.

Restrictions may be added at any time before or during a Match, if there are known or suspected bugs with any Agents, skins or maps, or for any other reason as determined at the discretion of Tournament Officials.

5.6.13. Substitutions during Tournament Play.

For Matches involving more than one Map (i.e., a best-of-three or best-of-five Match), a Team may replace their then-current Starters with Substitutes in between Maps, provided that the Team informs the opposing Team and receives approval from the Referees of such substitution no later than five minutes after the conclusion of the previous game. In the event that a Player disconnects during a map and is unable to return within the allocated pause time, the Team will be permitted to replace them with a Substitute from their Roster. Any substitutions must result in the Team having an eligible Roster or Starting Lineup.

5.6.14. Co-Streaming Regulations.

For the First Strike Qualifiers, participating players may stream their POV during matches that do not have an official broadcast as determined by the Tournament Officials. There will be no co-streaming or community streams permitted during the entirety of the First Strike Qualifiers and Main Event.

5.6.15. Match Lobby Participants

The only accounts allowed in the Custom Lobby are Match Participants. Those who are counted as Match Participants are as follows:

- Players on Confirmed Rosters
- Official Observers
- Tournament Official/Operations

5.6.16. Restricted Cosmetics

Tournament Officials reserve the right to ban any cosmetic at any time. The following cosmetic(s) are banned.

- The Elderflame Vandal

6. Pauses and Crashes

6.1. Timeouts (Tactical Pauses)

For Matches on broadcast, Teams are allowed to call Timeouts of 30 seconds in duration one time per map. Timeouts can be called via the in-game pause system. For non-broadcast games Tactical Pauses will not be allowed.

6.2. Technical Pauses

If a player has a problem that prevents him from playing on, he is allowed to use the pause function. The player has to announce the reason before or immediately after he paused the match. Unless a Tournament Official instructs the player otherwise any form of communication including but not limited to text and voice communication between players and coaches is forbidden during a technical pause. The Tournament Official can pause the game if for some reason the player pausing does not work.

6.3. Crashes

- If a match is interrupted for reasons beyond the control of the Players (e.g. server crash), the match will be restarted regardless of its current state.
- For a Match on broadcast, if both Teams are considered to have equal economy in game before the crash, as determined by a Tournament Official, the game will be remade and score set to 1-1 to allow both teams to buy.
- For a Match on broadcast, if one Team has a considerable economic advantage over the other the game will be remade and scores set to 2-1 in favour. This will allow them a full buy round.
- The 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).

7. Post-Match Process

7.1. Post-Match Process

7.1.1. Results.

Upon completion of a Match, both teams must report the result on the Challengermode lobby page. In case of a result dispute screenshots should be uploaded as evidence of a result.

7.1.2. Tech Notes.

Players will notify Tournament Officials of any technical issues prior to the start of their next schedule Match.

7.1.3. Break Time.

Between Maps.

Tournament Officials will inform players of the remaining amount of time before the next Map in the Match, if applicable. For online events, the standard time for transition in between Maps is eight (8) to ten (10) minutes from the time of the last Map's Round until players are required in their seats for the next Map. The next Map, if applicable, will commence as soon as both Teams have confirmed to a Referee or Tournament Official that all players are ready to play.

Between Matches.

For online events, the standard time for transition in between Matches is eight (8) to ten (10) minutes from the time of the last Match's Round until players are required in their seats for the next Match. The next Match, if applicable, will commence as soon as both Teams have confirmed to a Referee or Tournament Official that all players are ready to play.

If all the players are not ready to play at the time designated to them by the Referees or Tournament Officials, the Team can be sanctioned for delay of Game.

7.1.4. Post-Match Obligations.

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

7.1.5. Media Obligations.

Teams will be required to make available to the media for a minimum of 15 minutes at least one player that started any Match that day. If a player has started at least 2 Matches throughout First Strike Qualifiers, the player will be required to have made him or herself available to media at least once during the Event. A Team may not make available the same player for media for 4 consecutive Match days.

7.1.6. Results of Forfeiture.

Matches won by forfeit will be reported by the minimum score it would take for one Team to win the Match (e.g. 1-0 for best-of-1 Matches, 2-0 for best-of-three Matches, 3-0 for best-of-five Matches). No other statistics will be recorded for forfeited Matches.

8. Prizes

8.1. Qualification to First Strike Main Event

The top eight teams, four from each Qualifier Week, will advance to the First Strike Main Event where they will compete for a portion of the \$100,000 prize pool.

9. Communication with the Tournament Operator

If a Player or Team encounters an issue during the First Strike Qualifier Event they should reach out to a Tournament Official or Referee by following the processes outlined on the Challengemode Tournament page.

10. Interpretation and Construction

10.1. Tournament Operator's Right of Interpretation

Any matters relating to a First Strike Qualifier event that are not covered by these First Strike Qualifier Rules or the Global Policy will be subject to an interpretation made by the Tournament Operator and provided to the Teams from time to time in the form of an update to, or interpretation of, these First Strike Rules or the Global Policy. All decisions made by the Tournament Operator and Tournament Officials in regard to interpretations of these First Strike Rules and the Global Policy are final and binding.

Business Judgment

Whenever these First Strike Qualifier Rules or the Global Policy grant, confer or reserve to Riot or the Tournament Operator the right to take action, refrain from taking action, grant or withhold consent or grant or withhold approval or make any other determination, unless the provision specifically states otherwise, each of Riot and the Tournament Operator will have the right to engage in such activity in its sole discretion based on its own business judgment, taking into consideration its assessment of the best interests of Riot and the Tournament Operator and the short and long term interests of the Official Competitions, the First Strike events, VALORANT and the businesses and activities of the affiliates and group companies of Riot and the Tournament Operator. Neither a Team nor a Team Member will have any claim or cause of action based on an assertion that Riot, the Tournament Operator or any Tournament Official has unreasonably withheld or delayed any consent, approval, determination or other requested action under these First Strike Qualifier Rules or the Global Policy.

10.2. Language

The original First Strike Qualifier Rules have been written in the English language. In the event of an unintentional conflict in interpretation between the English version and such translation, the English version will control.

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