

# POKÉMON™

## WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

— #1 —

### ASH CLIMBS THE RANKS

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# CHAPTER ONE

**F**or as long as Ash Ketchum could remember, he'd had the same goal. Every single day, he had been on the same ultimate mission: to become a Pokémon Master. Sunup to sundown. Some of his friends had even accused him of thinking about Pokémon battles twenty-four hours a day! (Ash insisted that was impossible—he needed at least ten hours of sleep every day, so he could only really train for fourteen hours.)

But when Professor Cerise offered Ash and Goh tickets to the World Coronation Series Finals, things changed for Ash.

Before that point, Ash hadn't even known that such a long, involved tournament existed—a tournament with Trainers from all over, with Pokémon of every



type. The whole crew at Professor Cerise's lab had been excited to get to explain it to him.

Ren, one of Professor Cerise's lab assistants, looked at Ash over his red-rimmed glasses. "Up until now, each region has had its own League, or Championship, each with its own Champion," Ren had told him. He pulled up the info on his computer. The screen showed an amazing world-class arena, bigger than any stadium Ash had ever seen.

"But at the World Coronation Series, they choose the best from everyone around the world," Chrysa added. She smiled at Ash, knowing he would be totally into the whole idea of the World Coronation Series.

"That *is* cool," Ash agreed. It was the best of the best!

“And these are for the finals!” Goh emphasized, holding the ticket right in front of his face, as if he didn’t believe it was real. “Tickets for the big showdown!” Of course, Goh already knew about the World Coronation Series. Goh made it a point of knowing every fact and detail about all things Pokémon. Even when he was six and in his first-ever Pokémon camp with Professor Oak, Goh had known enough to practically lead the camp!

“That means we’ll get to see the world’s best Pokémon battle for ourselves!” Ash exclaimed. His mind was blown!

Professor Cerise, who always wore a white lab coat with the collar turned up, had spent his career learning about Pokémon. He was the professor at a



laboratory in Vermilion City. The lab was new, with top-of-the-line equipment. There, the team gathered as much information as possible to uncover the mysteries of Pokémon.

Professor Cerise had taken on both Ash and Goh as research fellows. It was an amazing opportunity for the two friends because they were able to travel all over to discover more about their favorite subject—Pokémon! While they were in Vermilion City, they were staying with Professor Cerise.

Both Ash and Goh were helping the professor. The tournament tickets were a special way for him to thank them. “There are things that will happen in that stadium that will awe and amaze you!” Professor Cerise told the two Pokémon fans. The professor knew that the tournament finals would take place in the Galar region. And, being a top researcher, Professor Cerise knew that the Trainers in Galar had some unique skills when it came to big-time battling.

And the battle didn't disappoint! The Galar region happened to be the home of Leon, one of the final two competitors. Leon had won the Galar Champion Cup on his very first try in battles that weren't even close. The tournament announcer had all kinds of fancy



names for Leon, like the Superstar of Galar and King of the Kingdom. Ash and Goh thought Leon probably deserved those names—he was undefeated, after all.

Leon's opponent, Lance, had an impressive winning record as well. He was one of the Kanto region's Elite Four, winner of the prestigious Elite Four Cup, and the victor at the Pokémon World Tournament in Driftveil City.

Before the battle, the two competitors met in the center for their introductions. Wyndon Stadium was the biggest that Ash had ever seen, yet the personalities of the two competing Trainers easily filled the arena.



“I’ve seen your previous battles,” Lance said to Leon. He wore a long black cape and had a serious expression, his eyes narrowed. “I can tell you’re a Trainer with considerable skill. That’s why I imagined that you would be the one to eventually join me here.”

“Can you feel it, Lance?” Leon asked with a dramatic flair. “To witness the tense, still air on the pitch?” He told his opponent that the audience was there to see one of them win, and one of them lose. “I love pushing past the fear. I love giving it everything I’ve got as a Trainer. It’s the greatest feeling, and I can’t get enough of it.”

Up in the stands, Ash couldn’t get enough of it either. He knew exactly what Leon was talking about. It was exactly how Ash felt about battling!







“The reason I’m unbeatable,” Leon went on, “is because I learn from every battle I see or take part in, and today, I’ll learn from my victory.”

Leon and Lance were very well matched. It was already an incredible contest between Lance’s Gyarados and Leon’s Charizard. Between Hyper Beams and Flamethrowers and Air Slashes and Dragon Dance, Ash couldn’t imagine a better battle. Then something massive happened. When the Trainers came to a standstill, when their Pokémon had used all their moves, both Trainers boosted the size and power of the Pokémon they had on the battlefield. With elite bands, they were



able to superpower their Pokémon. The oversized versions of their Pokémon, Dynamax Gyarados and Gigantamax Charizard, produced moves as huge as they were! It was literally the biggest battle the friends had ever seen.

Hometown favorite Leon and his undefeated Charizard were the winners. Leon was declared the World Coronation Series Monarch. And, after seeing the pure skill in that battle, Ash declared a new mission: He wanted to battle the world's best. He wanted to battle Leon!