Creating a Custom Lobby in Overwatch

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What is this guide for?

This guide will explain how to set up a custom lobby for tournament matches.

It will cover:

1. What is a Custom Lobby?
2. How do I create one?
3. How do I invite other players?
4. Spectators
5. FAQ

Read the full guide to make sure your team is ready for their first week of Competition!
What is a Custom Lobby?

Custom lobbies allow you to control who can join the match, spectate the match and the match settings. This is what we use to play tournament matches.

In Overwatch, there are different game modes available for play. Quickplay, Arcade, Competitive Play, and Game Browser.

The Game Browser consists of 2 main features: Find Game and Create Game. Using Find Game, players can look for available pre-created custom games in the server. Players can create their own custom game with customized settings by Create Game.

Overwatch Wiki. (2019). Game Browser. [online] Available at: https://overwatch.fandom.com/wiki/Game_Browser
How do I create one?

Log in to Overwatch and click the big “PLAY” word in the start up screen. The next menu should look like this:

Select “Game Browser” then click “CREATE” in the top right corner. Not sure who should be creating the lobby? Check the FAQ section at the end of this guide!
How do I create one?

After clicking “CREATE”, you’ll be entered into your Custom Lobby.

Now you’ll want to change the settings to make sure it abides by the tournament’s rules. Click “SETTINGS” in the top right corner.

Select “PRESETS” in the next menu.
How do I create one?

WAIT!

Before proceeding, check the ruleset of the tournament you are competing in.

Sometimes there are additional match settings you need to know about before starting the game. Here's an example in our Fall 2019 Overwatch Scholastic Tournament Ruleset:

6.2 Match Settings. All games should be played with the “Competitive” pre-set selected. All maps except for the map to be played should be set to “off”. All heroes communicated to be banned (if any) should also be set to “off”. The lobby should be set to “Invite Only.” Kill-cams should be set to “off”.

Okay, you’re good to continue! The rest of the guide will show you how and where to find these settings.
How do I create one?

Select “COMPETITIVE”, located under “STANDARD”. Make sure it registers before clicking the “BACK” button to proceed. Return to the lobby.

After returning to the lobby, click “SETTINGS” again and select “MAPS”.

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How do I create one?

Select “NONE” on the top right of the screen. Navigate to your assigned Map and enable it. Click “BACK” to return to the lobby.

Navigate to your assigned Map and enable it.

Click “BACK” to return to “SETTINGS”
How do I create one?

Select “MODES” after returning to “SETTINGS”.

Select “ALL”
How do I create one?

This is where tournament-specific rules may apply. In this case, we are using the Fall 2019 Overwatch Scholastic Tournament match settings as an example.

“6.2 Match Settings. All games should be played with the “Competitive” pre-set selected. All maps except for the map to be played should be set to “off”. All heroes communicated to be banned (if any) should also be set to “off”. The lobby should be set to “Invite Only.” Kill-cams should be set to “off”.

Make sure these settings abide by the tournament rules!
How do I invite other players?

Now that you’ve got your lobby set up with the right settings, it’s time to invite other players to the lobby. You’ll need to invite all of your teammates and the opposing team. Inviting at least one member of the opposing team will allow them to invite their own team members, so you don’t have to do all the work!

Tip: Remember to verify the enemy team roster. You may check the enemy team’s roster by clicking the Match Link in your match assignment email. Rosters on the Tournament Bracket must match the players in the custom lobby.

Make sure this is set to “INVITE ONLY”.

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How do I invite other players?

Click “INVITE” in the top right corner.

This window will pop up with a list of friends who are available to be invited to your custom lobby. Clicking “VIA BATTLETAG” will allow you to invite others by entering their full BattleTag (i.e. Username#1234). You can find the opposing team’s BattleTags by clicking the Match Link in your match assignment email.
How do I invite other players?

Make sure team members are placed on the correct sides.

You can edit your team name by clicking this icon on your team’s side of the lobby.
Spectators

You can add spectators to your custom lobby! This is useful for adding coaches, a General Manager, or other students that want to observe the game. It’s also used for adding an additional perspective for those who choose to stream their games to online streaming platforms like Twitch or Mixer.

NOTE: There are tournament rules that restrict spectators to specific settings. Here’s what the ruleset says:

“6.8 Spectators. Lobby Spectators. A total of twelve (12) spectator slots are available in each Game Lobby. Each team is permitted a maximum of six (6) spectators. Teams may give up their reserved spectator slots at their own discretion. If your match is being streamed on the official NASEF twitch channel, the NASEF stream team will need to occupy one spectator slot in the Game Lobby.

6.8.1 Spectators may only spectate their own team. The custom lobby owner can enable this by right-clicking a spectator’s name, then selecting which team they can spectate.”
Spectators

You can set which teams the Spectators in your lobby can watch. This rule is in place to prevent cheating.

For example, if Team A invites a spectator that is on Team A’s “side” to watch the match, that spectator must be limited to spectating Team A only. If a spectator on Team A’s “side” is able to view the perspective of Team B, that will give Team A an unfair advantage over Team B.

Make sure you check these settings before starting the match! To do so, click “MOVE” in the custom lobby, then right click any spectator.
FAQ

How do we decide which team gets to create the lobby?

Per the tournament rules, teams that are higher seeded will create the lobby. During Week 1 of the season, seeding is determined randomly, so either team can create the lobby. Moving forward, you can check which team is the higher seed by clicking the Match Link. The seed number is typically found close to the Team Name.

The opposing team isn’t entering the lobby or responding to my team’s messages. What do I do?

Contact a NASEF Tournament Administrator through the NASEF Community Discord server. We will assist as much as possible!

Note: Per the tournament rules, teams have up to 30 minutes to enter the lobby after the default match time or rescheduled match time. If the match time is 3:30 PM, teams have until 4:00 PM to appear in the lobby before they automatically forfeit the match.

The team that arrives in the lobby on time (within 30 minutes of the match time) will automatically win the match if the opposing team is not in the lobby.
You’re Done!

We recommend keeping your match assignment email open and readily available during tournament days. Important documents like rules, map pools, instructions on how to create the match lobby, and other critical info is provided in these emails.

If you are not receiving emails from us, make sure the following addresses are whitelisted and/or marked as “NOT SPAM” in your inbox: tournament@esportsfed.org and info@esportsfed.org

Need help using our Active Roster?

Check out our Tournament Readiness Webinar here! This is a step-by-step video guide on how to use our Tournament Management system. The slide deck used in the webinar is available here.

Running into errors on the Club Dashboard?

Send an email to info@esportsfed.org with your Club Name and screenshots of the error, OR

Join our NASEF Community Discord server and post your question/issue in the #support channel!