

## May I Have This Dance?

*Pokémon Video Game Showdown 2008*  
*Los Angeles National Qualifier*

Introducing my team... **Surf Supremum:**

Starters:

**Viterbi the Vaporeon:** Surf/Shadow Ball/Rain Dance/Protect... Modest, @ Chesto Berry  
**Lagrangian the Ludicolo:** Surf/Ice Beam/Fake Out/Protect... Timid, @ Lum Berry

Reserves:

**Kolmogorov the Kingdra:** Surf/Ice Beam/Rain Dance/Protect... Modest, @ Life Orb  
**Laplacian the Lapras:** Surf/Blizzard/Thunder/Protect... Modest, @ Citrus Berry

Friday, July 11, 2008:

My stay in Los Angeles officially began when I disembarked from my Southwest Airlines flight into LAX, the airport nearest my hotel. Along the way, my cab driver showed me the Staples Center, home of the Los Angeles Lakers and this year's NBA Finals. My mind also wandered to the Wimbledon, another sporting event whose mystifying aura I longed to experience. Sometimes, competition completely changes the feel of a location, and I secretly wished for a similar milieu at the next day's tournament.

That night, I dined on the 36<sup>th</sup> floor of the Westin Bonaventure, in a famed steakhouse known as L.A. Prime. I met Shelley Ackerman, a high schooler that I hosted at Stanford, at the restaurant, and I ordered a Filet Mignon. During dinner, I showed her a typical Pokémon battle between my two training cartridges, one of which controlled my main team (Vaporeon/Ludicolo/Kingdra/Lapras), the other of which contained my archnemesis (Smeargle/Bronzong/Machamp/Snorlax). My fast-paced team's greatest weakness was the Trick Room team, so I commonly battled these two parties for practice. During the battle, Lagrangian, my Ludicolo, Protected itself but still received a Dynamicpunch attack from the opposing Machamp, a glitch that surprised me at the time since I hadn't ever seen it. I made a mental note of the glitch and filed it away, since I did not want to be surprised again by a Dynamicpunch penetrating Protect; given Protect's move description --- shielding its user from *all* moves except Blizzard in a hailstorm -- I knew something was wrong with No Guard Machamp punching through Protect and damaging Lagrangian.

After dinner, I returned to my hotel room (#1123) on the Westin's 11<sup>th</sup> floor and began to fine-tune my team. I altered a few EV spreads on Viterbi and Lagrangian, transferred some more Pokémon from Pal Park to battle against my team, and reviewed my game plan against common strategies like Trick Room, Sunny Day, Hailstorm, and Explosion. Next, I trained some interchangeable pieces – potential substitutes for Viterbi and Laplacian, the newest members of my team. Since I hadn't playtested Viterbi to satisfaction, I also prepared Gyarados, Gengar, Starmie, Milotic, Raikou, Jolteon, and Slowking, among others, to substitute if necessary. Finally, I tried to increase Kolmogorov's Friendship level, but I fatigued and fell asleep before it reached a level sufficient for learning Draco Meteor.

*Sunday, July 12, 2008:*

Around 9 am in the morning, I descended to the hotel lobby for my complementary brunch, where I first tested my new camera:



I consumed a piece of raisin French toast, two thick sausages, a tomato-and-onion omelet, and some cubed fruit before hurriedly leaving gratuity and rushing upstairs to brush my teeth and pack my bags. Around 10:15 am, I plunged into a taxi and headed for the California Science Center. The driver had never heard of the California Science Center, and I had to continually describe the IMAX theater before he understood what he was seeking. He sped down the road to Exposition Boulevard, turned wildly, and followed my finger to a large complex where we found Park Drive. The science museum reminded me of the place I used to volunteer as a high schooler for my community service hours: The Science Place in Fair Park, Texas, location of all state fairs in Downtown Dallas. At the front desk, a volunteer directed me to the rose garden behind McDonald's, where I walked for a few minutes before spotting a gargantuan Pikachu and Palkia, signaling the entrance to the Pokémon Showdown.

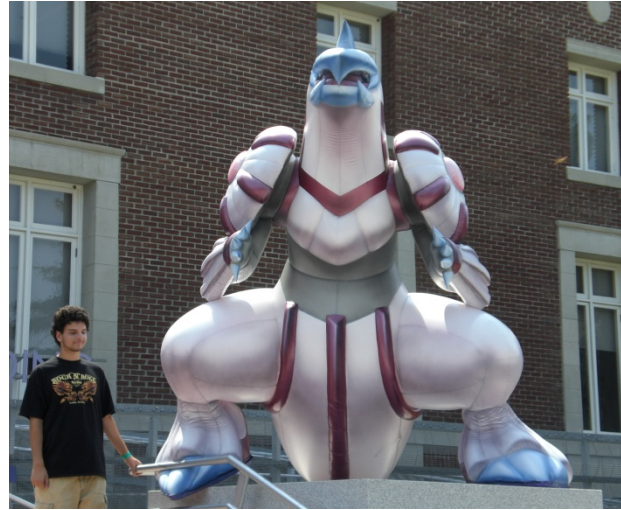


Hundreds of alternates and their friends and family were already circling a table that I quickly approached, but the man managing the raffle wheel pointed me towards the official registration, since I had preregistered online for my seat. I was happy to see females working the registration table, since I feared gruff officials would handle us players harshly, while I knew females would be more understanding and gentler, in general.



Angela Durand, the woman in black, seated at the center, verified my identity by birth date, registered me, and handed me a wristband. Apparently, she has been running Pokémon events for years, and she would turn out to be one of the kindest people I met at the tournament. She offered me constant encouragement and always seemed to be on the move, fixing some DS or replenishing the bottled waters. She was also the one who surprisingly notified me of my ascension into the Elite Eight; by handing me my paperwork for my travel award to Orlando, FL, when I was least expecting it – I thought I needed to win one more battle – she forever etched herself into my memory of this happy day and event.

Following registration at 10:45 am, I wandered the neighboring premises and absorbed some of the more memorable sights of the Pokémon Showdown.



Dialga and Palkia guard the entrance to the large exposition room where we compete.



Quite the crowd surrounds the alternates table, where tournament officials soon began drawing numbers and hollering them to designate the alternates for missing pre-registered players. The left half of this photograph actually contains two of my six opponents for the day.



A beautiful rose garden faces the tournament hall, so I step onto the grass momentarily to appreciate the beautiful sunny day and clear fountain. The rain will soon begin...



Older people – many of them parents – sit in front of the entrance to the coliseum. I soon entered to beat the alternate crowd inside.

Total pandemonium inside the coliseum greets me; the juniors have begun to play. Again, I snap a photo that contains two of my eventual opponents:



Terrorized by the camera crew, the juniors are playing Round 1 of their bracket. A good blend of male and female players excites me. Nearby, a television monitor is playing one of the current matches live. Two teenage girls are excitedly pointing at the screen, discussing strategy with their mother. They know little of the game, but they love ridiculing their younger brother. Briefly, I wished that I had sisters so supportive that they come attend my Pokémon tournament to support me. Most players at the tournament had a fanbase, so I felt a bit lonesome to go it alone.





As the junior division unfolded, I watched a single game (NIGELLA's Hitmonlee/Jolteon/Gengar/Garchomp vs. NOLAN's Gyarados/Rhyperior/Hitmonlee/Gengar) before seeking other photo ops indoors. Dancing with Turtwig, posing with Pikachu, squeezing Piplup's gigantic head, and meeting Chimchar were all good times, although none of it would be possible without Meredith, the red-haired girl in the orange Staff shirt that arranged all of the photo ops and even took some of the pictures for me. Thanks, Meredith!





Pictured above is the setup for the finals. Apparently, each television monitor beside the Wii connects to a larger screen facing the audience; however, neither player can see the other player's screen. Little did I know at the time that I'd be standing on that very stage within a couple of hours, playing for a Nintendo Wii. Right now, it looks relatively tame, with two generic demo battles decorating the television monitor screens and a bunch of innocent bystanders seated on the stage edge as if it were a joy seat. Again, it never ceases to amaze me how an enraptured crowd and the showtime feature really vivify an otherwise inanimate, ordinary location; sometimes, hype and the *moment* are what make a place come alive. What now seems like a dull slab of material will soon set the stage for two epic battles – the LA Showdown finals. Enjoy these pictures now, because I did not summon the frame of mind to pull out a camera before I ascended the stage for the final match.



The public address announcer soon summons us seniors into line to battle. During our wait in line, a young senior around the age of 13 or 14 asks me if I am nervous. I answer affirmatively, of course, not having ever participated in a tournament of this magnitude. His name is Miles, and he also wants to know how many Pokémon I've caught. Another equally diminutive boy tells him over 400. Miles also has a few hundred. I tell him I barely have 170, and another person – Thomas, who would turn out to be my semifinals opponent – says the same. As we are each called, we exit the queue and take our assigned places at the station with our number.

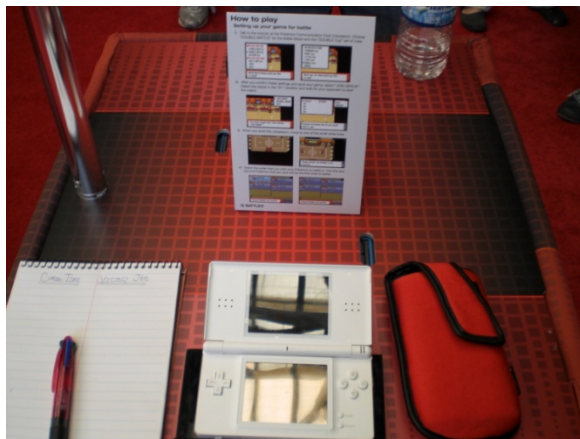
Before entering the heat of battle, I survey my surroundings and look at the other first-round pairings:



My second-round opponent (leftmost above) stands beside me, staring off into the distance as his opponent rolls up his sleeves in a masterful display of attitude and hardcore fearlessness.



In a baseball cap, Thomas, my semifinals opponent, puts on his game face as he prepares for a much larger adversary. Miles stares at me from Station 11, still awaiting his opponent's arrival. I also see two female players, at Station 14 and a cosplayer at Station 16. I wish I could have played a female player just to experience the differing mindset and attitude of play. Alas, I faced quite the gauntlet of opponents, all of whom knew exactly how to play their strategies and maximize their teams' potential. I set up my station as my opponent arrives, preparing my pen and paper for notes. Strangely, the slots for battle sit beside the DS, connected to the game slot from within the platform below, and we are instructed to remove our cartridges without turning off the DS; the staff controls power from a distance, turning on and shutting off without our control. Throughout the day, I worried about the health of my cartridge as I ripped it out without even shutting down power.



At the announcer's command, our DS systems turn on, and we begin the battle.

**First Round  
 Versus Victor Joo  
 Bronzong/Gengar/Ursaring/Metagross**



summons Viterbi	summons Bronzong
summons Lagrangian	summons Gengar
<b>TURN 1</b>	
Lagrangian Fakes Out Bronzong	Gengar Thunderbolts Viterbi
Viterbi Shadow Balls Gengar	Bronzong flinches
<b>TURN 2</b>	
Viterbi Protects	Gengar Thunderbolts Viterbi (annulled)
Lagrangian Surfs --> KOs Gengar	Bronzong Trick Rooms
<b>TURN 3</b>	
	<b>summons Ursaring</b>
	Ursaring Protects
	Bronzong Hypnotizes Viterbi (Chesto Berry heals)
Viterbi Rain Dances	
Lagrangian Surfs	Ursaring's Flame Orb burns Ursaring
<b>TURN 4</b>	
Viterbi Protects	Bronzong Hypnotizes Viterbi (annulled)
	Ursaring Facades Lagrangian --> KOs Lagrangian
<b>TURN 5</b>	
summons Laplacian	Bronzong Hypnosis misses

Viterbi Surfs --> KOs Bronzong	
	Ursaring Facades Viterbi --> KOs Viterbi
Laplacian Surfs --> KOs Ursaring	
<b>TURN 6</b>	
<b>summons Kolmogorov</b>	<b>summons Metagross</b>
Laplacian Protects	
	Metagross Hammer Arms Laplacian (annulled)
Kolmogorov Surfs	
<b>TRICK ROOM ENDS</b>	
<b>TURN 7</b>	
Kolmogorov Surfs --> KOs Metagross	

**Comments:** The first battle worried me from the start, once I saw Bronzong. My team fares notoriously poorly against Trick Room teams, and here I was facing one in the first round. Instead of risking the Taunt, I started attacking immediately, and KOed the Gengar as quickly as I could. His Ursaring had an extremely strong Façade when burned. Thankfully, Laplacian drew a Protected Hammer Arm as expected, allowing Kolmogorov to deal two heavy Surfs.

After the round concluded, I met a lanky guy named Michael Rivera, gasping for air as he recounted how close his first round match went down to the wire. He apparently won on a Blissey Counter that activated when his Blissey barely survived a Close Combat or something. He was sweating profusely as he spoke. Miles and Thomas also survived the first round, and we traded war stories.

**Second Round**  
**Versus Randall Godfrey**  
**Mismagius/Metagross/Blissey/Heracross**



summons Viterbi	summons Mismagius
summons Lagrangian	summons Metagross
<b>TURN 1</b>	
Lagrangian Fakes Out Metagross	
	Mismagius Swaggers Lagrangian (Lum Berry heals)
Viterbi Rain Dances	
	Metagross flinches
<b>TURN 2</b>	
	Mismagius Swaggers Lagrangian, confusing Lagrangian
Lagrangian (confused) Surfs	
Viterbi Surfs --> KOs Metagross	
<b>TURN 3</b>	
	summons Blissey
switches Lagrangian out for Laplacian	
	Mismagius sings Perish Song
Viterbi Surfs --> KOs Mismagius	
	Blissey sets a Light Screen
<b>TURN 4</b>	
	summons Heracross
Viterbi Surfs	
	Heracross Megahorns Viterbi
Laplacian Surfs	
	Blissey Toxic misses
<b>TURN 5</b>	
Viterbi Surfs --> Kos Heracross	
Laplacian Surfs	
	Blissey Toxic poisons Laplacian
<b>TURN 6</b>	
Viterbi Surfs	
Laplacian Thunders	
	Blissey Toxic poisons Viterbi
	Perish Song KOs Viterbi
	Perish Song KOs Laplacian
Perish Song KOs Blissey	

**Comments:** Perish Song actually helped me KO Blissey, who would have presented problems... Randall cursed his mistake as soon as he realized Blissey was his last Pokémon, but it was too late.

**Third Round**  
**Versus Jonathan Crow**  
**Wailord/Gengar/Metagross/Articuno**



<b>summons Viterbi</b>	<b>summons Wailord</b>
<b>summons Lagrangian</b>	<b>summons Gengar</b>
<b>TURN 1</b>	
Lagrangian Fakes Out Wailord	
Viterbi Rain Dances	
	Wailord flinches
	Gengar Trick Rooms
<b>TURN 2</b>	
Viterbi Protects	
	Wailord Self-Destructs --> KOs Self, Lagrangian
	Gengar Energy Balls Viterbi (annulled)
<b>TURN 3</b>	
<b>summons Laplacian</b>	<b>summons Metagross</b>
Laplacian Protects	
	Metagross Hammer Arms Laplacian (annulled)
Viterbi Surfs	
	Gengar Energy Balls Viterbi
<b>TURN 4</b>	
Viterbi Protects	
	Metagross Explodes --> KOs Self, Laplacian
	Gengar Energy Balls Viterbi (annulled)
<b>TURN 5</b>	
<b>summons Kolmogorov</b>	<b>summons Articuno</b>
Viterbi Surfs --> KOs Gengar	
Kolmogorov Surfs	
	Articuno Water Pulses Kolmogorov
<b>TRICK ROOM, RAIN END</b>	

TURN 6	
Kolmogorov Protects	
	Articuno Ice Beams Kolmogorov (annulled)
Viterbi Surfs --> KOs Articuno	

**Comments:** Once I saw Wailord, I knew something strange was up, so I flinched it on the first turn and started protecting afterwards in case it tried anything fishy. It did. In retrospect, Wailord probably would have presented more problems if it stayed alive, since it resists Surf well. A tall, biased judge watching our match remarked, "I approve!" and clapped after the self-destruct ambushed me. Still, its self-destruction took down only my Lagrangian, while removing his largest threat to my team. I'll take that any day. I did not expect the Gengar Trick Room, but it helped only his Metagross; Articuno did not seem particularly slow. Talking to Jonathan before the match, I learned that he had attended several Pokémon tournaments, including the Journey Across America Nationals in 2006 with Ruby and Sapphire. According to Jonathan, he lost his DS card just weeks ago and had to compile a new team on the fly, with little to no training time; if this was true, then I am impressed with how much havoc his team caused. He is a true player, working with the hand he was dealt and still persisting for three rounds. Hats off to Jonathan!

At this moment, somebody screamed, "I won with only 1 HP left! OH MY GOD! I can't believe this!" The judges rushed to the scene as Jonathan and I rushed to the restroom. With only 3 minutes between our first few matches, we were both quite exhausted from all the close battles with no downtime or bathroom breaks allowed. Personally, I was thirsty from seeing so much water in the game (between Rain Dance and Surf) but so little outside the game, and I complained to a judge. Eventually, Angela and a few other staff members brought out a fresh pack of refrigerated bottled water, and I quaffed two battles faster than Kolmogorov could Surf.

When I returned from the restroom, the staff immediately confiscated my game card for hack checking, stuffing it crudely into a DS game slot and an Action Replay-sized black device into the opposing DS game slot on one of the gaming platforms. I departed to seek more water, and, when I returned, Angela handed me paperwork for the Disney World trip, completely taking me by surprise. Whatever happened to 128 contestants? I guess only the tournament began with only 64; otherwise, three rounds would be insufficient to determine the Elite Eight. I accepted the envelope with a smile and a sigh of relief. I did not see my game card until the next round.

**Quarterfinals**  
**Versus Michael Rivera**  
**Ninjask/Yanmega/Blissey/Garchomp**



summons Viterbi	summons Ninjask
summons Lagrangian	summons Yanmega
<b>TURN 1</b>	
Lagrangian Fakes Out Ninjask	Ninjask flinches
Viterbi Rain Dances	Yanmega Hypnotizes Viterbi (Chesto Berry heals)
	Speed Boost on Ninjask, Yanmega
<b>TURN 2</b>	
Lagrangian Surfs --> KOs Ninjask	Ninjask Sword Dances
Viterbi asleep...	Yanmega Hypnotizes Viterbi
<b>TURN 3</b>	
	summons Blissey
Lagrangian Surfs --> KOs Yanmega	Yanmega Hypnosis misses
Viterbi asleep...	Blissey Double Teams
<b>TURN 4</b>	
	summons Garchomp
Lagrangian Ice Beams Garchomp --> OHKOs Garchomp	Blissey Double Teams
Viterbi awakens, Surfs	
<b>TURN 5</b>	
switches Viterbi out for Laplacian	
Lagrangian Surfs	Blissey Toxic poisons Laplacian



<b>TURN 6</b>	
<b>switches Lagrangian for Viterbi</b>	
Laplacian Blizzards, misses	
	Blissey Double Teams
<b>RAIN ENDS</b>	
<b>TURN 7</b>	
Viterbi Rain Dances	
Laplacian Surfs, misses	
	Blissey Toxic poisons Viterbi
<b>TURN 8</b>	
Viterbi Surfs, misses	
Laplacian Thunders Blissey, paralyzes Blissey	
	Blissey Double Teams
<b>URNS 9-16</b>	
Viterbi Surfs, misses	
Laplacian Thunders Blissey	
	Blissey Double Teams
<b>TURN 17</b>	
Viterbi Surfs, misses	
Laplacian Thunders Blissey	
	Blissey Softboiled
	Toxic KOs Viterbi
<b>TURN 18</b>	
<b>summons Kolmogorov</b>	
Kolmogorov Protects	
Laplacian Thunders Blissey	
	Blissey Toxic on Kolmogorov (annulled)
	Toxic KOs Laplacian
<b>TIME CALLED</b>	

**Comments:** I started out extremely happy to play Michael after seeing him sweat after the first round, but, by the seventeenth turn of our match, I was growing impatient. I asked the judge if there would be a time limit, because I knew that if we continued indefinitely, my entire team would eventually succumb to Toxic. No official clock existed, so I had no way of verifying that fifteen minutes had passed, even though I felt it had; at one point, I even started my own stopwatch just in case somebody lost count. However, thanks to Protect and double Water Absorb on Laplacian and Viterbi, I survived long enough for time to be called, at which point my remaining two Pokémon (Lagrangian and Kolmogorov) outnumbered his one Double Teaming Blissey. The judges initially laughed at me when they saw Viterbi faint just as time was called, and one of them, glancing at the screen (with only Kolmogorov there), declared the match a draw and disqualified both of us. However, I pointed out Lagrangian in my reserves, and the staff awarded me the match. I never want to face a Double Team Blissey again... It was peskier than the wasps that preceded it!

**Semifinals**  
**Versus Thomas Mifflin**  
**Bronzong/Togekiss/Snorlax/Metagross**



summons Viterbi	summons Bronzong
summons Lagrangian	summons Togekiss
<b>TURN 1</b>	
	Togekiss calls Follow Me
Lagrangian Ice Beams Togekiss	
Viterbi Surfs	
	Bronzong Hypnosis misses
<b>TURN 2</b>	
	Togekiss Protects
Lagrangian Ice Beams Togekiss (annulled)	
Viterbi Surfs	
	Bronzong Hypnosis misses
<b>TURN 3</b>	
	Togekiss Air Slashes Lagrangian
Lagrangian flinches	
Viterbi Surfs	
	Bronzong Trick Rooms
<b>TURN 4</b>	
	<b>switches Togekiss out for Snorlax</b>
Viterbi Protects	
	Bronzong Hypnosis misses
Lagrangian Surfs	
<b>TURN 5</b>	
Lagrangian Protects	
	Snorlax Substitutes
	Bronzong Gyro Balls Lagrangian (annulled)
Viterbi Surfs --> Breaks Substitute, KOs Bronzong	

<b>TURN 6</b>	
	<b>summons Metagross</b>
	Metagross Bullet Punches Lagrangian --> KOs Lagrangian
	Snorlax Belly Drums (Sitrus Berry recovers)
Viterbi Rain Dances	
<b>TURN 7</b>	
<b>summons Kolmogorov</b>	
Kolmogorov Protects	
Viterbi Protects	
	Snorlax Body Slams (annulled)
	Metagross Psychs Up off Snorlax
<b>TRICK ROOM ENDS</b>	
<b>TURN 8</b>	
	Metagross Bullet Punches Kolmogorov
Kolmogorov Surfs	
Viterbi Surfs --> KOs Snorlax	
<b>TURN 9</b>	
	<b>summons Togekiss</b>
	Togekiss Protects
	Metagross Bullet Punches Kolmogorov
Kolmogorov Surfs --> KOs Metagross	
Viterbi Surfs	
<b>TURN 10</b>	
Viterbi Protects	
Kolmogorov Surfs --> KOs Togekiss	

**Comments:** I thought Thomas and I played this match very closely. His missed Hypnoses may have made the difference, since my Viterbi could not have done damage if put to sleep. Thomas' Bronzong would have had to connect on Hypnosis twice to succeed, but the result would have been disastrous considering Psyched Up Metagross. Even without sleep, his team stayed resilient and fought hard to regain advantage; Metagross Bullet Punch nearly cut Kolmogorov's health in half per shot, despite the move's Steel typing. Fortunately, Snorlax was so weak after its Substitute and Belly Drum that two Surfs could wipe it out. Laplacian never entered battle, but it wouldn't survive a Bullet Punch so it didn't matter. This battle was much closer than the number of remaining Pokémon (3-0) would indicate. Togekiss/Bronzong is a very tough matchup for my team to handle. Thomas is a shrewd player and could easily have won this tournament deservedly.

Prior to the finals, J.P. Shields summons a pleasant woman named Marissa to interview me. Before I leave, I have one more picture snapped – the last of the tournament, it turns out:



Unbeknownst to me, my finals opponent stands in the background, to my right. However, the battle must wait, as the press people impatiently shuffle the Elite Eight for photographs with Pikachu and the certificate presentations. Several men interrupt my interview with Marissa for pictures. Just after sitting down with her on a secluded bench, J.P. Shields motions me over for photos. After the Pikachu photos, I return to the bench with Marissa, but Angela jettisons us over for a West Coast team photograph. Just as Marissa and I begin talking again, it's time for the finals... and even after that, an older British interviewer rudely cuts Marissa off to grill me in front of a camera as she stands there. Kudos to Marissa for continuing to smile, staying ever patient and pleasant despite all the disrespect she received; I really admire people like her who don't flinch at adversity. With her persisting positivity and inspiring attitude, Marissa was probably the coolest person I met at the event. She is a great interviewer but an even greater person.

## Finals Versus Paul Hornak Dusknor/Weavile/Machamp/Slowking

I have no photographs of this match. Interrupted in the middle of my interview with Marissa and my mind focused intently on Marissa's questions, I did not even bring my glasses as J.P. dragged me onto stage. I fetched my glasses, but, with a crowd eagerly awaiting the final match of the tournament, I was in no frame of mind to whip out my camera and take a picture of my opponent; he already had his game face on, and the stage was already set, with our Pokémon teams loaded onto Pokémon Battle Revolution for the Wii. Each of us had a Wii and personal TV monitor already displaying our team selection menu, Marissa stood up to acquire a better view of our match, the crowd was roaring, and the announcer had the microphone. It would have been strange to pause for photos here. As all signs indicated, it was time for battle.

<b>summons Viterbi</b>	<b>summons Dusknor</b>
<b>summons Lagrangian</b>	<b>summons Weavile</b>
<b>TURN 1</b>	
	Weavile Fakes Out Lagrangian
Lagrangian flinches	
Viterbi Surfs	
	Dusknor Trick Rooms
<b>TURN 2</b>	
Lagrangian Protects	
	Weavile Ice Shards Lagrangian (annulled)
	Dusknor Earthquakes Viterbi, Weavile
Viterbi Surfs --> KOs Weavile	
<b>TURN 3</b>	
	<b>summons Machamp</b>
	Dusknor Protects
Viterbi Protects	
	Machamp Dynamicpunches Viterbi (annulled)
Lagrangian Surfs Machamp	
<b>TURN 4</b>	
	Dusknor Shadow Sneaks Lagrangian
	Machamp Dynamicpunches Viterbi, confuses Viterbi
Viterbi (confused) Rain Dances	
Lagrangian Surfs --> KOs Dusknor	
<b>TURN 5</b>	
	<b>summons Slowking</b>
Viterbi (confused) hurts self	
Lagrangian Protects	
	Slowking taps HP Electric on Viterbi
	Machamp Dynamicpunches Lagrangian (annulled)
<b>TRICK ROOM ENDS</b>	
<b>TURN 6</b>	
	Machamp Bullet Punches Viterbi --> KOs Viterbi
Lagrangian Surfs --> KOs Machamp	
	Slowking Ice Beams Lagrangian
<b>TURN 7</b>	
<b>summons Laplacian</b>	
Lagrangian Surfs	
Laplacian Thunders Slowking --> KOs Slowking	

Thanks to Thomas Mifflin for the following video footage of the finals:

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=WGCE4rTE-Zo> and <http://youtube.com/watch?v=b3NvHvzbsyo>

**Comments:** An early critical hit expedited my defeat of Dusknor, and a few timely Protects nullified the devastating potential of Dynamicpunch. Apparently, the No Guard Machamp Dynamicpunch penetration of Protect is a glitch peculiar and particular to Pokémon Diamond and Pearl DS battles; thankfully, this glitch did not persist in Pokémon Battle Revolution, or else I would have had no way to stop the powerful attack and its accompanying confusion. Because Protect stopped Dynamicpunch twice, my entire team survived the Trick Room and reaped the benefits of a late Rain Dance to speed its way to victory. Ironically, three weeks ago, I seriously considered using Dusknor/Weavile/Machamp for the tournament but later found that it played too close to mass sweeper teams; in other words, battles were so close that a single stroke of luck or misstep could turn the match against me. That experience playing with Dusknor/Weavile/Machamp helped me immensely in this match, and, indeed, two critical hits (on Dusknor, then Slowking) and a few Protects made the difference. As with my previous match, this one was much closer than the numbers might show, because Machamp could easily have handled Laplacian. My favorite part of the match was when Viterbi fainted, prompting someone in the audience to scream, “Noooooooooooooo!” It’s always nice to have fan support! And I love Viterbi, too.

The tournament concludes, and I embarrass myself on stage as the Nintendo Wii weighs me down and forces me to assume weird poses as the hired cameraman closes in. Furthermore, I wield my certificate upside down, and, fortunately, Marissa quickly comes to my rescue and reverts the sign. Later, after a videotaped Q&A session with a British interviewer, I finally finish my more intimate discussion with Marissa. Here are some of the questions my interviewers posed:

The British reporter asked...

- 1.) How do you feel about your performance?
- 2.) How exciting was this tournament? What was your favorite part of it?
- 3.) How excited are you to compete against Japanese players? What do you think of them?

Marissa Weinstein asked...and I answered.

- 1.) How old are you? **Currently 22 years old, 23 years old by the next round.**
- 2.) Where are you from? **Stanford, California, but originally born in Dallas, Texas.**
- 3.) What school do you attend? **Stanford University, Electrical Engineering.**
- 4.) What is your occupation? **Video Software Intern at NVIDIA for Summer 2008.**
- 5.) What are some of your other hobbies? **English reading, solving math problems, writing.**
- 6.) How did you hear about the tournament? **Online forums, my research for a term paper.**
- 7.) Why did you enter the tournament? **Events like this are too infrequent to forgo.**
- 8.) How did you get here? **I flew Southwest Airlines from San Francisco to Los Angeles.**
- 9.) Who introduced you to Pokémon? **I discovered it myself when seeking deep RPGs.**
- 10.) Please tell me about your video game background. **Played RPG/Strategy since 3 years old.**
- 11.) What is your favorite Pokémon video game? **Pokémon Snap, Pokémon Diamond/Pearl.**
- 12.) Who are your favorite Pokémon? **Espeon for its resilience and mental capacity.**
- 13.) How much time did you spend preparing? **A couple of hours per day over last four weeks.**
- 14.) Can you give me an overview of your strategy? **Rain Dance with Surf and Thunder.**
- 15.) What Pokémon were in your party? **Vaporeon/Ludicolo/Kingdra/Lapas.**
- 16.) What was your reaction when the final KO occurred? **Happiness, disbelief, fulfillment.**
- 17.) Please recap the match, how the final KO was scored? **Lots of prediction, luck, survival.**
- 18.) Do you think you will win the Video Game Showdown in Orlando, FL? **We’ll see.**

Finally, you know the tournament has ended when even Pikachu takes a breather...



...and the primary diversion shifts from Pokémon battling to Pokéball soccer.



As the tournament concluded, Angela launched cleanup. I stumbled around trying to carry my Nintendo Wii and three Wiimotes in hand, but Angela saved my day by lending me a cardboard box in which I could consolidate all of my prizes. She also awarded me a goodie bag containing four deflated Poké beach balls of Pokéball and Ultra Ball design, a Pokémon sticker sheet, a battle type chart, and an Electivire figurine. When we finally departed, I was already eager for the next round; I couldn't wait to see Angela, Marissa, and the whole gang again in the Hilton at DisneyWorld, where I'm sure more adventures await. I can only hope to compile a team as fun to play as Surf Supremum. 'Till then! 😊