

Welcome to Epochtal Tournaments

Welcome to the weekly tournament! This is an open speedrunning competition where players of any skill level can compete on workshop maps carefully curated weekly. Whether you're here to compete for top scores or simply have fun with self-improvement, you'll need to know a few things before you get to submitting attempts.

Setup

You'll need a legitimate installation of Portal 2, as well as SpplICE - a mod loader which you can download [here](#). It is also strongly advised to join the Epochtal Tournaments [Discord server](#), as that's where most conversation about the tournament takes place, and where important announcements are made. If you have any questions, feel free to ask them there. Finally, there's the [Epochtal website](#) - this is where you can view the leaderboard, submit your runs, vote for upcoming maps, etc.

To get the tournament SpplICE package which holds the active map and all necessary scripts, you'll have to add "epochtal.p2r3.com" as a repository in SpplICE. This can be done by using the + icon in the top-right corner of the SpplICE window and simply typing in the link, then clicking "add". From now on, you'll see the currently active tournament map displayed among the other packages.

Systems

Before we get to the strict paperwork, you should familiarize yourself with Epochtal - the collection of automated systems working as the foundation of this tournament. You will need to Log In through Steam using the button at the top right of the page, which will then allow you to vote and submit runs.

When you first visit the [website](#), you'll see details about the active week's map, like its title, author, and the amount of upvotes or downvotes the map had gotten in the voting phase.

Right under the map you'll see this week's leaderboard along with two dropdown menus on the sides. The dropdown menu on the left side allows you to browse the leaderboards of past weeks. The menu on the right allows you to select the category for said leaderboard.

Under the leaderboards you will find the submission form. This is where you can submit runs to this week's leaderboard. You can upload your runs as either demo files or YouTube video submissions. Some categories (including the main "Inbounds CM" category) mandate demo files - they contain frame-by-frame information about every part of your run, which is useful for verification purposes. In most cases, they're even more comfortable to use than videos, so you'll need to learn how to handle them.

Luckily, the Spplce package automates almost the entire process. With each run you finish, a file named `"run_min-sec-ms.dem"` in the corresponding `"week#"` folder is automatically saved under your Portal 2 installation directory. To find this file, you can open the Steam properties for Portal 2, click on "Browse..." under "Installed Files", and from there navigate to the `"portal2"` folder. If you've installed srconfigs, enter the `"demos"` folder. If you haven't, or don't know what that is, stay where you are. From here, open the `"epochtal"` folder, and your run should be within the current `"week#"` folder. Simply find the file that corresponds to your run and either select it in the website or just drag and drop it into the browser window.

Once the demo or video has been selected, you must then select the category that you are submitting to. There is a dropdown menu that allows you to select the category. Optionally, you are allowed to write a comment for your run... or you can write whatever, really, as long as it's appropriate. Once you're ready to submit, just click the "Submit" button.

Below the submission form, there is a list of 5 maps which the curation algorithms have lined up as potential candidates for next week. Your votes will decide which one of these ends up getting picked. All votes are anonymous and the totals are hidden until the map is released. You *can* try out the voting pool maps directly through the workshop, but the much more convenient option is the "Tournament Week # Voting Pool" Spplce package. This lets you play the maps in order - finishing a map will send you to the next one, though you can also skip the current map by pressing the skip button. *A popup should appear in-game for this, though*

if it reads “unassigned”, bind a key to +mouse_menu. You may also suggest maps for consideration via the button at the bottom of the voting list. Suggested maps remain in the database until they’re voted off. There is no telling when a map you’ve suggested will be placed in the voting pool, it is up to the curation algorithms.

Lastly, the bottom of the site features a list of all registered players and their points, gained from participation on scored leaderboards. In Epochtal, points are calculated using an Elo-based system. Your points can go up or down depending on *who* you beat, or who you lost to – not necessarily your leaderboard placement. To put it simply, beating a player who’s better than you will grant you a bunch of points. Placing below a player ranked lower than you will *revoke* a bunch of your points. Placing among similarly ranked players won’t change your points much. **Points are scored on a select few “competitive” categories, which include Inbounds CM, Least Portals, and Co-op Mode.** Clicking on a player’s name in this list will open their profile page with a graph showing points over time, and basic cumulative statistics.

Rules

As with any other competitive tournament, there is a set of rules every player has to follow to keep things fun and fair. Portal 2 leaderboards often have multiple distinct categories, each with its own rules. You can find category-specific rules for Epochtal [here](#).

Other than that, this tournament has a few meta rules governing how the automated systems work and how the flow of the week is organized.

During the week and up until the conclusion of the [tournament livestream](#), there’s a strict “*no route sharing*” policy. This means that you may not give or receive **any** information that is likely to inspire ideas of a gameplay strategy in any of the tournament categories on either the currently active map or any upcoming map on the voting list. Put simply, don’t tell anyone what you’ve found or what you do in your runs. In some cases, if done maliciously, this can get you banned from participating in the current week, or even from the tournament as a whole for any indefinite period of time.

There are two exceptions to the above - first, if you're talking to someone who doesn't plan to participate in the week of the map being discussed and you aren't receiving any feedback that would help you in any way, you're free to ramble about whatever it is you've found. Second, you are, of course, allowed to share route ideas with your co-op partner.

However, there are additional restrictions for co-op partners. Namely, you cannot participate in scored single player categories after finding a partner. You also may not switch your partner until the end of the week. This is to discourage using a viable part of your partner's route in your own runs.

Regarding upcoming map votes, you may not disclose which maps you have upvoted or downvoted, nor may you express your subjective opinion on any of the maps until the voting period is over. This is not only to prevent influencing other player's votes, but also to make it harder to predict which map will be picked ahead of time.

Scheduling

This tournament is highly automated. The events of every week are governed entirely by the programming of the Epochal system.

There are typically only two phases that the system can be in - active or locked. While it's active, players can submit their runs, and vote on (or suggest) future maps. While locked, players cannot submit runs or vote for maps - the system is essentially frozen until the next week begins.

The times of these phase changes are consistent every week. Boards are locked on Sunday, 3 PM UTC+0 and re-opened with the announcement of the next map on Monday, 12 PM UTC+0. The livestream starts 3 hours after the board is locked.