



Steelix finds a secure home on many offensively inclined teams in UUBL that leverage its excellent typing, ridiculous bulk, and decent offensive output to make it an effective tank. Its Electric immunity and neutrality to both Ice and Grass make it one of the few true counters to the terrifying Raikou, and its STAB Earthquake makes it a Steel-type which dominates opposing Steel-types, namely Registeel. A Toxic and Thunder Wave immunity and a plethora of resistances to complement its bulk make Steelix an excellent pivoting tool and blanket check against a wide variety of physical attackers such as Dragonite, Regirock, Registeel, and various Normal-types. Its access to Roar is an amazing tool that its main competitor, Registeel, can only dream of, allowing it to phaze threatening sweepers such as Curse Miltank, Swords Dance Scizor, and Curse Registeel before they get out of hand. Explosion is another great tool that Steelix's foes must constantly be on the lookout for, especially since Steelix's Ground-type moves discourage most Normal resists from trying to switch into it.

However, Steelix is plagued by several key flaws which limit its presence in the metagame to defensive styles. Its shallow movepool leaves it with only one good set and minimal variation; its wanting special bulk and lack of Ice or Grass resistances make it vulnerable to many Pokémon that Registeel dominates, such as Regice, Jynx, Sceptile, and Glalie, and it is completely useless against UUBL's many Water-types. Steelix is also painfully slow even by the standards of defensive Pokémon, and it can't afford to make up for this in its EV spread. Finally, Steelix's base 85 Attack, while better than Registeel, is still underwhelming for UUBL's power level, and this makes it harder to compete with Donphan, Rhydon, and Marowak as an offensive Ground-type.

Physical Tank

Move 1: Earthquake

Move 2: Explosion

Move 3: Hidden Power Rock / Toxic

Move 4: Roar / Protect / Toxic

Item: Leftovers

Ability: Rock Head

EVs: 252 HP / 184 Atk / 72 SpD

Nature: Adamant

STAB Earthquake is Steelix's most consistent weapon, dealing consistently good damage against neutral targets and deterring Fire-type switch-ins, helping to alleviate its weakness to them. Explosion is an all-purpose nuke for whatever target Steelix's trainer deems problematic, usually physical walls that Steelix lures in such as Weezing, Donphan, or a bulky Water-type like Vaporeon; it's also useful as a pivoting tool to ensure one of Steelix's teammates can take the field safely. Hidden Power Rock is the default option for the third slot, providing the unresisted QuakeSlide coverage combination that ensures Steelix is not powerless against Haunter and can damage Heal Bell variants of Dragonite and Crobat without having to rely on Explosion, although Toxic is a solid alternative for crippling physically bulky Pokemon such as Vaporeon, Donphan, and defensive Hariyama. Roar is preferred in the fourth moveslot to deal with certain problematic boost sweepers as well as Baton Pass Scizor, but Protect can be used to maximize Leftovers recovery if the longevity is preferred over Roar's utility; Toxic can also be used alongside Hidden Power Rock in this slot.

Set Details

184 Attack EVs with an Adamant nature guarantee a clean OHKO on Raikou and Lanturn with Earthquake. Maximum HP and 72 Special Defense EVs further augment Steelix's excellent bulk, and allow it to survive a Surf from any defensive Water-type. Maximum Attack investment at the expense of Special Defense is also viable, as it gives Steelix better odds to OHKO standard Qwilfish and 2HKO Registeel, while making its Explosion strong enough to nearly guarantee a OHKO on standard Vaporeon. A few EVs can be diverted to Speed to avoid tying with Slowbro, but Steelix can't do much against Slowbro anyway aside from Toxic or Explosion. Leftovers are required in the item slot to give Steelix some longevity.

Usage Tips

Be careful to manage Steelix's health during the course of a game, especially if it lacks Protect; its low special bulk means it's deceptively easy to get knocked into KO range of neutral Hidden Power coverage from Raikou or a coverage move from various Choice Band users, especially with Spikes on the field. Try to use Roar as often as possible on forced switches, as shuffling foes and racking up Spikes damage is often much more disruptive than using Earthquake, especially if a Flying-type such as Dragonite is being used to switch into Steelix. When using Explosion, make sure that the opponent has gotten into a comfortable pattern of switching your target in whenever Steelix is on the field; thudding into the wrong target or Protect can waste a perfectly good Pokemon for little gain. Steelix also serves as a competent answer to Registeel, as it takes very little damage from the golem's Earthquake, is immuned to both Toxic and Thunder Wave, doesn't mind Explosion, and can phaze Curse variants.

Team Options

Steelix is an excellent choice on Spikes-stacking offensive teams which appreciate its defensive role compression and phazing capabilities. Smeargle is a common Spikes setter for these teams since it sets the tempo nicely with Spore on top of a layer of Spikes, but Qwilfish is also a great option thanks to its defensive synergies with Steelix and more powerful Self-Destruct compared to Smeargle. If the team is using a suicidal Spikes lead such as Smeargle or Glalie, Haunter is a useful partner to block Rapid Spin and ensure that Steelix can keep racking up Spikes damage with Roar; it also provides an easy switch-in to many of the Ground- and Fighting-types that threaten Steelix.

When using Steelix, it is usually over its biggest competitor in Registeel, which can also check Raikou and Choice Band users like Dragonite and Tauros, albeit less effectively, while also checking a ton of other metagame threat such as Regice, Alakazam, Lanturn, Jynx, offensive Vaporeon, Kingdra, and Ludicolo. Therefore, it is important to patch as many of these weaknesses as possible with Steelix's teammates. Regice can check most of the aforementioned Pokemon and appreciates Steelix's ability to handle Raikou, as it eases the pressure on Regice's shoulder when facing special

offense. Gardevoir is another noteworthy partner for its ability to handle Alakazam as well as most offensive Water-types thanks to Trace.

Steelix also fits on physical offense for its ability to handle Raikou while also luring out physical walls such as Weezing, Donphan, and Vaporeon before crippling them with Explosion, something greatly appreciated by sweepers such as Dragon Dance Dragonite and Swords Dance Venusaur. Notable teammates in such teams also include Hariyama, which can handle Fire-types such as Houndoom, among other special attackers that scare away Steelix, and once again Venusaur, which covers Steelix's weaknesses to Fighting- and Water-types.

Other Options

Steelix's shallow movepool leaves it with few alternatives to the standard set. Double-Edge provides good neutral coverage against Earthquake resists and has no recoil thanks to Rock Head, but it still leaves Steelix helpless against Haunter and Weezing. Crunch is a cool tech to surprise Haunter with a Will-O-Wisp-proof 2HKO, but it provides no value outside of that. Taunt is a useful move, but Steelix is too slow to use it for anything besides shutting down Dusclops and Calm Mind Slowbro. A Choice Band set with Earthquake, Iron Tail, Hidden Power Rock, and Explosion could be used to patch up Steelix's middling damage output, but the loss of Leftovers severely hampers Steelix's defensive attributes, and such a set is usually done better by Rhydon due to its major advantages in Speed, power, and more useful secondary STAB.

Checks and Counters

Haunter: Haunter is the only Pokemon in the tier not threatened by any of Earthquake, Toxic, or Explosion, making it a hard counter to Steelix lacking Hidden Power Rock. It can even stop Roar attempts if it has Taunt, and Will-O-Wisp or Hidden Power Water will both see Steelix quickly taken out of the game.

Weezing: Weezing is immune to Earthquake, Spikes, and Toxic, meaning Steelix struggles to hurt it outside of Explosion, and it can cripple Steelix with Will-O-Wisp or KO outright with Fire Blast.

Dusclops: Dusclops takes laughable damage from Earthquake, is immune to Explosion, and invalidates Toxic if it carries Rest while wearing down Steelix with Will-O-Wisp and/or Night Shade.

Fighting-types: Powerful Fighting-types such as Machop, Hariyama, and Medicham all pack enough power to cleave through Steelix's massive physical bulk, although setup sets can sometimes be stopped by Roar and the latter cannot directly switch into Earthquake.

Ground-types: Bulky Ground-types such as Donphan, Rhydon, and Marowak take a chunk from Steelix's Earthquake, but all of them threaten to KO it back with their own STABs. The former two also aren't KOed by Explosion if healthy, but none of them enjoy Toxic or Roar with Spikes down.

Water-types: Vaporeon, Slowbro, Kingdra, Ludicolo, Lapras, Quagsire, and the rare Blastoise all have enough bulk to tank Earthquake without trouble and threaten Steelix with a KO. All of these except Lapras, Kingdra, and Ludicolo can also viably run Protect, which ruins Explosion attempts if Steelix can't catch them on the switch. Other Water-types such as Lanturn and Omastar can also threaten Steelix with their STAB, but have to be wary of Earthquake.

Psychic-types: Nearly every Psychic-type in UUBL commonly runs Hidden Power Water to deal with Houndoom, which happens to be bad news for Steelix. Thus, despite its Psychic resistance, it can't reliably be used as a check to Alakazam (which also runs Fire Punch regardless), Espeon, Jynx, Gardevoir, or Exeggutor.

Ground-immune Pokemon: Dragonite can't set up Dragon Dance against Steelix if it has Roar, but Choice Band sets can mow through it with a boosted Earthquake or Focus Punch. Defensive sets are quite resilient against Hidden Power Rock and Toxic, and they can wear Steelix down with repeated Ice Beams. Without Hidden Power Rock, Steelix is unable to damage Crobat, Articuno, and any Heal Bell variants of Dragonite without resorting to Explosion, while Toxic-less variants are whittled down by Solrock.

Fire-types: While they need to avoid Earthquake, Houndoom, Blaziken, Entei, offensive Arcanine, and Typhlosion can all OHKO Steelix with their Fire STAB.

Other physical tanks: Cradily resists Explosion, isn't weak to Earthquake, can't be phased due to Suction Cups, and easily stalls out Steelix's attacking PP with Recover. However, it is entirely ruined by Toxic. Armaldo has the same drawback of hating Toxic but beats Steelix even more effectively with its own Earthquake. Porygon2 doesn't pack an Explosion resistance, but it takes even less damage from Earthquake and easily stalls Steelix out with Recover while chipping it down with Ice Beam.

Credits

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