

Pickleball Rating Definitions

These are the rating definitions used for the 2-digit rating system and by tournament directors to rate players who have never played in a tournament before.

Rating 1.0

- New player with understanding of the game and rules.

Rating 1.5

- Can hit the ball back and forth a bit
- Learning to serve
- Fails to hit easy balls frequently
- Beginning to learn the basic rules such as scoring, lines, sideouts, etc.

Rating 2.0

- Sustains short rallies
- Makes basic strokes such as forehand, backhand, volley, and can serve the ball
- Understands court positioning and doubles rules

Rating 2.5

- Can sustain longer rallies but not a fast pace
- Makes most easy shots including backhands, but still needs some work
- Able to approach the non-volley zone and hit volleys.
- Aware of dinks.
- Good understanding of the rules
- Struggles to cover the entire court

Rating 3.0

- Has a consistent serve and returns medium-paced balls reliably.
- Able to make all basic strokes. Lacks control when trying to place the ball.
- Attempts lobs and dinks with limited success.

Rating 3.5

- Consistent control and placement of medium-paced shots. Able to return fast-paced shots with slightly less success.
- Improved control and placement of the ball.

- Needs more shot variety.
- Can play aggressively at the non-volley zone.
- Anticipates opponent's shots.
- Learning the strategy of doubles play.

Rating 4.0

- Consistent both forehand and backhand strokes.
- Can use spin with some success.
- Can occasionally force errors when serving.
- May lose rallies due to impatience.
- Uses the dink and drop shot successfully.
- Demonstrates 3rd shot strategies.
- Aggressive net play in doubles.
- Full understanding of the rules.

Rating 4.5

- Beginning to master placement and spin.
- Beginning to master 3rd shot choices.
- Good footwork and positioning.
- Adjusts game style to account for opponent's strengths/weaknesses and court position.
- Good shot selection. Does not force shots.
- Serves consistently and can vary speed and spin.
- Good court positioning. Anticipates opponent's shot.

Rating 5.0

- Mastered all shot types.
- Excellent shot anticipation.
- Accurate shot placement.
- Forces errors. Limits their own unforced errors.
- Mastered dinks and dropshots.
- Mastered 3rd shot strategy.
- Mastered different strategies and can vary play style.
- Raw athletic ability is often what separates 5.0 players from the rest.