

Pickleball Hamilton Inclusive Play Guidelines

July 2021

1.0 Background

We have a problem that you can help solve!

The following guidelines are provided to all members of Pickleball Hamilton with the sole intention of ensuring that everyone knows the expectations placed upon them and all other player regarding Inclusive Play.

In previous years, there was a separation between some of the higher-level players and other players as they did not always want to play with people below their level. In 2020, we took away leveled play to make a more inclusive environment where everyone played with each other. We know how important leveled play is for all players to get games around their own level, so we brought it back this year, but we are starting to see separation again. While this is a pervasive issue in the sport as it continues to grow, this is a notice to let all members know that this behaviour is not acceptable at our Club.

If we are not successful in changing the culture towards a more inclusive and welcoming experience for the majority of our Members, the Board will have no choice and will not hesitate to drop all Level Play. We believe that this would be a backward step for the Club, but it is for you, the Members, to prove to all that Level Play works at Pickleball Hamilton.

Not mincing our words, **the problem area within the Club exists within our Members at Skill Level 4.0+**. It is not all Skill Level 4.0+ players that exhibit behaviours that are not in keeping with both our Code of Conduct and our Court Etiquette Rules, but it is a small portion of our Membership that is intimidating to other members.

2.0 Expectations

To encourage the right inclusive culture, we have in place our Club Constitution, our Code of Conduct and our Court Etiquette Rules. Copies of these documents are on our website (<https://pickleballhamilton.com/member-resources>) and all Members are deemed to have made themselves familiar with their contents. Some relevant articles to quote from these documents include:

From our **Code of Conduct**:

“3. I will always use language and actions that are positive, encouraging, and supportive.

5. I will be a positive role model for others learning the game.

6. I will take an active role as an ambassador for Pickleball Hamilton in promoting the game as a fun activity for all ages.”

From **Pickleball Hamilton Court Etiquette Rules**:

“2. Respect all players.

3. Do your best to ensure equitable court time for all members.

19. If you are asked to play with a group that is of a lower skill level than you, graciously accept and play a game with them. They will likely appreciate your graciousness and understand that you may want to get back to similarly skilled players after the game.”

From our **Constitution 3. Purpose, Aims and Objectives**:

“3.4 To promote the sport of pickleball by encouraging participation at all levels of the game”.

This means, without exception, that the Club promotes participation at all levels of the game.

3.0 Inclusive Play – What can you do?

- If you sign up for Open Play – expect to be mixing with all other players. We recommend indicating your Skill Level in your comments on SignUpGenius such that all players know how to adjust their play.

- If you sign up for Level Play at or around your Skill Level, mixing is fully expected BUT no players should be expected to play down.
- Always listen to and abide by the Court Facilitator's rules of play.
- Introduce yourself at the beginning of the game.
- Do not refuse to take your place on the court (first off is first on) when they are busy simply to allow you to get a game of your choosing.
- Always give players in the game your utmost attention, focus, commitment and respect.
- Do not exhibit disappointment in partners'/opponents' level of play/abilities – everyone has a place in Pickleball and Pickleball Hamilton is the place for everyone.
- Don't offer play improvement tips without being asked or ask if the other player(s) would be receptive to receiving them.
- At the end of the game, thank everyone and ensure that socially you continue to acknowledge each other.
- Remember you need to be the change you want to see at Pickleball Hamilton.

4.0 Skill Level Sessions – Which should I play in?

To clarify ambiguity, we are introducing a revised schedule with revised classifications of Level Play. We have revised the Level Play such that everyone should have sessions available for them at their level and the ability to play a Level Play session that should facilitate a challenge and aid game improvement.

Signing up to all sessions remains the Members' prerogative for all Skill Levels except 4.5+ which is available only to Skill Level 4.5 and over. Below is a table that is provided for your guidance to ensure that you book the appropriate sessions.

Your Current Skill Level	Sessions that are available to you							
	Open	Beginner-2.0	2.0-3.0	3.0-3.5	3.5-4.0	4.0-4.5	4.5+	Family/ Youth
Beginner-2.0	Yes	Yes	Try it – Play up	Not recommended	Not recommended	Not recommended	No	Yes - Members are encouraged to bring siblings, children, partners, grandchildren. \$25 memberships – for Saturday/Sunday play all summer session.
2.5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not recommended	Not recommended	Not recommended	No	
3.0	Yes	Yes – Play down	Yes	Yes	Not recommended	Not recommended	No	
3.5	Yes	Yes – Play down	Yes – Play down	Yes	Yes	Not recommended	No	
4.0	Yes	Yes – Play down	Yes – Play down	Yes – Play down	Yes	Yes	No	
4.5	Yes	Yes – Play down	Yes – Play down	Yes – Play down	Yes – Play down	Yes	Yes	
5.0	Yes	Yes – Play down	Yes – Play down	Yes – Play down	Yes – Play down	Yes – Play down	Yes	
5.5+	Yes	Yes – Play down	Yes – Play down	Yes – Play down	Yes – Play down	Yes – Play down	Yes	

If you are unsure of your Skill Level or unable to self-assess (self-assessment guide found here: <https://www.ifpickleball.org/skill-rating-definitions>), please reach out to our Club Pro, Matt Kawamoto, for guidance. Any member that is not currently assessed at Skill Level 4.5 or higher can be assessed by Matt for a fee of \$25.

5.0 Questions/Clarifications

If you have questions/clarifications related to inclusive play at Pickleball Hamilton or if you are a victim of inappropriate behaviour that makes your experience within our Club less than acceptable – please take the time in contacting a Board Member –

Linda Kawamoto	lkawamoto@pickleballhamilton.com
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Please be patient as we try to set up the club in the best way to run as smoothly as possible.