

# Pickleball Self-Rating Guidelines

Review the following guidelines to rate your own skills. As you self-identify, think about how you hit balls to opponents and how you handle shots hit to you.

1. **React** – May get balls back in play. May not return difficult shots. Unpredictable returns.
2. **Engage** – Return challenging to difficult balls with some accuracy. Needs more control when returning fast or tricky shots.
3. **Control** – Returns most shots strategically and accurately. Returns difficult shots well and can move from defense to offence as needed.

2.5 Early Intermediate	3.0 Intermediate	3.5 Advanced Intermediate	4.0 Advanced
<p>These players are able to keep quite a few balls going with their forehands, make most, easier volleys and are beginning to make more backhands, but need to work on developing their strokes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are thinking more about coming up to the non-volley zone to hit volleys</li> <li>• They are making an effort to be more aggressive.</li> <li>• They are attempting more use of dinks and lobs.</li> <li>• Aware of the “soft game.”</li> <li>• Knowledge of the rules has improved.</li> <li>• Court coverage is limited but improving.</li> </ul>	<p>These players are fairly consistent when hitting medium-paced shots, but are not comfortable with all strokes and lack control when trying for direction, depth, or power on their shots. They are using dinks and lobs on a regular basis and are beginning to understand the benefits of these important parts of the game.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More consistent on the serve and can chose where to hit at their opponent.</li> <li>• Service return is consistent when returning medium-paced balls.</li> <li>• Demonstrates improved skills with all the basic strokes and shot placement but lacks control when trying for direction, depth, or power on some shots.</li> <li>• Beginning to look for weakness in opponent’s skills, and playing to those weaknesses’.</li> <li>• Complete knowledge of the rules and scoring of pickleball.</li> <li>• Court coverage is becoming an asset.</li> </ul>	<p>These players have achieved improved stroke dependability with directional control on medium paced balls and some harder hit balls. They still need to develop more depth and variety in their shots. These players are exhibiting more strategic and aggressive net play. Demonstrating greater variety with their shots.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibits strategic net play, by creating opportunities consistently.</li> <li>• Beginning to anticipate opponent’s shots.</li> <li>• Learning the importance of strategy and teamwork in doubles</li> <li>• Beginning to use Third Shot drops, dinks, and a mixture of strategic pace</li> <li>• Using angles and lobs in their games successfully</li> <li>• Movement and coverage on the court, is an asset. Can get to almost all balls hit near them.</li> <li>• Can exploit weakness’ in other players.</li> </ul>	<p>These players have very strong, dependable strokes, including directional control and depth. They are strong with both forehand and backhand strokes. They use lobs, overheads, approach shots and volleys with success. They may occasionally, force errors when serving. Points may be lost due to impatience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses the dink shot and drop shots intentionally, to slow down or change the pace of the game.</li> <li>• Shows clear understanding of “soft game” strategies and benefits.</li> <li>• Change of pace, angles and lobs are a regular part of their games.</li> <li>• Aggressive net play is demonstrated.</li> <li>• Teamwork in doubles is evident.</li> <li>• Learning to anticipate opponent’s shots and strategies.</li> <li>• Movement is good to exceptional.</li> <li>• They have begun playing in advanced level tournaments.</li> </ul>

**Player notes,** The goal of rating is to establish your skill level vis-à-vis other players so that all players can enjoy playing with those at their skill level. Note the progression from one level to the next. These are the skills you need to master to move up to the next level. You may also earn the next level by winning first place at a sanctioned pickleball tournament at your current level. Once rated, you can play up a level, but not down a level in events and tournaments.