

Introduction

One of the most complex elements of pickleball is player ratings.

There are many guides out there and many individuals who are working to provide information to help with the self-rating process.

Until we have time to create a rating system, and individuals willing to carry out assessment, PV have enlisted the support of members and other State pickleball associations to create a self-rating guide to assist players with determination of their rating for tournaments and fixtures.

Acknowledgements

- Keith Bing – for descriptions provided
- IPTPA – for written skill descriptions
- Pickleball Association Queensland - original document

Reading the Guide

As with any rating system we sit somewhere on the spectrum

Read through the general description of various levels and then the more specific skills for each level. Many of you will be between levels.

Remember this is just a guide and is not a perfect solution for self-rating.

When deciding on a rating to work out what division to play in a tournament, you need to consider a few elements.

1. Enter the division where you will have challenging games but still be able to enjoy the matches.
2. Be less concerned with winning the division and more with facing opponents that provide a satisfying challenge.
3. Age category can influence (but not always) the division you should select.
4. Consider others in a division and how you have fared playing them in the past
5. Don't hesitate to ask tournament directors, certified pickleball coaches and PV committee members for advice on entry level.

Pickleball Rating Made Simple



Rating	Description
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Beginner level

1.0 - 2.5	Novice players. Learning to serve & return the serve. Learning scoring & rules. Short rallies.
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1.0 Skills	New and have only minimal knowledge of the game and the rules.
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1.5 Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Limited to some rallies * Learning how to serve * Developing a forehand * Fails to return easy balls frequently and occasionally misses the ball entirely. * Played a few games and is learning the court lines, scoring, and some basic rules of the game.
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2.0 Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Sustains a short rally with players of equal ability. * Demonstrating the basic shot strokes forehand, backhand, volley, overhead and the serve, but has obvious weaknesses in most strokes. * Familiar with court positioning in doubles play.
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Advanced Beginners

Encouraged to enter tournaments at beginner level You can score, know the rules, can serve and return the serve a-ok and have some short rallies. You haven't learned the drop shot, how to let the out ball fly, haven't done much dinking, problems dealing with bangers, working with a partner, strategies and most likely, have never been in a tournament.

2.5 Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Makes longer lasting slow-paced rallies. * Makes most easy volleys and uses some backhands, but needs more work on developing shot strokes. * Beginning to approach the non-volley zone to hit volleys. * Aware of the "soft game." * Knowledge of the rules has improved. * Court coverage is weak but improving.
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Intermediate

Potentially able to start playing at Intermediate level in events You know about the drop shot, can deal with some of the hard hitters, have longer rallies and can place some shots. You still hit too many high balls that get smashed. If you usually lose badly playing stronger (advanced) players, you should play Intermediate. However, if you know you usually win against Intermediate players it is time to move up!

3.0

Know how to play the game, the rules and scoring.
Mostly hard hitters and less likely to come to the NVL.
Need to learn the 3rd shot and approach strategies to reach the NVL.
Subject to easy put-aways by opponents.

3.0 Skills

- * More consistent on the serve and service return and when returning medium-paced balls.
- * Demonstrates improved skills with all the basic shot strokes and shot placement but lacks control when trying for direction, depth, or power on their shots.
- * Beginning to attempt lobs and dinks with little success and doesn't fully understand when and why they should be used.

Advanced Intermediate

The challenge here is whether to play at advanced or intermediate level in events. You know the game well, understand strategy but may not yet always execute successfully. It is up to you but is you know you can easily win at Intermediate level – move up! It is the only way you get better.

3.0 – 3.5

Learning the 3rd shot drop, dealing with hard hitters and developing shot placement.

Definitely play up in advanced level for events

3.5

A useable 3rd shot drop, some extended dinking and rallies. Have most of the pickleball shots.

3.5 Skills

- * Demonstrates improved stroke consistency with directional control on most medium-paced balls and some faster-paced balls
- * Demonstrates improved control when trying for direction, depth and power on their shots.
- * Needs to develop variety with theirshots.
- * Exhibits some aggressive net play.
- * Beginning to anticipate opponent's shots.
- * Learning about the importance of strategy and teamwork in doubles.

3.5 – 4.0

Have both a hard & soft game, have extended rallies and all the shots.

Advanced

4.0

Have all the shots plus can hit with consistency & accuracy.
Able to employ team strategies.

4.0 Skills

- * Consistent and dependable strokes, including directional control and depth on both forehand and backhand shots.
- * Reliable serves, lobs, overheads, approach shots and volleys and can use spin shots with some success.
- * Occasionally can force errors when serving.
- * Rallies may be lost due to impatience.
- * Uses the dink shot and drop shots to slow down or change the pace of the game.
- * Demonstrates 3rd shot strategies – drop shots, lobs, and fast-paced ground strokes.
- * Aggressive net play and teamwork in doubles is evident.
- * Fully understands the rules of the game and can play by them.

4.5

They know – there is a major gap between 4.0 and 4.5

4.5 Skills

- * Beginning to master the use of power and spin, can successfully execute all shots, can control the depth of their shots, and can handle pace.
- * Beginning to master the dink shots and drop shots and their importance to the game.
- * Beginning to master 3rd shot choices.
- * Displays sound footwork and moves well enough to get to the non-volley zone whenever required.
- * Understands strategy and can adjust style of play and game plan according to the opponent's strengths and weaknesses and court position.
- * Serves with power and accuracy and can also vary the speed and spin of the serve. * Understands the importance of "keeping the ball in play" and the effect of making errors.
- * Making good choices in shotselection.
- * Anticipates the opponent's shots resulting in good court positioning.

Elite – Not something we have to consider yet – quite rare in Australia

5.0

Another big gap, in a league of their own.

5.0 Skills

- * Mastered all the skills – all shot types, touch, spin, serves, with control and can use them as weapons.
- * Excellent shot anticipation, extremely accurate shot placement and regularly hit winning shots.
- * Forces opponents into making errors by "keeping the ball in play."
- * Mastered the dink and drop shots.
- * Mastered the 3rd shot choices and strategies.
- * Uses soft shots, dinks and lobs to set up offensive situations.
- * Mastered pickleball strategies and can vary strategies and styles of play in competitive or tournament matches.
- * Dependable in stressful situations as in tournament match play. Athletic ability, quickness, agility, and raw athleticism are also qualities that are sometimes what separates the top players from those near the top.