

Newmarket Pickleball Club- Definition of Player Skill Ratings (Per USA Pickleball)

2.0 Level: This player is just starting to play pickleball. Minimal understanding of rules of the game. Often this will be their first opportunity to play when they join the club.

2.5 Level: Often this player has some experience but is still relatively new to the sport. They may have minimal understanding of rules of the game. The player has limited experience. They can sustain a short rally with players of equal ability. They may have a basic ability to keep score.

3.0 Level: Summary: These players hit drives, volleys, serves, and returns with pace and are developing consistency and control. They understand the rules, move quickly to the NVC and are starting to vary placement, pace and spin on their shots. Many recreational players participate at this level.

USA Pickleball Definition: FOREHAND: Ability to hit a medium paced shot. Often lacks directional intent and consistency. BACKHAND: Avoids using a backhand. Lacks directional intent and consistency. SERVE / RETURN: Able to hit a medium paced shot. Lacks depth, direction, and consistency. DINK: Not able to consistently sustain a dink rally. Not yet developed the ability to control this shot 3RD SHOT: inconsistent use and execution of this shot. VOLLEY: Able to hit a medium paced shot. Lacks direction/inconsistent. STRATEGY: Understands fundamentals. Is learning proper court positioning. Knows the fundamental rules and can keep score and may be playing tournaments.

3.5 Level: Summary: These players hit forehand and backhand drives, serves, and returns with pace, use dinks, drop shots and a variety of volleys. They understand court positioning, basic game, and doubles tactics (including stacking), can defend pace and attacks from opponents and are starting to attack the opponent's weakness.

USA Pickleball Definition: FOREHAND: Improved stroke development with moderate level of shot control. BACKHAND: Learning stroke form and starting to develop consistency. SERVE / RETURN: Consistently gets serve/return in play with limited ability to control depth. DINK: Increased consistency, with limited ability to control height/depth. Sustains medium length rallies. Starting to understand variations of pace. 3RD SHOT: Developing the drop shot in a way to get to the net. VOLLEY: Can volley medium paced shots thereby developing control. STRATEGY: Moves quickly towards the non-volley zone (NVZ) when opportunity is there. Acknowledges difference between hard game and soft game and is starting to vary own game during recreation and tournament play. Can sustain short rallies. Is learning proper court positioning. Basic knowledge of stacking and understands situations where it can be effective.

4.0 Level: Summary: This is for the club's top players. These players display the skills of the 3.5 level but are differentiated by their consistency, greater variety of shots, shot selection, teamwork, power and spin of their shots.

USA Pickleball Definition: These players have advanced skills. They display the skills of the 3.5 level players but are differentiated by their consistency, greater variety of shots, shot selection, teamwork, power and spin of their shots. FOREHAND: Consistently hits with depth and control. Is still perfecting shot selection and timing. BACKHAND: Has improved stroke mechanics and has success at hitting a backhand consistently. SERVE / RETURN: Places a high majority of serves/returns with varying depth and speed. DINK: Consistency with some ability to control height/depth. May end dink rally too soon due to lack of patience. Is beginning to understand difference between attackable balls and those that are not. 3RD SHOT: Selectively mixing up soft shots with power shots to create an advantage with inconsistent results. VOLLEY: Able to volley a variety of shots at different speeds. Is developing consistency and control. Starting to understand the block/re-set volley. STRATEGY: Aware of partner's position on the court and can move as a team. Demonstrates ability to change direction in an offensive manner. Demonstrates a broad knowledge of the rules of the game. Has a moderate number of unforced errors per game. Solid understanding of stacking and when and how it could be used in match play. Beginning to identify opponent's weaknesses and attempts to formulate game plan to attack weaknesses. Seeks out more competitive play.

4.5 Level: Summary: This is an expert level.

USA Pickleball Definition: **FOREHAND:** High level of consistency. Uses pace and depth to generate opponents' error or set up next shot. **BACKHAND:** Can effectively direct the ball with varying depth and paces with good consistency. **SERVE / RETURN:** Serves with power, accuracy, and depth and can also vary the speed and spin of the serve. **DINK:** Ability to place ball with high success at changing shot types while playing both consistently and with offensive intent. Recognizes and attempts to hit attackable dinks. **3RD SHOT:** Consistently executes effective 3rd shot strategies that are not easily returned for advantage. Able to intentionally and consistently place the ball. **VOLLEY:** Able to block hard volleys directed at them and can consistently drop them into the NVZ. Comfortable hitting swinging volleys. Hits overhead shots consistently, often as putaways. **STRATEGY:** Has good footwork and moves laterally, backward, and forward well. Uses weight transfer for more efficient footwork. Able to change direction with ease. Very comfortable playing at the non-volley zone. Communicates and moves well with partner — easily "stacks" court position Understands strategy and can adjust style of play and game plan according to the opponent's strengths and weaknesses and court position. Limited number of unforced errors.