

## FAQ: Ladder Leagues Using Pickleball Brackets, December 2024

### Why competitive pickleball?

The YPA wishes to meet the varied needs and wishes of our membership. Many of our members enjoying playing with others at a similar skill level. **Competitive play can be enjoyed at any skill level.** In the past we relied on players self assessing their skill level. However, this had its challenges. The board decided that we have reached a point where we need to use an objective computer program to rank our members based on their skill level, as reflected in game scores in a ladder league. We have chosen Pickleball Brackets to provide this service.

### What is Pickleball Brackets?

Pickleball Canada entered into an agreement in April, 2021, with Pickleball Brackets, located in Buffalo, NY, for preferred pricing on software solutions for affiliated clubs and organizations in Canada. PB has a “ratings engine”, a software program that adjusts ratings based on game results and current ratings of the four players in a match.

### Why is adjusting the ratings important?

When players sign up initially in PB they “self-rate”, by declaring their initial rating. **For players in YPA there are four options: 2.0, 2.5, 3.0, and 3.5.** As you can see from the above explanation on ratings, PB calculates ratings to 8 decimal places. PB will initially declare that a player who self rates as 3.0 has an initial rating of 3.25000000, mid-way between 3.0 and 3.5. So, at the start of using PB there will be several players with identical ratings, for example, 3.25000000. The first time we use PB the rankings won't mean much. However, after each game, players will post their results on-line (details to follow) and 24 hours later their ratings will be adjusted based on the game results from the day before. So, next time. instead of having many players with the same rating, now some of those who self-rated at 3.0 will have a PB rating slighter higher then 3.25000000, and some will be slightly lower. The more matches that are played the more the rating will reflect that player's ranking compared with other players in the club.

### Why is an accurate initial rating important?

Pickleball Brackets adjusts ratings based on game scores. Nevertheless, the more accurate/realistic the initial rating of each player, the less adjustment PB needs to make and the sooner players will end up playing others who are at a similar skill level within their round robins. Players who were rated by Brooke Siver in May are asked to use his assessed value for your initial rating. Players who were not assessed are asked to refer to the May 2024 newsletter, (accessible at our webpage) and to use the published assessed ratings as a guideline to assist in deciding what would be an appropriate initial rating. Players who are new to YPA and pickleball will most likely select either a 2.0 or a 2.5 rating. Players who

participated in the recent October Championships should **NOT** automatically select the rating used to describe the three different tournaments. In other words, **not all who played in the 3.5 tourney should consider themselves 3.5 players. Similarly, not all in the 3.0 tourney should consider themselves 3.0 players.**

### **What is the difference between ratings and rankings?**

A rating can be considered a raw score, an indication of a player's skill level compared to others in the club. The ranking, uses the rating scores to list (rank) players from the highest rating score (thus ranked #1) to the lowest score, ranked "x", with "x" being the number of club members who have enrolled in PB.

### **What is a ladder league?**

PB offers clubs the ability to run ladder leagues. A ladder league is intended to provide competitive play at each rung of the ladder. In other words, at each rung (level) players will have a similar skill level (rating). At the start of the league in a club where everyone is new to PB, and everyone has provided self assessed ratings, they will not be precise and accurate, and likewise rankings will be inaccurate. **So, please be patient.** I've been informed that after only a few weeks ratings do spread out enough to start to generate meaningful rankings.

There will be three leagues: tier 1, tier 2 and tier 3. In many ways this mirrors what we have been offering this past fall with the tiered round robins, with tier 1 from 8:30 to 10:30, tier 2 from 10:30- 12:30 and tier 3 from 12:30 to 2:30. However, unlike the tiered RRs where players shuffled from court to court, in the ladder league, within each tier, each week **there will be three round robin matches, one for each court.** The limit for registration each week will be 15 per league. So, assuming full registration the top 5 ranked players (who signed up for that day) play on court 1, the next 5 ranked play on court 2, and the last five ranked play on court 3. Each game will be to 15, win by 1. Results will be submitted electronically to PB. If we are short one or two players at **game time** there may be one or two courts with only 4 players. In this case, they will play two rounds (a total of 6 games) with each game to 11, win by 1.

A crucial element with PB ladder leagues is that you must "sign in" at the venue just prior to playing. A "host" will mark you present. **Please show up at least 10 minutes prior to game time. At game time (e.g. 8:30 for tier 1), the host "locks in" the matches.** PB then generates the table of matches for the round robins. **Once the matches are "locked in" late players are not eligible to play that day.**

## Session 1 Leagues 2025

We will start the ladder leagues on Sunday February 2 at Takhini school. There will be 14 “game days”, with the last one for the winter/spring session on Sunday June 8. We will miss some Sundays due to Spring break, etc.

### Do I need to sign up (opt-in) each Sunday?

**Short answer: Yes.** Each week you can choose to opt-in for the following Sunday. You can opt-in as often or as seldom as you wish. *In other words, you are not committed to play each week. You register (opt-in) for the dates that work for you.* Sign up will open at 7 pm on Sundays for the following Sunday. You will “opt-in” at the Pickleball.com site, selecting the appropriate league. There is a limit of 15 players per league each week. There will also be a “waitlist” option. If a player who opted-in changes their mind they can select “opt-out”. In this case the first player on the waitlist is automatically “opted-in”.

### Do I need a winter pass (\$40) to play in the ladder league? Yes

**Is there a deadline for signup? Yes.** We will have a deadline one hour prior to “game time”. If you need to opt-out (perhaps you felt ill on Sunday morning) please do so before the deadline, to allow a waitlisted player to fill your vacancy.

### Can I see my rating, other’s rating and the club rankings?

Yes, PB is transparent. The day following an event the ratings are adjusted, based on game results. So, each Monday you can see the new ratings, and the new ranking of all players in each league based on the revised ratings. Chances are the group you play on the following Sunday will not be identical to the group you played last Sunday, for a couple of reasons. Ratings will have changed. Also, perhaps more significantly, some who played one Sunday may not register for the following Sunday, and vice versa. In any case, for each weekly event you will be able to see your current rating, your current ranking, and the current rating and ranking of everyone else who is participating in these PB leagues.

### What does it cost to participate in the Ladder League?

To encourage participation, the YPA has decided to cover the nominal cost this year. There is no cost to members to register (create a profile) with PB. And there is no additional cost to participate in the Ladder League this winter. **However, you will need to have a 2025 YPA/PCO membership. Select the Whitehorse Pickleball Club (when you renew your Pickleball Canada membership). As well you must join the Whitehorse Pickleball Club in Pickleball Brackets when you create your profile in PB. Note: you must include your PCO membership number in your PB profile.**

## **What about summer leagues?**

We certainly intend to offer a set of summer leagues. With more courts and more court times available we will be able to accommodate more players.

After our 14 game days in session 1 there will be a meaningful spread in players' ratings. For the second session next summer this spread will assist us in establishing boundaries between the three tiers. Say, for discussion purposes, 60 players register to play in session 2, starting in early June. We would place the top 20 ranked players in tier 1, the next 20 in tier 2 and the third 20 in tier 3. If player #20 in ranking has a rating of 3.3657 and player #31 had a ranking of 3.2925 then the tier 1-2 boundary could be 3.3. Similarly, if player #40 had a rating of 2.945 and player #41 had a rating of 2.8382n the boundary between tier 2 and 3 could be 2.9.

Thus tier 1, in this example, would be defined as 3.3+, tier 2 as 2.9-3.3, and tier 3 would 2.0-2.9

## **What about additional tiers?**

If there is sufficient interest we can add additional tiers. In the summer, we could have 20 playing in each tier on 4 courts. Next winter at Takhini we could add an additional tier, tier 4, for our last time slot, from 2:30-4:30, assuming we get the same allocation. We were unsure if there would be adequate demand this winter for 4 tiers.

In a separate document we will provide step by step instructions for

- Registering in Pickleball Brackets, (creating a profile)
- Joining the Whitehorse Pickleball Club