



## Lethbridge, Coaldale, and Area Ratings System 2025

Lethbridge Pickleball Club/Coaldale Pickleball Club/Lethbridge Senior Citizens Organization, and area

## **Introduction**

Over the last couple of years, the growth in the number of registered pickleball players in Southern Alberta has been a welcome addition to the sporting landscape. With this increase in player numbers, the availability of quality leveled play is one of the most important guiding elements in the development of player skills, opportunities for players, and the continued expansion of the sport in Southern Alberta.

Quality leveled play provides players a chance to recognize and develop the skills necessary to improve, while ensuring that there is a clear pathway to progress. Providing quality leveled play means implementing a system of assessment that recognizes a player's place on that pathway. This system of assessment is the club/org ratings system known as the Lethbridge, Coaldale and Area Rating System (LCARS).

## **Goals of Assessment**

Club/Org ratings are intended to:

- Provide players with an awareness of their pickleball abilities and areas for improvement,
- Allow for comparisons between players based on their pickleball abilities, and
- Create standards by which quality leveled play can be afforded all players.

LCARS is not intended to provide a ratings assessment for other entities, or for sanctioned or non-sanctioned tournament play.

Once a member is rated by the LCARS, that rating will be valid across all three clubs/organizations.

## **Updated for 2025**

In 2025, the Lethbridge Pickleball Club, Coaldale Pickleball Club, and Lethbridge Seniors Citizens Organization through the Joint Ratings Committee has made two significant changes to the Policy: 1. Major updates to the criteria for achieving each level, and 2. All testing for re-assessments has been moved to Pickle Point Inc.

Summary of 2025 updates to levels:

- New members can now receive a preliminary rating by either attending club lessons (LPC, CPC, LSCO, Pickle Point Inc.) that specifically identify that a club rating will be provided, submitting a Verifiable Rating Form (some changes to this format), or will automatically receive an initial club rating of 2.75;
- Skill-related testing for the 2.75 and 3.0 levels has been added
- Skill-related testing for the 4.0 level has been removed;
- Members interested in being re-rated for a higher rating:
  - o Will now see a minimum standard for each of the Skill Assessment portions of testing;
  - o Will find the ratings document for a new level (3.75) introduced to this document;
  - o Can pursue re-rating at the beginning and end of the outdoor season only (LPC), or may be requested outside of the scheduled sessions by contacting CPC & LSCO directly.

Summary of 2025 update to re-assessments:

- All re-assessments beyond initial assessments will now be completed by the coaching staff at Pickle Point Inc.;
- Re-assessments at Pickle Point Inc. may be completed at any point in time throughout the calendar year;

For the purposes of the remainder of this document, CLUB refers to LPC, CPC, LSCO and Pickle Point Inc..

## Member Ratings

All members of LPC, CPC, and LSCO must have a member rating (MR) to participate in Leveled Play (LP) and some club-based tournaments/events. Members without a MR are only permitted to play in sessions that are not considered LP. Examples of some non-LP sessions may be All Level Play, Open Play, Practice, Partners, and Drills and Skills.

There are two ways for members to acquire a member rating (MR), either through a Verifiable Doubles Rating or through the Club Assessment Process.

### Verifiable Doubles Rating

Members with a Verifiable Doubles Rating can apply to be placed in the corresponding MR. A Verifiable Doubles Rating is a tournament or assessment-based rating that has not been self-assigned and may be one of the following:

- a. Canadian Tournament Player Rating (CTPR) with a minimum tournament history of at least 10 tournament matches in a Canadian tournament.
- b. International Pickleball Teaching Professional Association (IPTPA) assessment by an IPTPA Certified Ratings Specialist (CRS).

Members who meet this criterion can apply to be placed in the corresponding MR by completing and submitting:

1. the Verifiable Ratings Form and
2. a screenshot/copy of the verifiable rating from its original source.

Once approved, players will be placed in the corresponding MR for a period of 2 years.

### Club Assessment Process

The Club Assessment Process will be based on two streams:

- A. New members to the club will either:
  - a. Join the chosen club and be subsequently rated at 2.75, or
  - b. Participate in club lessons that specifically identify that a club rating will be provided. In these cases, club ratings will be no higher than 3.5, or
  - c. In the case of the LSCO, for 2025, new members follow the LSCO Policy for ratings.
- B. Members with a prior club MR (from LPC, CPC, LSCO, Pickle Point Inc., or Verifiable Rated) will be afforded an opportunity to be re-assessed at Pickle Point Inc. under the following guidelines:
  - a. Refer to the appropriate criteria for each level and self-select their reassessment level.
  - b. If a member is unable to achieve the requirements to move to a level, they shall remain at their existing level prior to testing.

The following pages describe the criteria to be rated at each of levels 2.75, 3.0, 3.25, 3.5, 3.75, and 4.0.

## The 2.75 Level

The goal of 2.75 level play is to provide an opportunity for players to improve some basic pickleball skills that might allow them to engage in longer rallies. At this level, most players have a good understanding of the rules of pickleball and how to score the game and is starting to find areas of their game that they would like to improve.

### Playing Criteria for 2.75 level players:

- Knows the basic rules including the 2-bounce rule, scoring and player position relative to score
- Demonstrates a serve and return of serve that enable rally to continue
- Demonstrates basic pendulum swing on the forehand and backhand side
- Uses a backhand groundstroke
- Engages in dinking down the line forehand and backhand
- Engages in dinking cross court forehand and backhand
- Demonstrates a punch volley during rallies
- Beginning to move forward to approach the NVL for dinks and volleys
- Demonstrates proper side-step movement while staying balanced in court position
- Has good mobility and moves in a safe and balanced manner
- Demonstrates some hand-eye coordination
- Keeps ball in play during short rallies
- Beginning to communicate with partner on court
- Achieves a minimum of 21 points across three games during the assessment

\*\* Skill requirements must meet minimum standard noted beside each category or a score of '0' is awarded\*\*

### Skills Requirements - 2.75 player: DINKS

\*Dinks must land in the NVZ

Forehand dinks down the line 4/10

Forehand dinks cross court 4/10

Backhand dinks down the line 4/10

Backhand dinks cross court 4/10

### Skills Requirements - 2.75 player: Punch Volley

\*Punch volley must land in transition zone

Forehand punch volley 4/10

Backhand punch volley 4/10

### Skill Requirements - 2.75 player: Transition Drops

\*Transition drops must land in the NVZ

Forehand transition drops 3/10

Backhand transition drops 3/10

### Skill Requirements - 2.75 player: Serves

\*Serves must land in the appropriate box

Deuce (right-side) 3/5

Left (left-side) 3/5

### Skill Requirements - 2.75 player: Return of Serves

\*Returns must land in the transition zone

Forehand 2/5

Backhand 2/5

Assessment for the 2.75 level requires players to Meet Standard on 7/14 Playing Criteria and scores a minimum total of 40/100 on the Skill Requirements.

## The 3.0 Level

The goal of 3.0 level play is to provide an opportunity for players to improve some basic technical aspects of their pickleball skills that might allow them to begin to strategize while they play. At this level, most players can keep score, engage in consistent rallies, and may even start to consider entering a tournament.

Playing Criteria for 3.0 level players:

- Possess all criteria from previous levels
- Understands fundamental rules, scoring and positional elements of the game
- Consistent serve and return of serve with depth/direction
- Demonstrates consistent forehand and backhand groundstrokes
- Beginning to demonstrate control on forehand groundstrokes (direction, depth)
- Uses a backhand groundstroke when appropriate
- Working on consistency while dinking down the line forehand and backhand
- Working on consistency while dinking cross court forehand and backhand
- Demonstrates a punch volley on forehand and backhand sides
- Is attempting 3rd shot drop by long dinking from the transition area
- Avoids unnecessary play from transition zone
- Demonstrates proper side-step movement while staying balanced at the NVL
- Has good mobility and moves in a safe and balanced manner
- Hand-eye coordination compliments court movement
- Keeps ball in play during short rallies by attempting different shots, i.e., volleys, dinks
- Is beginning to communicate with partner about tactical elements
- Achieves a minimum of 21 points across three games

\*\* Skill requirements must meet minimum standard noted beside each category or a score of '0' is awarded\*\*

Skills Requirements – 3.0 player: DINKS

\*Dinks must land in the NVZ

Forehand dinks down the line 5/10

Forehand dinks cross court 5/10

Backhand dinks down the line 5/10

Backhand dinks cross court 5/10

Skills Requirements – 3.0 player: Punch Volley

\*Punch volley must land in transition zone

Forehand punch volley 5/10

Backhand punch volley 5/10

Skill Requirements – 3.0 player: Transition Drops

\*Transition drops must land in the NVZ

Forehand transition drops 4/10

Backhand transition drops 4/10

Skill Requirements – 3.0 player: Baseline Drops

\*Baseline drops must land in the NVZ

Forehand transition drops 2/5

Backhand transition drops 2/5

Skill Requirements – 3.0 player: Serves

\*Serves must land in the appropriate box

Deuce (right-side) 3/5

Left (left-side) 3/5

Skill Requirements – 3.0 player: Return of Serves

\*Returns must land in the transition zone

Forehand 3/5

Backhand 2/5

Assessment for the 3.0 level requires players to Meet Standard on 9/17 Playing Criteria and scores a minimum total of 53/110 on the Skill Requirements.

## The 3.25 Level

The goal of 3.25 level play is to provide an opportunity for players to improve some basic strategic elements of their play while developing consistency in technical skills. At this level, most players can sustain rallies, look for ways to put pressure on the opponent, and may have played in a tournament.

Playing Criteria for 3.25 level players:

- Possess all criteria from previous levels
- Is attempting serve and ROS with depth and placement
- Consistent serve and ROS that does not disadvantage team
- Demonstrates control on forehand groundstroke placement (direction, depth, height)
- Uses backhand groundstroke at appropriate times and with better control
- Is consistently dinking down the line forehand and backhand
- Is consistently dinking cross court forehand and backhand
- Is keeping opponents back with effective punch volley
- Engaging in volley exchanges at the net
- Can perform a 3rd shot drop by long dinking from the transition area
- Is attempting re-sets/soft shots from transition zone with some success
- Moving forward to approach the NVL for dinks and volleys
- Stays at NVL to participate in rallies
- Attempting to adjust to different ball speeds
- Keeps ball in play during short rallies by using volleys and dinks at appropriate times
- Can sustain a short volley exchange at the net
- Engages in regular communication with partner about tactical elements
- Achieves a minimum of 21 points across three games

\*\* Skill requirements must meet minimum standard noted beside each category or a score of '0' is awarded\*\*

Skills Requirements – 3.25 player: DINKS

\*Dinks must land in the NVZ

Forehand dinks down the line 6/10

Forehand dinks cross court 6/10

Backhand dinks down the line 6/10

Backhand dinks cross court 6/10

Skills Requirements – 3.25 player: Punch Volley

\*Punch volley must land in back ½ of transition zone

Forehand punch volley 6/10

Backhand punch volley 6/10

Skill Requirements – 3.25 player: Transition Drops

\*Transition drops must land in the NVZ

Forehand transition drops 5/10

Backhand transition drops 5/10

Skill Requirements – 3.25 player: Baseline Drops

\*Baseline drops must land in the NVZ

Forehand transition drops 2/5

Backhand transition drops 2/5

Skill Requirements – 3.25 player: Serves

\*Serves must land in back ½ of box

Deuce (right-side) 3/5

Left (left-side) 3/5

Skill Requirements – 3.25 player: Return of Serves

\*Returns must land in back ½ of transition zone

Forehand 3/5

Backhand 3/5

Assessment for the 3.25 level requires players to Meet Standard on 11/18 Playing Criteria and scores a minimum total of 62/110 on the Skill Requirements.

## The 3.5 Level

The goal of 3.5 level play is to provide an opportunity for players to improve their strategic play as they attempt to win rallies. At this level, most players can sustain rallies, attempt to re-set fast play, and will likely have played in a tournament.

Playing Criteria for 3.5 level players:

- Possess all criteria from previous levels
- Demonstrates better placement and depth on serves and ROS
- Demonstrates control on forehand and backhand groundstrokes (direction, speed, depth, height)
- Can perform an overhead with control while maintaining proper court position
- Attempts to use an offensive lob
- Is beginning to dink with a purpose
- Sustains longer dinking exchanges, becoming more aggressive in placement of dinks
- Punches volley to back 1/2 of opponent court; keeping opponents back
- Can sustain a controlled volley exchange at the net
- Becoming more effective from Transition Zone, attempting soft shots into NVZ
- Is attempting longer 3rd shot drops from the baseline
- Moving forward with partner to approach the NVL for dinks and volleys
- Moves with partner along the NVL as rallies progress
- Displays improved control when adjusting to different ball speeds (all shots)
- Is balanced and in control while executing shots, not running through shots
- Making fewer unforced errors by keeping ball 'in play'
- Communicates with partner in all aspects of play
- Achieves a minimum of 21 points across three games

**\*\* Skill requirements must meet minimum standard noted beside each category or a score of '0' is awarded\*\***

Skills Requirements – 3.5 player: Dinks

\* Windshield dinks must land in the NVZ

Windshield Wiper Dinks 14/20

Skill Requirements – 3.5 player: Transition Drops

\*Transition drops must land in the NVZ

Forehand transition drops down the line 6/10

Backhand transition drops down the line 6/10

Forehand transition drops cross court 6/10

Backhand transition drops cross court 6/10

Skill Requirements – 3.5 player: Serves

\*Serves must land in back ½ of box

Deuce (right-side) 3/5

Left (left-side) 3/5

Skills Requirements – 3.5 player: Punch Volley

\*Punch volley must land in back ½ of transition zone

Forehand punch volley 7/10

Backhand punch volley 7/10

Skill Requirements – 3.5 player: Baseline Drops

\*Baseline drops must land in the NVZ

Forehand transition drops 3/5

Backhand transition drops 3/5

Skill Requirements – 3.5 player: Return of Serves

\*Returns must land in back ½ of transition zone

Forehand 3/5          Backhand 3/5

Skill Requirements – 3.5 player: Overhead 2/5

Skill Requirements – 3.5 player: Offensive Lob 2/5

Assessment for the 3.5 level requires players to Meet Standard on 12/18 Playing Criteria and scores a minimum total of 74/120 on the Skill Requirements.

## The 3.75 Level

The goal of 3.75 level play is to provide an opportunity for players to improve their strategic play and coordinate movement with their partner during rallies. At this level, most players work as a unit with their partner, can re-set play, and may be preparing for a tournament experience.

Playing Criteria for 3.75 level players:

- Possess all criteria from previous levels
- Consistent serve; ROS does not disadvantage team
- Consistent control of forehand and backhand groundstrokes that pressures opponent
- Incorporates appropriate spin into shots
- Incorporates proper shot selection to minimize errors
- Consistently dinks with a purpose
- Sustains a volley exchange and beginning to use directional control
- Attempts a winning volley when ball is at appropriate height
- Executes a block volley when necessary
- Can execute a drop shot from baseline during game with greater success
- Attempting transition zone re-sets with some success
- Can execute an overhead with directional control
- Attempts offensive lob at appropriate times with some success
- Moves effectively (and into proper court position) with partner in all phases of play
- Has good mobility - lateral, up and back; incorporates proper footwork
- Plays under control and appears to prepare for next shots
- Maintains patience during rallies and limits unforced errors
- Beginning to anticipate shots from opponent and make appropriate movements/shots
- Able to change a fast-paced strategy to a slow one and vice versa
- Communicates with partner to utilize strategy in game play (lob recovery, etc)
- Achieves a minimum of 21 points across three games

**\*\* Skill requirements must meet minimum standard noted beside each category or a score of '0' is awarded\*\***

Skills Requirements – 3.75 player: Dinks

\* Windshield dinks must land in the NVZ

Windshield Wiper Dinks 16/20

Skill Requirements – 3.75 player: Transition Drops

\*Transition drops must land in the NVZ

Forehand transition drops down the line 7/10

Backhand transition drops down the line 7/10

Forehand transition drops cross court 7/10

Backhand transition drops cross court 7/10

Skill Requirements – 3.75 player: Serves

\*Serves must land in back 1/3 of box

Deuce (right-side) 3/5

Left (left-side) 3/5

Skills Requirements – 3.75 player: Punch Volley

\*Punch volley must land in back 1/3 transition zone

Forehand punch volley 7/10

Backhand punch volley 7/10

Skill Requirements – 3.75 player: Baseline Drops

\*Baseline drops must land in the NVZ

Forehand transition drops 7/10

Backhand transition drops 7/10

Skill Requirements – 3.75 player: Return of Serves

\*Returns must land in back 1/3 transition zone

Forehand 3/5          Backhand 3/5

Skill Requirements – 3.5 player: Overhead 3/5

Skill Requirements – 3.5 player: Offensive Lob 3/5

Assessment for the 3.75 level requires players to Meet Standard on 15/21 Playing Criteria and scores a minimum total of 90/130 on the Skill Requirements.



## The 4.0 Level

The goal of 4.0 level play is to provide an opportunity for players to improve their strategic partner by learning to recognize opponent weaknesses and strengths. At this level, most players work as a unit with their partner, can adapt their play to take advantage of opponent weaknesses, and may have tournament experience.

Playing Criteria for 4.0 level players:

- Possess all criteria from previous levels
- Consistently placed with depth, speed and location
- Forehand and backhand hit with spin, depth and control
- Can appropriately change from a hard shot to a soft shot (resets) and vice versa
- Can effectively use spin on a variety of shots
- Able to sustain a dink rally with control; limits opponents attacking opportunities
- Can sustain a dink exchange with patience to elicit offense for their team
- Able to volley a variety of shots at varying speeds
- Able to block and return fast, hard volleys and drives with control
- Makes appropriate decision on 3rd shot
- Can regularly execute drop shot from baseline and transition zone to approach net
- Consistent overheads using directional control and 'finishing' ability
- Makes appropriate decision when to lob and is accurate in placement
- Moves effectively with partner; switching sides and poaching when necessary
- Uses mobility to apply tactics in game situations
- Is balanced and in control when executing shots; positions self for next shots
- Controls play from NVL by keeping opponents back if at the baseline
- Makes few errors and if so, manages movement/play to recover
- Strategically plans each point (shot execution, stacking, targeting)
- Effectively controls situations that involve differing ball speeds
- Effectively communicates with partner (shots, movement, lob recovery, strategy)
- Achieves a minimum of 21 points across three games or averages 7 pts

Assessment for the 4.0 level requires players to Meet Standard on 16/22 Playing Criteria.

END OF DOCUMENT