

DINKZTER

L A D D E R L E A G U E

Rules & Format

A comprehensive guide to the Ladder League competition format
for club presidents and organizers

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What is Ladder League?

Ladder League is a season-long doubles pickleball competition where players are ranked on a ladder and compete on scheduled game days to climb the ranks.

Each game day, players are grouped, play matches within their group, and the top performer moves up the ladder while the bottom performer moves down.

Every match matters. Every game day is a chance to climb.

The Ladder

All players are ranked from position 1 (top) to the last position (bottom) on a single ladder. Think of it as a leaderboard that updates after every game day.

Starting Position

- The organizer chooses which rating to use for initial seeding: DUPR rating or Dinkzter rating (Glicko-2)
- Your starting position is based on that chosen rating at the time you join
- Higher-rated players start higher on the ladder
- Same rating? First to register gets the higher position
- Players without a rating start at the bottom
- Mid-season joins always start at the bottom, regardless of rating — you earn your way up

Season Structure

The organizer sets up the ladder with:

- A start date and end date for the season
- A recurring game day schedule (e.g., every Tuesday at 6 PM, every Saturday at 9 AM)
- Multiple scheduled days per week are supported
- The organizer can cancel individual game days as needed (holidays, weather, etc.)

The season runs until the end date. The number of game days depends on the schedule.

Game Day — Step by Step

Step 1: Register for Game Day

Each game day is a separate event. To play, you must register for that specific game day through the app.

- Registration closes 30 minutes before the scheduled start time
- You can unregister if your plans change
- Registering means you are committing to show up and play

Step 2: Groups Are Formed

Once the organizer is ready to start, they form the groups. Groups are created from registered players who have checked in, ranked by their current ladder position. Registering alone is not enough — you must also check in on game day to be placed in a group.

- The top 5 checked-in players form the first group
- The next 5 form the second group, and so on

Example with 23 registered players:

Group	Ladder Positions	Tier Name
Group 1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Gold
Group 2	6, 7, 8, 9, 10	Silver
Group 3	11, 12, 13, 14, 15	Bronze
Group 4	16, 17, 18, 19, 20	Group 4
Sit out	21, 22, 23	—

The top 3 groups carry special tier names: Gold, Silver, and Bronze. All other groups are numbered. If the total number of registered players doesn't divide evenly by 5, the lowest-ranked players sit out that game day.

Step 3: Late Arrivals

Once the organizer has formed groups and play has begun, latecomers cannot join. They sit out that game day. Their ladder position stays the same.

Step 4: If You Can't Make It

No problem. You simply aren't placed in a group. Your ladder position stays the same — there is no penalty for missing a game day. You can come back and play the next one.

Match Format

Each group of 5 players plays a Whist rotation — a carefully designed doubles format where partners and opponents rotate fairly.

How the Whist Rotation Works

In a group of 5 players (A, B, C, D, E), there are 5 rounds. Each round is one doubles match (2 vs 2), and one player sits out:

Round	Team 1	Team 2	Sits Out
1	A & B	C & D	E
2	A & C	B & E	D
3	A & D	C & E	B
4	A & E	B & D	C
5	B & C	D & E	A

Why This Format is Fair

The Whist rotation guarantees perfect balance:

- Every player plays exactly 4 matches out of the 5 rounds
- Every player sits out exactly 1 match — everyone gets the same rest
- Every player partners with every other player exactly once — you play with everyone in your group
- Every player plays against every other player exactly twice — you face everyone equally

No one gets an easier or harder draw. No one partners with the best player more than anyone else. It is mathematically balanced.

Scoring

- Each match is played to 11 points
- You must win by 2 (if it's 10-10, play continues until one team leads by 2)
- Standard pickleball rally scoring rules apply

Score Verification

After each match:

1. One player from the winning team enters the score in the app
 2. One player from the losing team must confirm the score
 3. Only one player per side needs to act — not both
- If the score is not confirmed within 3 hours, it is automatically accepted
 - If there is a disagreement, the organizer reviews and resolves the dispute

Group Rankings

After all matches in a group are completed, the 5 players are ranked within their group from 1st to 5th place.

How Rankings Are Determined

Players are ranked using these tiebreakers, in order:

#	Criteria	Description
1	Most Wins	The player with the most match wins ranks highest (4-0, 3-1, 2-2, 1-3, or 0-4)

2	Point Differential	Total points scored minus total points scored against you, across all matches
3	Total Points Scored	The player who scored more total points ranks higher
4	Current Ladder Position	If still tied, the player holding the higher ladder position keeps it

Point Differential Example

You play 4 matches with the following scores:

- Won 11-7, Won 11-9, Lost 8-11, Won 11-6
- Points scored: $11 + 11 + 8 + 11 = 41$
- Points conceded: $7 + 9 + 11 + 6 = 33$
- Your point differential: +8

Moving Up & Down the Ladder

After each game day, ladder positions are updated based on group results:

Group Rank	What Happens
1st place (winner)	Moves UP 2 positions on the overall ladder
2nd place	No change
3rd place	No change
4th place	No change
5th place (loser)	Moves DOWN 2 positions on the overall ladder

How Movement Works — Example

Before game day, the ladder looks like this:

Position	Player	Group
1	Alice	
2	Bob	
3	Carol	Gold
4	Dave	
5	Eve	
6	Frank	
7	Grace	
8	Hank	Silver
9	Ivy	

10

Jack

After game day results:

- Dave (position 4) wins Gold group !' moves up 2 to position 2
- Eve (position 5) loses Gold group !' moves down 2 to position 7
- Frank (position 6) wins Silver group !' moves up 2 to position 4
- Jack (position 10) loses Silver group !' moves down 2 to position 12

Everyone else shifts to fill the gaps.

Edge Cases

- At the very top: Only position 1 can't move higher — they're already at the top. Position 2 can still move up to position 1.
- At the very bottom: Only the last position can't move lower — they're already at the bottom. The second-to-last position can still move down.
- Position collision: If two players target the same position (one moving up, one moving down), the player from the higher group gets priority — they played tougher competition.

Movement Amount

The +2 / -2 movement amount is fixed and applies to every ladder. It is not configurable.

Incomplete Game Days

Sometimes not all matches in a group can be completed — maybe time runs out or a score is disputed. The rule is simple:

Completed Matches	Result
3 or more	Group is ranked, ladder positions update normally
Fewer than 3	No positions change for that group

This ensures that rankings are only affected by meaningful, complete results.

Registration & Membership

Joining the Ladder

- The ladder is created by a club organizer
- Registration is open to all players
- The organizer may set a registration deadline (a specific date, or open for the entire season)
- Your starting position is based on your DUPR or Dinkzter rating (chosen by organizer at creation)
- Players without a rating start at the bottom

- Same rating? First to register gets the higher position

Joining Mid-Season

New players are welcome to join during the season. You will always start at the bottom of the ladder regardless of your rating. This is fair to the players who have been competing — you earn your spot through play.

Dropping Out

- You can leave the ladder at any time
- The organizer can also remove a player if needed
- When someone leaves, all players below them move up one position to close the gap

Courts & Logistics

Each group of 5 uses 1 court for their Whist rotation. The number of courts needed equals the number of groups playing.

Registered Players	Groups	Courts Needed
10 players	2 groups	2 courts
15 players	3 groups	3 courts
20 players	4 groups	4 courts
23 players	4 groups + 3 sit out	4 courts
25 players	5 groups	5 courts

Rated vs. Non-Rated

The organizer chooses at creation whether the ladder is rated or non-rated.

Option	Description
Rated	Match results affect the player's official rating (Glicko-2 system). Wins against higher-rated players boost your rating more.
Non-rated	Matches don't affect official ratings. Pure fun and competition on the ladder only.

Standings & History

- The full ladder standings are visible to all players at all times
- You can view any group's matches and results during and after game day

- All past game day results are available to review
- Your position history is tracked over the season — see your climb (or drop) over time

Notifications

Players receive notifications for:

- Game day reminders — upcoming game day alert so you can register
- Match results — scores and group rankings after game day
- Position changes — when you move up or down on the ladder

Quick Reference

Format	Doubles only
Group size	5 players
Rotation	Whist (balanced partners & opponents)
Matches per group	5 total (each player plays 4, sits 1)
Scoring	Game to 11, win by 2
Score verification	1 player per side, 3-hour auto-confirm
Group ranking	Wins !' Point diff !' Points scored !' Ladder position
Winner movement	+2 positions on overall ladder
Loser movement	-2 positions on overall ladder
Min matches for movement	3 completed per group
Registration closes	30 minutes before game start
Tier names	Gold, Silver, Bronze, then Group 4, 5, 6...
Season end	Set end date at creation
Movement amount	+2 / -2 (fixed, not configurable)

