



## Pickleball Skill Level Guidelines

The following skill level descriptions are a guide for evaluating your skill level for playing in the Round Robin Rumble or any other Pickleball Tournament. This guidance was developed utilizing existing guidelines from USA Pickleball and refinements by larger Pickleball clubs.

### 3.0 Skill Level

- Knows the fundamental rules and can keep score
- Learning the importance of hitting unattackable balls
- Understands the need to dink but doesn't dink much
- Works at keeping the serve deep and return of serve deep
- Uses both forehand and backhand groundstrokes on return of serves
- Able to keep the ball in play and increasing ability to sustain rallies
- Learning to move quickly to the non-volley zone when opportunity is there
- Aware of partner's position on the court and moving as a team
- Displays good footwork and good hand/eye coordination
- Game play is inconsistent with too many unforced errors during rallies

### 3.5 Skill Level

- Has a deep understanding of the rules
- Gets a majority of serves in deep and return of serves deep
- Demonstrates smart playing strategies during games
- Actively works with partners in communicating, covering the court, and moving to the non-volley zone together
- Executes with varying consistency: forehand/backhand ground strokes, punch volleys, and block volleys
- Becoming comfortable dinking and hitting unattackable balls
- Developing consistency in hitting 3rd shot drops
- Specifically places shots rather than just hitting shots anywhere
- Selectively mixes up soft shots with power shots to create an advantage
- Maintains a moderate number of unforced errors per game
- Demonstrates ability to intentionally play in offensive mode
- Game play is gaining consistency with fewer unforced errors during rallies

## 4.0 Skill Level

- Puts advanced playing strategies into the game, particularly when dinking
- Consistently varies shots for competitive advantage, uses power shots selectively
- Strategically places serves and return of serves to a competitive advantage
- Communicates and moves very well with their partner covering the court and getting to the non-volley zone together
- Learning to master the 3rd shot drop
- Very comfortable playing at the non-volley zone
- Works with their partner to control the non-volley zone line, keep opponents back at the baseline and drive opponents off the non-volley zone line
- Able to consistently use the punch volley and block volley to gain an advantage
- Has good footwork and moves laterally, backward and forward with ease
- Hits punch volleys consistently, often as kill shots
- Consistently hits overheads as kill shots
- Uses topspin and underspin (slice) to stress opponents
- Ability to change a hard drive into a soft shot through a block volley
- Consistently executes effective drop shots that are not easily returned
- Can effectively poach
- Hits a low number of unforced errors per game
- Regularly demonstrates “anticipation of play”
- Demonstrates self-correcting during games
- Consistently is a multi-dimensional player

## 4.5+ Skill Level

The 4.5+ player is distinguishable from the 4.0 player by:

- Increased athleticism
- Higher level of strategic playing
- Stronger dink game
- Smarter use of power
- Superior placement of shots
- Faster hands
- Consistently hits fewer unforced errors