

Pickleball Skill Level Descriptions

2.0 Skill Level:

- Moves around the court in balanced, safe manner.
- Gets some serves “in”, perhaps not regularly.
- Realizes aspects of score-keeping, rules and where to stand on court during serve, receipt of serve, and general play.
- Has some basic stroke skills

2.5 Skill Level

- Able to serve “in” more regularly
- Knows two-bounce rule and demonstrates it most times
- Knows where to stand on the court during serve, receipt of serve and general play
- Is mastering keeping score
- Attempts to dink but not always effective at it
- Working on their form for ground strokes, accuracy is variable
- Can keep the ball in play

3.0 Skill Level

- Knows the fundamental rules and can keep score
- Regularly gets serves “in” to mid-court or deeper
- Able to sustain dinking in the game
- Uses both forehand and backhand on returns and forehand on overhead returns
- Moves quickly towards the non-volley zone when opportunity is there
- Aware of partner’s position on the court and moving as a team

3.5 Skill Level

- Gets a high majority of serves in deep and returns serve deep
- Often hits to the weak side of opponent
- Demonstrates strategies of playing during games
- Actively works with partners in communicating, covering court, moving to net
- With varying consistency executes: lobs, forehand/backhand ground strokes, overheads, net volleys, and sustained dinking
- Some use of drop shots to get to the net
- Specifically places shots
- Selective missing up soft shots with power shots to create an advantage
- Hits fewer balls out of bounds or in the net
- Has a moderate # of unforced errors per game
- Demonstrates ability to intentionally play in offensive mode
- Self-correcting after play is over
- Demonstrates extended periods of multi-dimensional play

4.0 Skill Level

- Primarily plans in an offensive mode rather than reactively
- Controls and places serves and return of serves to best advantage
- Puts advanced playing strategy into the game, particularly in dinking
- Consistently varies shots for competitive advantage, uses power shots selectively
- Communicates well with partner and easily 'switches' court positions
- Very comfortable playing at the non-volley zone
- Keeps opponents back by driving them off the line
- Can block hard volleys directed at them
- Has good footwork and moves laterally, backward and forward with ease
- Hits overhead shots consistently, often as put-aways
- Ability to change a hard shot to a soft shot
- Hits a low # of unforced errors per game
- Regularly demonstrates "anticipation of play"
- Self-correcting during play
- Consistently is a multi-dimensional player

4.5 – 5.0 Skill Level

- Can regularly convert a hard shot to a soft shot
- Exhibits patience in play at a superior level
- Shows noticeably increased skills, a higher level of strategy, quickness of hands and movement, judicious use of power, superior placement of shots, superb anticipation of play, sustained volleying skills, superior put-aways, all with consistency
- Makes very few unforced errors

Differences between 4.5 and 5.0 are subjective – but, generally each of the four points above is even more pronounced at the 5.0 level.