



**KINGBOROUGH PICKLEBALL
CLUB Inc**

Ratings Guide

January 2025/6

Introduction:

*This KPC Ratings Guide is just that, a **GUIDE***, and it reflects the Club in its current state. It is not meant to be totally definitive, or answer all questions, or resolve all dilemmas. It is presented here in response to the Club Survey as a tool for members to **GUIDE** their awareness of current skill levels and what needs to be achieved in order to progress.

KPC doesn't have any players above the 4.0 level at the moment, hence this **GUIDE** stops at 4.0. There are suggested criteria for those above 4.0, however, these players would generally have their rating determined by Pickleball Brackets via tournament/DUPR play.

Please also remember that player rating/gradings are subjective. This **GUIDE** attempts to add **SOME** objectivity, however, the acquisition of the suggested criteria remains in the "eye of the beholder" which, in some cases may be problematic. If this is the case, guidance and decision making from the KPC Gradings Sub-committee may be sought.

Why have Ratings?

Ratings provide a way to understand and compare the skill levels of individual players. They are an overall assessment of a player's capability across all elements of how pickleball is played.

Ratings are helpful to assist players wanting to improve their play by developing specific skills and this connects with the work of coaches.

Ratings may be used to determine a player's skill level for tournament entry, club competitive and recreational play where, for example, there are separate courts for different skill levels.

Four Types of Ratings

1. Self-Assessment of Skill Level: this is a framework to assist players to understand different skill levels and to assist in skill development. Self-assessment may be used in lower-level tournaments to determine entry into divisions of play.

2. KPC Assessment of Skill Level: The Gradings Sub-Committee may assess players and determine ratings. These ratings may be required for entry to some Club competitions and tournaments.

3. Performance-based Ratings: Actual game results may be recorded e.g. DUPR, and skill ratings adjusted based on results. These may also be used for entry to tournaments and aligned with Pickleball Brackets.

4. Tournament Ratings: As more official tournaments (sanctioned by Pickleball Australia) are held, entry divisions based on ratings are likely to be introduced. Some tournaments will use software to capture results and produce nationally recognised ratings e.g. Pickleball Brackets. Pickleball Australia and Pickleball Tasmania are progressively introducing ratings groups to tournaments, and this guide is part of a consistent approach in Australia to understanding and developing player skill levels. Some tournaments may group together skill ratings into wider bands such as Beginner (2.0 to 2.5), Intermediate (3.0 to 3.5) and Advanced (4.0+).

Know Your Rating: Self-Assessment

This guide explains how a player can assess their own skills.

The KPC ratings guide outlines suggested expectations of skill acquisition on a scale between 2.0 and 4.0. The minimum is 2.0 (low skilled player) and the maximum is 4.0 (high skilled player). The ratings operate in gradients of 0.25 up to 4.0.

The definition of each rating provided in the tables below may be used to self-rate players, especially where they have not played in a tournament or participated in performance-based club play.

Players may assess their own capability and also ask playing partners, observers and coaches to provide feedback on their level of skill in each of the skill areas assessed.

The ratings descriptions in this guide are adapted from the USA Pickleball Association, Pickleball Canada, and Pickleball Coaching International.

1. New player with limited understanding of the game and rules:

Rating 2.0

<p>Forehand Backhand Serve Service Return Dink Volley/Overhead Drop Shot</p>	<p>Limited experience in racquet sports means only short rallies with players of similar ability are possible.</p> <p>Learning all shot types.</p>
<p>Overall Play and Strategy</p>	<p>Movement and court positioning. Mobility on the court may be limited.</p> <p>Shot selection. A beginner learning shot types. Rules and Scoring. Limited understanding.</p>

2. Beginning to learn the range of skills and how to produce the shots.

Rating 2.25

Forehand	Able to make most easy forehands.
Backhand	Able to make some easy backhands but with more errors than forehands.
Serve	Serve lands in about 50% time but without placement.
Service Return	Returns serve in about half the time
Dink	Yet to understand the dink shot
Volley and Overhead Hits	Some volleys but is not approaching the net
Drop Shot (3 rd shot drop etc)	Not able to hit drop shots
Movement and Court Positioning	Limited movement and tends to remain near the base line
Overall Play and Strategies	Uses a limited range of shots. Sustains short rallies.
Unforced Errors	Errors are about 50% of shots or more.
Rules and Scoring	Knows the basics of the rules and scoring
Teamwork in Doubles	Yet to understand how to work together
Competitions/Tournaments	Not a focus

3. Most skills are achieved by a player 50% of the time.

Rating 2.5

Forehand	Able to make easy forehands and a few more difficult shots.
Backhand	Able to make easy backhands but with more errors than forehands.
Serve	Serve mostly lands in but without placement.
Service Return	Return serves are mostly in but without direction.
Dink	Aware of dinks but has not yet developed this shot.
Volley and Overhead	Able to approach the non-volley zone and hit some volleys. Makes regular non-volley zone foot faults.
Drop Shot (3 rd shot drop and others)	Not able to hit drop shots.
Overall Play and Strategy	<p>Movement and court positioning. Can sustain longer rallies but not at fast pace. May struggle to cover the entire court. Shot selection. Still developing control of shot decisions. Unforced errors. Unforced errors may be as high as 50%. Forced errors closer to 75%. Rules and Scoring. General understanding of the rules and mostly understands scoring. Teamwork in doubles. Communication and working together is limited. Tournaments. Yet to build up to tournaments</p>

4. Most skills are achieved by a player 60% of the time - pursuing some consistency.

Rating 2.75

Forehand	Able to hit a medium paced forehand with direction and consistency.
Backhand	Able to hit a medium paced backhand with direction and consistency. Favours forehands and makes more backhand errors.
Serve	Able to hit a medium paced serve. Lacks depth, direction, and consistency.
Service Return	Able to hit a medium paced service return. Lacks depth, direction, and consistency.
Dink	Not able to consistently sustain a dink rally. Not yet developed the ability to control this shot.
Volley and Overhead	Able to hit a medium paced shot. Lacks direction and placement. Not often hit as winners. Makes some non-volley zone foot faults
Drop Shot (3 rd shot drop and others)	Able to hit a medium paced 3rd shot with some direction about half the time. Low success rate with drop shots at other times.
Overall Play and Strategies	Movement and court positioning. Is learning proper court positioning. Shot selection. Understands the fundamentals but execution is inconsistent. Unforced errors. Unforced errors may be as high as 30 - 40%. Forced errors closer to 50 - 60%.

	<p>Rules and Scoring. Knows the fundamental rules and can keep score. Teamwork in doubles. Communication and working together with different style players is developing. Tournaments. Beginning to play in tournaments</p>
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5. Most skills are achieved by a player 70% of the time.

Rating 3.0

Forehand	<p>Able to hit a medium-paced forehand with direction and consistency most of the time. Developing control and consistency generating fast-paced shots. Less consistent returning fast-paced shots.</p>
Backhand	<p>Able to hit a medium-paced backhand with direction and consistency most of the time. Control generating fast-paced shots is gaining consistency. Some difficulty returning fast-paced shots.</p>
Serve	<p>Able to hit a medium paced serve with depth, direction and consistency.</p>
Service Return	<p>Able to hit a medium paced service return with depth, direction, and consistency.</p>
Dink	<p>Getting consistency in sustaining a dink rally with control.</p>
Volley and Overhead	<p>Usually able to hit a medium-paced volley with direction and consistency. Can play aggressively at the non-volley</p>

	zone. Avoids non-volley zone foot faults.
Drop Shot (3 rd Shot drop and others)	Getting more consistent when hitting a medium paced 3rd shot with direction. Improved ability to reset mid-rally with a drop shot.
Overall Play and Strategy	<p>Movement and court positioning. Improving use of court positioning in a variety of situations. Starting to exhibit good mobility and hand-eye coordination. Shot selection. Shot variety is reasonably strong but weaker when pressured. Starting to anticipate opponent's shots. Unforced errors. Unforced errors may be as high as 20-25%. Forced errors closer to 40%.</p> <p>Rules and Scoring. Understands most rules and scoring. Teamwork in doubles. Starting to think and communicate more strategically in doubles play. Tournaments. Competing in more tournaments with mixed outcomes.</p>

6. Most skills are achieved by a player 80% of the time.

Rating 3.25

Forehand	Able to hit a variety of medium-paced and fast-paced forehands with direction and consistency. Good consistency returning fast-paced shots. Selects topspin and backspin with a mixed level of success.
Backhand	Able to hit a medium-paced backhand with direction and consistency, but less consistency

	with fast-paced backhands. Some inconsistency returning fast-paced shots. Selects topspin and backspin with a variable level of success.
Serve	Able to hit a variety of service pace, including fast-paced, with depth direction and consistency. Sometimes forces errors when serving.
Service Return	Returns serve deeply and consistently achieves a net position.
Dink	Able to sustain a dink rally with control. Can create opponent errors in dink rallies.
Volley and Overhead	Able to hit a medium-paced volley with direction and consistency. Aggressive play with improving but inconsistent percentage of winners from put-away shots. Less consistency in volley exchanges at non-volley zone. Some consistency leaving out balls.
Drop Shot (3 rd shot drop and others)	Developing the drop shot as a way to get to the net. Able to reset mid-rally with a drop shot but lacks consistency.
Overall Play and Strategies	Movement and court positioning. Understands court positioning in a variety of situations. Has good mobility and hand-eye coordination. Shot selection. Shot variety and selection is showing consistency. Anticipates opponent's shots. Looks for gaps to place shots. Shows impatience going for a winner too soon. Unforced errors. Unforced errors may be as high as 10%. Forced

	<p>errors closer to 20%. Rules and Scoring. Understands all rules and scoring. Teamwork in doubles. Applies some advanced strategies in doubles play. Tournaments. Competing in tournaments with improving performance.</p>
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7. Most skills are achieved by a player 80 - 90% of the time.

Rating 3.5

Forehand	<p>Able to hit a variety of medium-paced and fast-paced forehands with direction and consistency. Good consistency returning fast-paced shots. Attempting topspin and backspin with more consistent outcomes.</p>
Backhand	<p>Able to hit a medium-paced backhand with direction and consistency, but less consistency with fast-paced backhands. Some inconsistency returning fast-paced shots. Use of topspin and backspin is gaining consistency.</p>
Serve	<p>Able to hit a variety of service pace, including fast-paced, with depth direction and consistency. Sometimes forces errors when serving.</p>
Service Return	<p>Returns serve deeply and consistently achieves a net position.</p>
Dink	<p>Able to consistently sustain a dink rally with control. Uses the dink and drop shots to slow down or change the pace of the game. Creates opponent errors in dink rallies.</p>

Volley and Overhead	Able to hit a medium-paced volley with direction and consistency. Aggressive play with medium to high percentage of winners from put-away shots. Improving consistency in volley exchanges at non-volley zone. Gaining consistency leaving out balls.
Drop Shot (3 rd shot drop and others)	Demonstrates a variety of drop shots with consistency. Selectively mixes soft with power shots to create an advantage, with inconsistent results. Demonstrates improved consistency resetting mid-rally with a drop shot.
Overall Play and Strategy	Movement and court positioning. Understands court positioning in a variety of situations. Has good mobility and hand-eye coordination. Aware of partner's position on court and able to move as a team. Shot selection. Demonstrates strong shot variety and selection. Anticipates opponent's shots. Looks for gaps to place shots. May lose rallies due to impatience by reliance on power game. Unforced errors. Has a moderate number of unforced errors per game. Rules and Scoring. Demonstrates a broad knowledge of the rules and scoring. Teamwork in doubles. Beginning to apply some advanced strategies in doubles play. Sound understanding of stacking and how it can be used in match play. Tournaments. Competing in tournaments with good performance.

8. Most skills are achieved by a player 90% of the time.

Rating 3.75

Forehand	Consistently hits with depth and control. Is still perfecting shot selection and timing. Selects topspin and backspin effectively and with consistency.
Backhand	Has improved stroke mechanics and able to hit a medium-paced backhand with improving direction and consistency, but less consistency with fast-paced backhands. Selects topspin and backspin with a moderate level of success.
Serve	Places a high majority of serves/returns with varying depth and speed. Able to apply spin serves with some advantage. Forces errors when serving.
Service Return	Returns medium and most fast paced serves with depth, direction, and consistency.
Dink	Takes control of dink rallies to create rally winning opportunities.
Volley and Overhead	Uses volleys and overheads to finish points or create forced errors. Effectively blocks and returns hard volleys. Demonstrates good awareness at

	leaving out balls and calling for partner.
Drop Shot (3 rd shot drop and others)	Drop shots used to out-position opponents, create net rallies, and resets rallies with drop shots to reclaim net position.
Overall Play and Strategy	<p>Movement and court positioning. Demonstrates good court positioning and partner and opposition awareness. Adjusts game style to take advantage of opponent's strengths/weaknesses. High level of athletic ability. Shot selection. Demonstrates 3rd shot strategies - drop shots, lobs and fast paced ground strokes. Effective with most shot types. Good shot anticipation. Changes effectively from soft shot to hard shot strategies. Returns most difficult shots and forces errors. Demonstrates some patience with rally structuring to create advantage. Unforced errors. Limited number of unforced errors per game. Rules and Scoring. Has a sound knowledge of the rules and scoring. Teamwork in doubles. Uses advanced strategies in doubles play to create advantage. Calm in stressful playing situations. Uses stacking and other team play to create advantage. Tournaments. Enjoys and frequently achieves positive outcomes in tournaments.</p>

9. Almost all skills are achieved by a player 90-95% of the time.

Rating 4.0

Forehand	High level of consistency. Starting to master the use of power and spin. Can successfully execute all shots, control the depth of their shots and can handle pace. Uses pace and depth to generate opponents' error or set up the next shot.
Backhand	Can effectively direct the ball with varying depth and pace with good consistency. Returns all pace shots comfortably.
Serve	Serves with pace, accuracy and depth and can also vary the speed and spin of the serve. Forces errors when serving.
Service Return	Returns serve deeply and establishes strong net position.
Dink	Ability to place the ball with high success at changing shot types, while playing both consistently and with offensive intent. Recognises and attempts to hit attackable dinks.
Volley and Overhead	Able to block hard volleys directed at them and can consistently drop them in the NVZ. Comfortable hitting swinging volleys. Hits

	overhead shots consistently, often as putaways.
Dro Shot (3 rd shot drop and others)	Consistently executes effective 3rd shot strategies that are not easily returned for advantage. Able to intentionally and consistently place the ball.
Overall Play and Strategy	<p>Movement and court positioning. Has good footwork and moves laterally, backwards and forwards well. Able to change direction with ease. Very comfortable playing at the NVZ. Good court positioning in all situations. Able to return difficult shot placements such as wide, short and at feet. Shot selection. High level of quality shot selection, shot placement and spin. Defensive play to reset or maintain rallies is high quality. Able to change from soft shot to hard shot to soft shot strategies. Demonstrates good patience to create put-away shots and structures points to achieve this. Consistently takes advantage of gaps on the court. Unforced errors. Minimises unforced errors. Rules and Scoring. Understands all rules and scoring and plays accordingly. Teamwork in doubles. Uses advanced strategies in doubles play to create advantage. Able to adjust game style to account for opponent's strengths/weaknesses. Communicates and moves well with partner - easily "stacks" court positions. Tournaments. Regular good performer in tournaments.</p>