



# Skill Level Definitions

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The following skill level sets are a guide for evaluating your own level and determining which lessons you should sign up for. They were developed utilizing existing guidelines listed by the USAPA (usapa.org). This is a work in progress and we expect to continue to modify these descriptions with your input at least once a year.

The club will use this information to develop training clinics and for seeding fun tournament players.

The purpose of rated events is to insure a consistent and competitive level of play for all players within that event as much as possible. Therefore we request that you do NOT sign up for a lesson higher or lower than your rated skill level if you have a rating.

The following lists each skill level from 1 to 4.0+. It also adds specific detail about skills required to be at a given level.

## 1.0 Beginner Skill

Players possess the following attributes and skills:

- Have taken beginner's training or the equivalent. Have been assessed by member(s) of Silverdige Executive
- Are familiar with how to serve although they may not be able to execute serve yet
- Are not comfortable with two-bounce rule and may not appear to know what it is
- Are learning where to stand on the court during serves, returns and point play but are still uncomfortable with some positions
- May not have basic ground strokes unless they are bringing in transferable skills from other sports...e.g. racquetball, tennis, badminton, paddle tennis, table tennis, squash, etc.
- Don't yet demonstrate the basics of how to keep score, have no idea what a dink is, unless coming from tennis where a cut-volley or drop-volley may be a demonstrable comparable
- At best can keep a ball in play for a couple of shots

## 2.0 Skill Level

Players will also possess most/all of the skills of the 1.0 skill-level skills plus the following:

- Moves in a balanced and safe manner
- Getting at least 50% of serves in the service court and returning 50% of serves
- Are learning where to stand on court during serves, returns and point play but are still not comfortable with some positions
- Knows the 2 bounce rule and applies it during games. Can keep score comfortably
- Will have basic ground strokes with a very limited use of backhand, overhead, and volley
- Capable of keeping ball in play for a couple of shots

## 2.5 Skill Level

Players will also possess most/all of the skills of the 2.0 skill-level skills plus the following:

- Knows the basic rules including the "two bounce rule", scoring
- Attempting to control forehand groundstroke (direction, depth, height over net)
- Attempting backhand groundstroke
- Getting 60% of serves in the service court and returning 60% of serve returns
- Knows where to stand as the server, server's partner, and receiver
- Consistently Approaches the non-volley line for volleys
- Can keep the ball in play for longer lasting rallies
- Sometimes lobs with forehand
- Attempting to "dink" the ball at the net, can do so for short durations.
- Moves in a safe and balanced manner
- Developing good hand-eye coordination

## Skill Level Definitions

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### 3.0 Skill Level

Players will also possess most/all of the skills of the 2.5 level skills plus the following:

- Knows basic rules including how to keep score
- Developing control on forehand groundstroke (placement, direction, depth)
- Developing control on backhand groundstroke (placement, direction, depth)
- Getting 70% of serves and return of serves “in”
- Striving to place serves deep into the court
- Beginning to develop placement of serves
- Uses deeper and higher returns of serve to allow time to approach the net
- Approaches the non-volley line quickly rather than staying back
- Sustains a short volley session at the net
- Exhibits correct court positioning for doubles and how to “move as a team”
- Beginning to use the forehand lob with some success
- Developing a sustained “dink” exchange at the net
- Attempting to hit a soft “drop shot” to approach the net (3rd, 5th, etc. shot)
- Attempting to adjust to differing ball speeds (hitting & returning)
- Has good mobility
- Developing good hand-eye coordination

### 3.5 Skill Level

Players will also possess most/all of the skills of the 3.0 skill-level skills plus the following:

- Knows all the main rules including how to refigure the score and correct server
- Demonstrates control on forehand groundstroke (direction, depth and pace)
- Demonstrates some control on backhand groundstroke (direction, depth and pace)
- Getting 80% of serves and return of serves “in”
- Regularly placing serves deep into the court
- Regularly uses deeper & higher returns of serve to allow time to approach net
- Approaches the non-volley line quickly (when appropriate) rather than staying back
- Able to play with partners effectively. Beginning to use court strategies such as partner communication and team coverage of court
- Avoids hitting “out” balls
- Hitting the ball lower over the net consistently
- Developing a wide variety of shots with some consistency
- Learning when to use soft shots vs. power shots to their advantage
- Developing consistency on shot placement, including ability to create and hit “gaps”
- Sustains a short volley session at the net with some control and placement
- Initiates and maintains a sustained “dink” exchange at the net
- Able to execute a soft “drop shot” to approach the net (3rd, 5th, etc. shot)
- Able to adjust to differing ball speeds consistently
- Developing ability to hit overheads with control
- Using a forehand and backhand lob when appropriate
- Developing patience in rallies
- Has good mobility
- Has good quickness
- Has good hand-eye coordination

## Skill Level Definitions

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### 4.0 Skill Level

Players are capable of consistently executing at above a 3.5 skill-level. The 4.0 player will distinguish themselves from the 3.5 player by possessing increased skills and strategy, or by more speed, power, or consistency.

- Controls and places 90% of both serves and returns of serves
- Consistent and dependable forehand and backhand groundstrokes, including directional control, depth, placement and pace.
- Consistent and dependable volleys, including some directional control, depth, placement and pace
- Consistent and dependable overheads, including some directional control, depth, placement and pace
- Has good accuracy in placing lobs
- Consistently makes successful "drop shots" from the back court to approach the net (3rd, 5th, etc. shot)
- Regularly initiating and sustaining a "dink" exchange at the net until a "put away" shot is received
- Able to change from a soft shot strategy to a hard shot strategy, and vice versa
- Can block and return hard volleys
- Developing the ability to return overheads hit at their feet
- Can handle speed on shots without over-hitting or hitting out of bounds
- Moves effectively with partner, easily switching courts and communicating when required
- Can control play at the non-volley zone line, keeping their opponents back, driving them off the line and controlling the speed or placement of the ball
- Consistently uses shots to create and hit "gaps"
- Recognizes and exploits the weaknesses in their opponent's game
- Can poach effectively
- Maintains patience in rallies
- Has good mobility
- Has good quickness
- Has good hand-eye coordination

### 4.5+ Skill-Level

The 4.5+ player is distinguished from the 4.0 player by increased skills, a higher level of strategy, quickness of hands, judicious use of power, superior placement of shots and consistently fewer unforced errors. The 5.0 player is even more consistent in all skills than the 4.5 player with very few, if any, unforced errors.