

Pickleball Skill Levels at-a-Glance

Please Note: Pickleball “levels” are supposed to make games fair, safe and fun. These skills and abilities should represent your typical play day, not your strongest one. While everyone has days when they are really great or not so great, this should reflect your consistent performance. Unlike ratings or rankings, which are based on match results, your skill level is based solely on knowledge and proficiencies that highlight your ability to consistently execute various shots and apply game strategy, enabling you to develop skills, play with confidence, and make the most of every match. The number of years playing does not determine your skill level. Everyone progresses at a different rate, and friends and spouses may differ in skills and/or mobility.

The Silveridge Pickleball Club may review all members and make changes if needed to ensure competitive and fun play for each level.

New to Pickleball (Beginner) & 2.0 Skills Development Group

- **The Court:** Learning court positioning and the layout of the court.
- **Paddle & Ball:** Getting familiar with the paddle and ball.
- **Forehand/Backhand:** Basic strokes are developing but inconsistent.
- **Serve/Serve Return:** Some success (40-50% of the time); learning.
- **3rd Shot/Volley:** Trying and learning the purpose and feel of these shots.
- **Strategy:** Learning rules and scoring and beginning simple positioning and movement.
- **Mobility:** Limited or showing adequate mobility (safe and balance).
- **Lots of trial and error and that's perfectly okay!**

Group Level 2.5 (Bell Curve: 2.25 to 2.75)

- **The Court:** Knows where to stand on court. Demonstrates ready position at no-volley zone (NVZ)
- **Forehand:** Prefers. Basic directional groundstrokes; consistency still developing.
- **Backhand:** Limited success; building confidence and control.
- **Serve/Return:** Very basic serve. 50% of serves and returns are usually in bounds.
- **Dink:** Basics developing; can sustain short rallies with players of similar ability.
- **3rd Shot:** Making minimal attempts at the drop shot.
- **Volley:** Able to hold a brief rally. Developing a simple punch volley.
- **Strategy:** Limited experience and consistency; knows basic rules and how to keep score.
- **Mobility:** Shows good mobility. Moves in a safe manner. Hand-eye coordination.

Pickleball Skill Levels at-a-Glance

Group Level 3.0 (Bell Curve: 2.75 to 3.25)

- **Requirements:** Meets all 2.5 rating level requirements.
- **Forehand/Backhand:** Ability to hit a medium paced shot at the NVZ with direction and control regarding height & depth.
- **Serve/Return:** 75% of serves and returns are in. Able to hit a medium paced shot. Moves to NVZ after the return of serve and not retreat during play.
- **Dink:** Occasionally engage in with limited control with speed and positioning.
- **3rd Shot:** Starting to use 3rd drop shot inconsistently and not in control.
- **Volley:** Able to hit a medium paced shot. Maintains at least a 5+ shot rally.
- **Strategy:** Understands basic rules and being aware of where to position self on each point.
- **Mobility:** Has moderate quickness.

Group Level 3.25 (Bell Curve: 3.0 to 3.5)

- **Requirements:** Must meet all the 3.0 rating level requirements.
- **Serve/Return:** Serves and returns are consistently in.
- **Dink:** Attempts and executes dink rally 50% of the time.
- **3rd Shot:** Attempts and executes 3rd drop shot drops 50% of the time.
- **Strategy:** Aware of unforced errors and is working and drilling to minimize.

Group Level 3.5 (Bell Curve: 3.25 to 3.75)

- **Requirements:** Able to meet all the 3.25 rating level requirements.
- **Serve/Return:** Deep and reliable serves and returns.
- **3rd/5th Shot:** Successfully drops from baseline to get to the NVZ at least 60% of the time.
- **Dink:** Initiates dinking and can maintain a controlled dink rally.
- **Volley:** Successfully puts balls away using overheads and volleys. Has less than 8 unforced errors in one game. Accumulating a range of shots, both quick and slow, in your arsenal.
- **Strategy:** Possesses a broader understanding of the regulations than just the fundamentals (including net rules, net post problems, NVZ, etc.). Growing more accurate with shots and beginning to apply this in your strategies. Starting to plan and collaborate with your partner to build the point.

Pickleball Skill Levels at-a-Glance

Group Level 3.75 (Bell Curve: 3.5 to 4.0)

- **Requirements:** Able to meet all the 3.5 rating level requirements.
- **3rd/5th/7th Shot:** Must be successful in dropping and driving from the baseline.
- **Dink:** Recognizes the balls in a dink rally that can be attacked and those that cannot.
- **Volley:** Unforced errors less than 6 in one game.
- **Transition Zone:** Attempts and executes resetting from the transition zone with 50% accuracy.
- **Strategy:** Demonstrates understanding of which balls are attackable and which are not. Understanding proper court positioning and working with a partner.

Group Level 4.0+ (Bell Curve: 3.75 and up)

- **Requirements:** Able to meet all the 3.75 rating level requirements.
- **Serves/Returns:** Significant number of serves and returns are placed with variable depth, speed precision and variety of spins.
- **Transition Zone:** Reset from the transition zone and when forced back to baseline.
- **3rd Drop/Drive Shot:** Apply both 3rd drops and drives as the conditions dictate (90% success rate). Working on consistently carrying out 3rd shot strategies, both drive and drop, that are not easily returned for advantage.
- **Volley:** Low unforced errors, 5 or less during a single game. Developing the reliable reset and block to return fast, hard volleys.
- **Lobbing:** Only from the NVZ and not using lob as a reset or panic.
- **Dinks:** Able to maintain long dink rallies at different shot heights and depths, with variety and precision with an offensive intent.
- **Pace:** Able to switch between soft and power shots to gain the upper hand. Able to place shots with consistent changing paces and touch anywhere on the court.
- **Strategy:** Totally understand the importance of court positioning in collaboration with a partner. Able to recognize an opponent's flaws and devise a plan to exploit them. Able to stack and how/when to use it.