

Document 1
How the SCA Pickleball Club plans to develop and Implement a Pickleball skills rating system

The SCA pickleball club committee has met to review the different types of skills rating options currently available in the pickleball space and decided after much discussion to develop a hybrid system that is simpler than the numerical (1.0 to 5.0) system used by the USA pickleball association. We suggest that club members be evaluated and placed into 4 skill level categories from Novice to highest skill at level A:

1. Novice, (N)
2. Level C,
3. Level B and
4. Level A. (the highest rating for advanced player)

These ratings would *ONLY* be used to organize the various club events such as tournaments, leagues, ladder meet-ups, etc. Normal recreational play would still proceed as it does currently, with no regard to skills ratings. We have also decided to host some meet up events which require players to self-rate their skills and other meetups events which will not require players to have or declare a skills level.

We decided on a two-phase process to develop the ratings system:

- Phase 1 Self Rating and
- Phase 2- Implement an Objective ratings process.

The two phase process would ensure that the system could be up and running in a few short weeks by letting players interested in ratings self rate or evaluate and then having a follow up objective rating process that would allow folks who were not sure of their skills levels or simply wanted to advance their skills level rating to ask seasoned veterans to help assess their skills and test these in a series of skinny singles matches. Read on for details.

II. Description of the Phase 1- Self Rating Process

A. The Process of developing Individual Player Skills Ratings

The method of rating a player will be straight forward. Each player will rate her/himself after reviewing a *subjective* set of skills guidelines published by the club. If a player finds he/she is overmatched by other players with the same rating, the player can voluntarily re-rate her/himself into a less competitive level. If a

player would like to move up to a more competitive level of B or A, a published skills test will be administered by a pickleball club volunteer so as to provide an *objective* standard for rating a player.

Players will be given up to two months to review the guidelines after they are published in final form and come up with their own self rating. The reason for this relatively long period of time between reading the docs and the choice of a rating level is that our committee wanted to give every member some time on the court to try to determine how the various descriptions of skill levels and shot accuracy for each level actually applies to their own particular style of play on a day in and day out basis. After spending some time trying to inventory one's skill levels and matching them to the skill descriptions at each of the four skill levels described in the skills guideline document, each member will be in a better place to actually choose their own rating level and send them on to the rating committee.

The results of each member's ratings will be posted on the web by skill level, with separate pages identifying the players who have self-rated at each skill level. Each member will also have the option to give the club permission to provide their contact information for other club members to facilitate more opportunities to play with players of similar skill and or ability levels.

B. Dealing with the Possibility that some Self Skill Ratings may not be accurate or acceptable to other players with similar skills levels or ratings

It is possible that some club players may initially over or underestimate their pickleball skills level. For example, a level C player, (advanced beginner in my lingo) may decide or simply choose they want to rate themselves as an A level or advanced player, even if in reality they might only be a B or a C player. This overrating could be based on a desire to play against better players or simply their own different interpretation of their own skills level against the words they read in our skills description doc or the words in our doc were simply not clear enough or could be interpreted in different ways to justify a skills choice. Or it could be that our skills guidelines need improvement. This is easily fixed.

To guard against this possibility, members who feel a particular player does has overrated their skills level can email either Mario Najera, Larry Strumwasser, or Mike Messenger and identify the player and ask that this

player be “objectively tested” by one or more members of the skills rating committee. If at least five club members email us, or tells us a member of the skills committee in person, that a specific club member or player needs “retesting” or testing for the first time, we will reach out to that player and ask them to participate in our objective testing process. If only a few (four or less) players complain about a specific player “overrated”, no action will be taken.

If this player agrees to be retested based on the emails from at least six club members, one of our team will reach out to set up the testing process. If they refuse, we will simply remove their rating from their profile and let them know they may not be able to participate in specific tournaments.

You can access/download a draft of the Pickleball skill guidelines for your review by clicking on this link <https://pickleball.scaclub.org/club/document-view/419>

Or you can go to the pickleball home page, click on the documents icon and then select the skills and lessons category and click on “view” to see the doc entitled ,” A guide to self-rating or assessing your own Pickleball skills”

III. Phase 2- Description of the Objective Process To Rate Players who request or need an independent assessment of their skills level

A. Providing an objective process for players to determine if they are ready and or qualified to advance to the next skills level.

After the club gains some experience with the self-rating process, we anticipate that some members may decide they want the opportunity to move up beyond their initial self-rated skills level. There are many plausible reasons why players may want to try and move up a skill level; ranging from a belief that their skills level has improved significantly since their initial rating, or simply that they made a mistake in their initial self-rating that they wish to correct by seeking to compete with players who gave themselves higher initial skills ratings. Whatever the reason, the club wants to provide all players with the opportunity to objectively demonstrate they have both the skills and the competitive drive to play at a higher level by providing them with both a skills test and the opportunity to play short pickleball games with players at a higher skill rating and demonstrate their ability

to compete at the higher level by winning the majority of points in a skinny singles match. Details of this process are presented below.

B. The Skills Rating and Skinny Singles Match Challenge Process

When a player feels they're ready to move up a level, for example, from Level B to Level A, they will go through a two-part testing process, given by one of the members of the rating committee. The process will only be required for players wanting to move from Level C to B or from Level B to A. If a Novice player feels they're ready and wants to move from Novice to Level C, no skill assessment is required. They just notify the ratings committee and move to that level.

Players must pass both the skills assessment test described below in section C : and the skinny singles assessment, described in section D to be certified by the rating committee to move up one level. If the player fails either test, they will not be moved up but will be encouraged to keep playing, working on the skills criteria where they missed the minimum qualifying threshold, and enjoying the game. Players will be eligible to retake both tests to determine if they are ready to move up a level after 3 months have passed.

C. Part 1: Details of the Skills Assessment Test

The first part of the test consists of performing 20+ pickleball shots: such as, dinks, serves, return of serves, drop shots, etc. The SCA - Skills Assessment Test document, showing the list of shots, can be found in the SCA Pickleball Club website, under the Documents Tab. During the test, a member of the rating committee will be feeding you the ball, while you perform each shot. You will have 10 attempts for each shot and will have to make a certain amount of those shots, in order to pass. The number of shots you have to make, out of the 10 attempts, can be found on the Skills Assessment Test document. The ratio or number of shots made to attempts will be higher to qualify for Skills Level A, compared to Skills Level B. There are no skills level tests for level C or novice.

You can access/download a draft of the Skills Assessment Test for levels A and B by clicking on the link **below**.

[SCA Pickle Skills Assessment](#)

A video of the various shots performed and or described in this skills assessment document (for example, “windshield wiper dinks”) can be found by clicking on this link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=75_UhuiF8Tg

D. Skinny Singles Challenge Matches

The second part of the Skills Assessment test will consist of playing Skinny Singles. As you may know, skinny singles is similar to doubles, in that the strategy and shot selection used in doubles transfers over well to skinny singles. It’s a great drill for anyone who wants to become a better player. You’re getting 100% of the balls and your opponent has no one to target, but you.

You will be playing 3 games against 3 different players from the skill level you are trying to go to. Games will be played to 11 points, win by 1. Rally scoring will be used, meaning you will score, whether you’re serving or receiving. To pass you will need to score 17 points out of a possible 33 points for all three games.

The ratings committee will keep records of the results from both the skills test and the skinny singles competition for a minimum of six months in case any player wants to retake the test and then compare their progress for specific shot types, like dinks for example, over time.

If you have any questions regarding this process, please contact the rating committee by using the contact us tab on the website and selecting “Club rating questions” and an email will automatically be sent to Larry Strumwasser, Mike Messenger, and Mario Najera. We promise to respond to all questions in a timely manner.