



National Self Rating

1.5

This player is brand new to paddle.
This player has no racquet sports background.

Keys To Advance :

- 1) This player needs to learn how to keep score.
- 2) This player needs to learn basic positioning.
- 3) This player needs to start learning the basic shots.



National Self Rating

2.0

This player is new to paddle and has some racquet sport experience.

Keys To Advance :

- 1) This player needs stroke development for most shots including finding a consistent contact point.
- 2) This player needs to learn the 6 basic positions to start a point:

The server's starting position to serve to the deuce court (1)

The server's starting position to serve to the ad court(2)

The position at net for the partner of the server on serves hit to the deuce court (3)

The starting position at the net for the partner of the server on serves hit to the ad court side (4)

The starting position for a player to return serve when playing the deuce court (5)

The starting position for a player to return serve from the ad court (6)



National Self Rating

2.5

This player understands basic court positioning and is comfortable returning slower paced shots. This player has very little match experience.

Keys To Advance:

- 1) This player can improve their anticipation, positioning and tactics dramatically by starting to play social matches and lower level league matches.
- 2) This player can improve immediately by watching better players play.
- 3) This player can improve immediately with drilling for overall stroke development.



National Self Rating 3.0

This player understands basic court positioning and is comfortable returning slow to medium paced shots. This player is developing a reliable serve but probably does not serve with a continental grip. This player is fairly consistent on volleying slower paced drives but struggles with harder hit shots. 3.0 players are fairly consistent hitting flat overheads off of short lobs but struggle with consistency and placement when pushed back on deeper lobs. This player's baseline play is still inconsistent from week to week due to lack of match experience and tactics.

Within the 3.0 rating, different levels exist: Higher level 3.0 players tend to have better anticipation and court coverage than lower level 3.0 rated players.

Keys to Advance:

- 1) This player can decrease their unforced errors dramatically with better backhand volley technique and more frequent lobbing.
- 2) This player will improve immediately by allowing hard hit overheads to hit the screens before attempting to play the shot.
- 3) Tactically, 3.0 players can instantly improve by making the assumption that all of their opponents' shots will be good. Many 3.0 players stop and watch and hope that their opponents' shots will go out and then get caught out of position when the ball lands in.
- 4) This player needs to start communicating during points with their partner about shot selection, tactics and positioning.



National Self Rating

3.5

This player has a decent knowledge of tactics and positioning and has several reliable strokes with good directional control on soft to medium paced shots. Many 3.5 players tend to be reactive at the net, making contact with the ball as early as possible which allows them to make many first volleys off of higher hit return of serves. 3.5 players are also fairly comfortable with higher screen shots but still struggle to get their paddle properly positioned to return lower screen shots and low volleys. 3.5 players are most comfortable hitting flat overheads off of an opponents' lob. 3.5 players could be fairly new to paddle but possess a strong tennis background or this player could be a seasoned paddle player who lacks grip variety and shot variety. Many 3.5 players can recognize opponents' weaknesses but might not have the shot variety to capitalize. Within the 3.5 rating, different levels exist: Higher level 3.5 players often have better anticipation and court coverage than lower rated 3.5 players. The two areas where this is significant are as follows: the first is when an opponent lobs a ball over the net team. Higher 3.5 rated players are able to run back and lob the next shot off of the back screen consistently. The second frequent scenario where anticipation and court coverage impact play is when a net player volleys short. Higher rated players are able to run up and make a play on those short volleys consistently.

Based on the skills required to achieve a NTRP Rating of 4.0, tennis players with a 4.0 rating warrant an initial APTA Rating of 3.5.

Keys to Advance:

- 1) This player needs more match experience to develop earlier shot recognition.
- 2) Many 3.5 rated players will improve their volley placement by learning to wait longer before contacting the ball. Many 3.5 players will improve their overhead placement and variety instantly by waiting longer to contact the ball.
- 3) This player will improve their baseline play and reduce unforced errors significantly by having a willingness to lob shots that are hit with too much pace or too much spin, including the serve.
- 4) This player needs to recognize opponents' weaknesses earlier in matches.
- 5) This player will improve immediately by letting high hard hit drives, go out.
- 6) This player will improve their baseline consistency by learning to lob with a shorter backswing and a shorter followthrough.
- 7) This player will improve once they can get their paddle in position to lob screen shots.
- 8) This player needs to improve their footwork to be able to create more reliable shots.

9) This player will improve their net positioning with an earlier recognition of when they need to yield to their partner on net shots.



National Self Rating 4.0

This player has the ability to anticipate and recognize many of their opponents' shots and can adjust their positioning and their shot selection accordingly. This player has dependable strokes, including directional control. This player can serve with consistency but not necessarily variety. This player has the ability and willingness to play longer points and probably recognizes the need to have more overhead variety against better players. This player makes many volleys hit from above the net level on medium paced returns but struggles when the point of contact is below the level of the net, oftentimes because of grip limitations. This player makes solid contact on overheads but rarely hits an overhead that can force the ad court player to play a side back screen, probably due to footwork or grip limitations. 4.0 players are comfortable playing many screen shots.

Within the 4.0 rating, different levels exist: Higher level 4.0 players have better anticipation, better court coverage, probably have more match experience with more tactical options than lower rated 4.0 rated players. Oftentimes, higher rated 4.0 players have frequently demonstrated the ability to make defensive "gets" to extend points.

Based on the skills required to achieve a NTRP Tennis Rating, tennis players with a 4.5 rating warrant an initial paddle rating of 4.0. This rating is justified because of dependable racquet skills, dependable contact point on all paddle shots (except screens), shot anticipation and court coverage.

Keys To Advance:

- 1) This player may need to make a grip adjustment to improve volleys. This player may need to make a grip adjustment to improve overhead variety. This player may need to make a grip adjustment to get low screen shots.
- 2) This player needs to have a willingness to play more low screen shots.
- 3) 4.0 rated players often need to hit more off speed shots for better consistency overall.
- 4) This player needs to be able to anticipate and initiate proper net positioning sooner to be more competitive against higher rated players.
- 5.) This player needs to recognize earlier when there is an opportunity to hit an offensive shot or when there is a need to hit a defensive shot.
- 6) This player needs to improve their fitness level to be able to maintain consistency during matches lasting over an hour and a half long.
- 7) This player will improve with a more accurate self assessment following match play.
- 8) 4.0 players will improve with a better tactical understanding of which player at the net has the "right of way".



National Self Rating

4.5

This player has developed a game plan according to their own strengths and can identify an opponents' strengths and weaknesses quickly. This player can control location, pace and depth of enough shots to win several games in a set against 2 higher rated players and sometimes can win one set in a best of 3 set match. This player can recognize and anticipate opponents shots early enough to adjust net positioning. This player has built their game around either an offensive shot or around strong defensive play. This player can lob off the deck with consistency on medium to faster paced shots. This player can get many screen shots back in play and probably can drive off the screens with consistency.

This player understands and demonstrates a willingness to work with their partner but needs to improve in their understanding of net positioning and shot selection.

This player might not have spin variety on their overheads but rarely miss more than a few overheads in a match.

Within the 4.5 rating, different levels exist: higher rated 4.5 players typically have better anticipation, better court coverage and have a better ability to make tactical adjustments than lower rated 4.5 players. Higher rated 4.5 players have demonstrated an ability to be scrappy on the court, coming up with defensive "gets" that extend points. Higher rated 4.5 players have developed the ability to go back and forth between offense and defense within a point but probably still lack consistency on offensive opportunities.

Keys To Advance:

- 1) Offensive minded players need to limit unforced errors when the pace of play speeds up. Defensive minded players need to add more off speed shots from the baseline to force errors in longer points.
- 2) This player needs to factor in the score of the match for better shot selection.
- 3) This player can improve the effectiveness of their volleys and overheads with a better understanding of tactics.
- 4) This player often needs to make grip adjustments to be able to lob more effectively.
- 5) This player needs to develop more overhead variety to include a dependable push shot, the roller and possibly some variety of a slash or slice overhead.
- 6) This player may need to improve their fitness level and footwork to be more competitive in matches lasting longer than an hour and a half.
- 7) This player could improve in their ability to recognize when a tactical change is needed and possibly in their willingness to make a tactical change.
- 8) Many 4.5 rated players will improve significantly by waiting to hit more purposeful overheads and volleys as opposed to making contact as soon as the ball gets to their side of the net.



National Self Rating 5.0

This player is capable of playing a 2 hour match with slightly higher level players. This player volleys with consistency and depth. 5.0 players have above average anticipation and often favor playing on one side of the court over the other side for baseline play. 5.0 players can lob the ball with consistency and directional control off of harder hit volleys and overheads. 5.0 players understands the tactics of lobbing with a shorter blocking motion off of the deck, mostly with a continental grip. 5.0 players are able to work as a team to build points from the baseline. Some players at this level will use the continental grip to their advantage on serves, overheads and volleys. A 5.0 player's serve is generally not a weapon nor is it necessarily a liability. 5.0 players rarely play out balls on hard hit drives from opponents.

5.0 players have the confidence to force errors with drives, lobs, overheads and volleys.

5.0 players have the patience and a willingness to adjust shot selection as needed.

5.0 players start every match with an overall plan but can adjust play depending on the weather. 5.0 players consistently win several matches, including back draw matches in APTA regional events.

Higher level 5.0 players can go from offense to defense within a point and are more consistent on offensive opportunities.

Keys To Advance To The Next Level:

This player often needs to serve with more spin to be able to adjust placement and depth against a higher level player.

This player needs to improve their overall shot variety and decision making. .

This player needs to develop a greater awareness of the positioning of all four players at any given time during play in order to improve shot selection and consistency.

Deficiencies in your game might only be revealed when playing against higher level players; improvement comes from learning why your team lost by talking thru matches with partner.

This player needs to demonstrate an awareness and a willingness to continually adjust their tactical approaches during higher level matches.

This player will improve with a more accurate self assessment following match play.



This player has won a match or two in the main draw of most Apta Regional Ranking Events entered.. A 5.5 player quickly recognizes opponents' playing styles, strengths and weaknesses and formulates and executes a game plan. This player can vary strategies and styles of play in competitive situations and hits dependable shots in high level match play. This player can handle spin serves and spin overheads and has a consistent serve and a dependable first volley. This player is comfortable playing the deuce or ad court and can build points from either side and can drive with consistency off of the screens. This player is comfortable hitting drop shots off of opponents' off speed drives.

Potential strengths include the ability to consistently hit offensive, winning shots off of weak volleys and weak overheads. 5.5 players have the ability to be able to consistently hit overheads that force the ad court player to play a side back screen.

This player probably makes over 100 screens in a two set match.

This player can serve, volley and hit overheads with a continental grip.

Keys To Advance To The Next Level of Play:

- 1) 5.5 players with high level racket skills will improve with tournament experience and a more disciplined approach.
- 2) This player typically needs to hit with more spin and possibly pace on the serve against higher level players.
- 3) This players needs to focus on hitting volleys with more control and depth so as to avoid creating offensive opportunities for the baseline team.
- 4) This player typically could improve their screen play on lower shots by making more grip adjustments.
- 5) This player needs more variety on overheads and a better understanding of what overhead combinations are necessary to consistently break down a strong baseline team.
- 6) This player needs to have a better recognition tactically of when it is necessary to speed up the tempo or when it is necessary to slow down the tempo.
- 7) This player probably needs to improve in at least one of these areas to consistently win several rounds in APTA National Events a) improve willingness to play higher percentage shots when the score dictates b) improve overall ability to manage both the physical and mental side to reduce errors. c) improve the ability to quickly recognize when a tactical change is needed d) improve ability to serve with consistency, depth and variety during pressure situations e) improve willingness to work with a partner so that the combination of shots hit are toward the goal of keeping pressure on the opponents.



National Self Rating

6.0

This player has had extensive training for national level tournaments and consistently wins several main draw matches in Apta National Ranking Events.

This player can handle spin and pace off of serves and overheads to the point where they can still drive or lob effectively. This player can hit drives off of many screen shots with consistency and accuracy. The only screen shot this player might miss occasionally would be off of an opponent's overhead that hits the "nick" or corner or possibly when it hits a seam.

This player makes a high percentage of their forehand and backhand drives.

This player can hit controlled volleys on hard hit drives hit by high level players.

6.0 players win several points each set hitting a drop shot winner.

This player can consistently hit an attack overhead to the "side-back" screen in the ad court corner assuming the player is right handed. This player's overhead variety produces very few overhead errors in high level competition.

This player's physical, mental and tactical abilities allow this player to be competitive against higher rated players.

Keys to advance to next level:

- 1) This player may need to develop a more reliable spin serve.
- 2) This player may need to improve their consistency and variety on spin overheads to be able to avoid an opponent's strengths.
- 3) This player may need to improve their volley placement and tactics to be able to avoid an opponent's strength.
- 4) This player's could improve along the tactical side of their net game by improving their ability recognize earlier when it is better to let hard hit, well placed drives "go thru" to the back screen.
- 5) This player probably needs a more disciplined tactical approach to have a willingness to take away an opponent's offensive weapons earlier in highly competitive matches.
- 6) This player probably needs to improve in at least one of these areas in order to reach the later rounds in National Events. a) better decision making and shot selection b) better overall match management; c) increased willingness to change tactics throughout a match; d) improve volley technique and placement e) improve variety on overheads e) improve fitness level



National Self Rating 6.5 - 7.0

This player possesses offensive weapons that force opponents to make errors.

This player possesses offensive weapons that can be outright winners. 6.5 players can easily win points off of an opponents' short lobs and off speed drives.

6.5 players and above have defensive abilities to extend points and have probably played several matches lasting well over two hours long.

All 6.5 players and above have exceptional footwork, anticipation, quickness and/or speed. A 6.5 level player might have a weakness but it might only be revealed after a point has gone for 25 hits or more.

A 6.5 player is able to dictate play off of the serve and volley and can hit a majority of their volleys with control and depth. This player has variety on the overheads and is able to add pace, take away pace, add spin and hit with depth on demand.

This player can create offensive opportunities off of screen shots and rarely lose main draw matches to anyone ranked lower in the overall APTA National Rankings.

All 6.5 players have high level racket skills. They all have the endurance to be competitive in a 2 or 3 day APTA Ranking Event and have probably reached several finals in Apta Ranking events. All 6.5 rated players have a shot to shot awareness of all 4 players positioning on the court at any given time and they all have a mastery of the game's tactics.

