

NATIONAL TENNIS RATING PROGRAM (NTRP)

The National Tennis Rating Program (NTRP), which defines the characteristics of a player's levels, is the official system for determining the levels of competition for the USTA Jr. Team Tennis League. Each section association will determine the appropriate use of their ranking system to distinguish between Intermediate and Advanced level for any players, across all age categories, who participate in sanctioned tournaments.

Players in the USTA Jr. Team Tennis League without a rating must self-rate or have their team coach/manager rate them in accordance with the NTRP guidelines. Factors such as a player's on-court performance, tennis background, and any additional information should be considered in the self-rating decision. When players are rating themselves and question at which level they should play, they should place themselves in the higher NTRP level of play.

Players who are good athletes or intend to spend a great deal of time taking lessons and practicing should be aware that their improvement may be significant enough to surpass their original self-rating by the time they reach the end of the local league season or championship level. **If players anticipate their play level will be higher by the time of a championship event, they should enter at a higher level of play at the beginning of the local team season to ensure eligibility.**

To place players: Begin with 1.0. Read all categories carefully and then decide which one best describes the present ability level. Be certain that you qualify on all points of all preceding levels as well as those in the level you choose. When rating yourself, assume you are playing against a player of the same gender and the same ability.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF NTRP PLAYING LEVELS

1.0 Player is just starting to play tennis.

1.5 Player has limited experience and is working primarily on getting the ball in play. **Note to team coach/manager:** Player needs to coordinate moving when hitting the ball. In fact, player is still concentrating on getting the ball over the net from a stationary position. Player is learning to serve and keep score.

2.0 Player lacks court experience and their strokes need developing. Player is familiar with the basic positions for singles and doubles play. **Note to team coach/manager:** Player is now beginning to coordinate footwork but is not consistent in hitting the ball over the net. Player can serve to some degree, understands scoring as well as correct positions for serving and receiving, and has limited success with volleys.

2.5 Player is learning to judge where the ball is going, although their court coverage is limited. Player can sustain a short rally of slow pace with other players of the same ability. **Note to team coach/manager:** Player can keep score unassisted, can call own lines, can serve overhand from the baseline, and has an understanding of the basic rules.

3.0 Player is fairly consistent when hitting medium-paced shots, but is not comfortable with all strokes and lacks execution when trying for directional control, depth, or power. The most common doubles formation is one-up, one-back. **Note to team coach/manager:** Player is improving court coverage and can sustain a rally and serve with consistency. On ground strokes, player needs to improve control of height, depth, direction, and speed.

3.5 Player has achieved improved stroke dependability with directional control on moderate shots, but needs to develop depth and variety. They exhibit more aggressive net play, have improved court coverage, and are developing teamwork in doubles. **Note to team coach/manager:** Player is starting to recognize opportunities to attack short balls by coming to net. Player is developing more spin and power on the serve and seldom double faults.

4.0 Player has dependable strokes, including directional control and depth on both forehand and backhand sides on moderate-paced shots. Player can use lobs, overheads, approach shots, and volleys with some success and occasionally forces errors when serving. Rallies may be lost due to impatience. Teamwork in doubles is evident. **Note to team coach/manager:** Player has added variety in shot selection by using lobs, overheads, volleys, and approach shots with some success. Player can develop a game plan.

4.5 Player has developed use of power and spin and can handle pace. Player has sound footwork, can control depth of shots, and attempts to vary their game plan according to your opponents. Player can hit first serves with power and accuracy and place the second serve. They tend to over hit on difficult shots. Aggressive net play is common in doubles. **Note to team coach/manager:** Player is developing an offensive weapon.

5.0 Player has good shot anticipation and frequently has an outstanding shot or attribute around which a game may be structured. They can regularly hit winners or force errors off of short balls and can put away volleys. Player can successfully execute lobs, drop shots, half volleys, overhead smashes, and has good depth and spin on most second serves. **Note to team coach/manager: Player is match-wise and uses shots that have a high percentage of success in both singles and doubles.**

5.5 Player has mastered power and/or consistency as a major weapon. They can vary strategies and styles of play in a competitive situation and hit dependable shots in a stress situation. Player has had intensive training for national tournament competition at the junior and collegiate levels and has obtained a sectional and/or national ranking.

6.0 to 7.0 Player has had intensive training for national tournament competition at the junior and collegiate levels and has obtained a sectional and/or national ranking.

7.0 Player is a world-class player.

PLAYERS IN WHEELCHAIRS

Players in wheelchairs should use these same general characteristics to determine their NTRP skill level. The only differences are as follows:

- **Mobility:** While players in wheelchairs may have skills that would normally provide them with a certain rating, the mobility factor suggests that when competing against able bodied players, they should participate at an NTRP skill level that provides for competitive rather than compatible play.
- **Serving ability:** Due to the nature of the player's injury or disability, a powerful serve may not be possible. In this case, it may be more realistic to self-rate below 3.5, as serve strength becomes key beyond this level.