

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF NTRP PLAYING LEVELS

Players in wheelchairs should use these same General Characteristics to determine their NTRP skill level. The only difference observed is mobility and power on the serve. (For more details concerning characteristics, see pages 8-9.)

- 1.0 This player is just starting to play tennis.
- 1.5 This player has limited experience and is still working primarily on getting the ball into play.
- 2.0 This player needs on-court experience. This player has obvious stroke weaknesses but is familiar with basic positions for singles and doubles play.
- 2.5 This player is learning to judge where the ball is going, although court coverage is weak. Can sustain a *short rally of slow pace* with other players of the same ability.
- 3.0 This 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. Most common doubles formation is one up, one back.
- 3.5 This player has achieved improved stroke dependability with directional control on moderate shots, but still lacks depth and variety. This player exhibits more aggressive net play, has improved court coverage, and is developing teamwork in doubles.
- 4.0 This player has dependable strokes, including directional control and depth on both forehand and backhand sides on moderate shots, plus the ability to use lobs, overheads, approach shots, and volleys with some success. This player occasionally forces errors when serving. Rallies may be lost due to impatience. Teamwork in doubles is evident.
- 4.5 This player has begun to master the use of power and spins and is beginning to handle pace, has sound footwork, can control depth of shots, and is beginning to vary game plan according to opponents. This player can hit first serves with power and accuracy and place the second serve. This player tends to overhit on difficult shots. Aggressive net play is common in doubles.
- 5.0 This player has good shot anticipation and frequently has an outstanding shot or attribute around which a game may be structured. This player can regularly hit winners or force errors off of short balls and can put away volleys, can successfully execute lobs, drop shots, half volleys, overhead smashes, and has good depth and spin on most second serves.
- 5.5 This player has developed power and/or consistency as a major weapon. This player can vary strategies and styles of play in a competitive situation and hits dependable shots in a stress situation.
- 6.0 to 7.0 The 6.0 player typically has had intensive training for national tournament competition at the junior and collegiate levels and has obtained a sectional and/or national ranking. The 6.5 and 7.0 are world-class players.

VERIFICATION GUIDELINES

	FOREHAND	BACKHAND	SERVE/RETURN OF SERVE
1.0	This player is just starting to play tennis.		
1.5	This player has limited experience and is still working primarily on getting the ball into play.		
2.0	Incomplete swing; lacks directional intent	Avoids backhands; erratic contact; grip problems; incomplete swing	Incomplete service motion; double faults common; toss is inconsistent; return of serve erratic
2.5	Form developing; prepared for moderately paced shots	Grip and preparation problems; often chooses to hit forehand instead of backhand	Attempting a full swing; can get the ball in play at slow pace; inconsistent toss; can return slow-paced serve
3.0	Fairly consistent with some directional intent; lacks depth control	Frequently prepared; starting to hit with fair consistency on moderate shots	Developing rhythm; little consistency when trying for power; second serve is often considerably slower than first serve; can return serve with fair consistency
3.5	Improved consistency and variety on moderate shots with directional control; developing spin	Hits with directional control on moderate shots; has difficulty on high or hard shots; returns difficult shots defensively	Starting to serve with control and some power; developing spin; can return serve consistently with directional control on moderate shots
4.0	Good consistency; hits with depth and control on moderate shots; may try to hit too good a placement on a difficult shot	Directs the ball with consistency and depth on moderate shots; developing spin	Places both first and second serves, often with power on first serve; uses spin; dependable return of serve; can return with depth in singles and mix returns in doubles
4.5	Very good consistency; uses speed and spin effectively; controls depth well; tends to overhit on difficult shots; offensive on moderate shots	Can control direction and depth but may break down under pressure; offensive on moderate shots	Aggressive serving with limited double faults; uses power and spin; developing offense; on second serve frequently hits with good depth and placement; frequently hits aggressive service returns; can take pace off with moderate success in doubles
5.0	Strong shots with control, depth, and spin; uses forehand to set up offensive situations; has developed good touch; consistent on passing shots	Can use backhand as an aggressive shot with good consistency; has good direction and depth on most shots; varies spin	Serve is placed effectively with intent of hitting to a weakness or developing an offensive situation; has a variety of serves to rely on; good depth, spin, and placement on most second serves to force weak return or set up next shot; can mix aggressive and off-paced service returns with control, depth, and spin
5.5	This player is capable of hitting dependable shots in stress situations; has developed good anticipation; can pick up cues from such things as opponent's toss, body position, backswing, preparation; first and second serves can be depended on in stress situations and can be hit offensively at any time; can analyze and exploit opponent's weaknesses; can vary strategies and style of play in a competitive situation.		
6.0 to 7.0	These players will generally not need NTRP ratings. Rankings or past rankings will speak for themselves. The 6.0 player typically has had intensive training for national tournament competition at the junior level and collegiate levels and has obtained a sectional and/or national ranking. The 6.5 player has a reasonable chance of succeeding at the 7.0 level and has extensive satellite tournament experience. The 7.0 is a world-class player who is committed to tournament competition on the international level and whose major source of income is tournament prize winnings.		

Specific Characteristics of Various Playing Levels

VOLLEY	SPECIAL SHOTS	PLAYING STYLE
Reluctant to play net; avoids backhand; lacks footwork		Familiar with basic positions for singles and doubles play; frequently out of position
Uncomfortable at net especially on the backhand side; frequently uses forehand racquet face on backhand volleys	Can lob intentionally but with little control; can make contact on overheads	Can sustain a short rally of slow pace; modest consistency; weak court coverage; usually remains in the initial doubles position
Consistent forehand volley; inconsistent backhand volley; has trouble with low and wide shots	Can lob fairly consistently on moderate shots	Fairly consistent on medium-paced shots; most common doubles formation is still one up, one back; approaches net when play dictates but weak in execution
More aggressive net play; some ability to cover side shots; uses proper footwork; can direct forehand volleys; controls backhand volley but with little offense; difficulty in putting volleys away	Consistent overhead on shots within reach; developing approach shots, drop shots, and half volleys	Improved consistency on moderate shots with directional control; improved court coverage; starting to look for the opportunity to come to the net; developing teamwork in doubles
Depth and control on forehand volley; can direct backhand volleys but usually lacks depth; developing wide and low volleys on both sides of the body	Can put away easy overheads; can poach in doubles; follows aggressive shots to the net; beginning to finish point off; can hit to opponent's weaknesses; able to lob defensively on difficult shots and offensively on set ups	Good consistency on ground strokes with directional control and depth demonstrated on moderate shots; not yet playing good percentage tennis; teamwork in doubles is evident; rallies may still be lost due to impatience
Can handle a mixed sequence of volleys; good footwork; has depth and directional control on backhand; developing touch; most common error is still overhitting	Hits approach shots with good depth and control; can consistently hit volleys and overheads to end the point	Very good consistency; more intentional variety in game; is hitting with more pace; covers up weaknesses well; beginning to vary game plan according to opponent; aggressive net play is common in doubles; good anticipation; beginning to handle pace
Can hit most volleys with depth, pace and direction; plays difficult volleys with depth; given opportunity volley is often hit for a winner	Approach shots and passing shots are hit with pace and high degree of effectiveness; can lob offensively; overhead can be hit from any position; hits mid-court volleys with consistency	Frequently has an outstanding shot, consistency, or attribute around which game is built; can vary game plan according to opponent; this player is "match wise," plays percentage tennis, and "beats himself or herself" less than the 4.5 player; solid teamwork in doubles is evident; game breaks down mentally and physically more often than the 5.5 player

Players in Wheelchairs:

Players in wheelchairs should use these 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 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 4.0, as service strength becomes key beyond this level.

Many tournament players in wheelchairs have already received an NTRP rating. Wheelchair players should check with players whose skills match their own before determining their rating. The very best world-class players in wheelchairs have an NTRP rating in the low 4.5s.