

NTRP: The National Tennis Rating Program

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The primary goal of the National Tennis Rating Program (**NTRP**) is to help all tennis players enjoy the game by providing a method of classifying skill levels for more compatible matches, group lessons, league play, tournaments and other programs.

GUIDELINES:

The rating categories are generalization about skill levels. You may find that you actually play above or below the category which best describes your skill level, depending on your competitive ability. The category you choose is not meant to be permanent, but may be adjusted as your skills change or as your match play demonstrates the need for reclassification.

START HERE TO PLACE YOURSELF:

- A. Begin with 1.0. Read all categories carefully and then decide which one best describes your present ability.
- B. Be certain that you qualify on all points of all preceding categories as well as those in the classification you choose.
- C. When Rating yourself assume you are playing against a player of the same gender and the same ability.
- D. If you are undecided between 2 NTRP levels, you should place yourself in the higher level of play.
- E. Ultimately your true NTRP Rating is based upon your match results, so use match play history against players who have an established NTRP ratings as a major indicator of your true NTRP level.

NTRP Level 1.0

This player is just starting to play tennis. This player has limited playing experiences and is still working primarily on getting the ball over the net, has some knowledge of scoring but is not familiar with basic positions and procedures for singles and doubles play.

NTRP Level 2.0

This player may have had some lessons but needs on-court experience; has some obvious stroke weaknesses but is beginning to feel comfortable with singles and doubles play.

Forehand: Incomplete swing; lacks directional intent

Backhand: Avoids backhands; erratic contact; grip problems; incomplete swing

Serve/Return of Serve: Incomplete service motion; double faults common; toss is inconsistent; return of serve erratic

Volley: Reluctant to play net; avoid backhand; lacks footwork

Playing Style: Familiar with basic positions for singles and doubles play; frequently out of position

NTRP Level 2.5

This player has more dependable strokes and is learning to judge where the ball is going; has weak coverage or is often caught out of position, but is starting to keep the ball in play with other players of the same ability.

Forehand: Form developing; prepared for moderately paced shots

Backhand: Grip and preparation problems; often chooses to hit forehand instead of backhand

Serve/Return of Serve: Attempting a full swing; can get the ball in play at a slow pace; inconsistent toss; can return slow paced serve

Volley: Uncomfortable at net especially on the backhand side; frequently uses forehand racket face on backhand volleys

Special Shots: Can lob intentionally but with little control; can make contact on overheads

Playing Style: Can sustain a short rally of slow pace; weak court coverage usually remains in the initial doubles position

NTRP Level 3.0

This player can place shots with moderate success, can sustain a rally of slow pace but is not comfortable with all strokes; lacks control when trying for power.

Forehand: Fairly consistent with some directional intent; lacks depth control

Backhand: Frequently prepared; starting to hit with fair consistency on moderate shots

Serve/Return of serve: Developing rhythm; little consistency when trying for power; second serve is often considerably slower than first serve; return serve with fair consistency

Volley: Consistent forehand volley" inconsistent backhand volley, has trouble with low and wide shots

Special Shots: can lob consistently on moderate shots

Playing Style: Consistent on medium paced shots; most common doubles formation is still one-up, one-back; approaches net when play dictates but weak in execution

NTRP Level 3.5

This player has achieved stroke dependability and direction on shots within reach, including forehand and backhand volleys, but still lacks depth and variety; seldom double faults and occasionally forces errors on the serve.

Forehand: Good consistency and variety on moderate shots; good directional control; developing spin

Backhand: Hitting with directional control on moderate shots; has difficulty on high or hard shots; returns difficult shots defensively

Serve/Return of Serve: Starting to serve with control and some power developing spin; can return serve consistently with directional control on moderate shots

Volley: More aggressive net play; some ability to cover side shots; uses proper footwork; can direct forehand

volleys; controls backhand volley but with little offence; difficulty putting volleys away

Special Shots: Consistent overhead on shots within reach; developing approach shots, drop shots, and half volleys; can place the return on most second serves

Playing style: 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

NTRP Level 4.0

This player has dependable strokes on both forehand and backhand sides; has the ability to use a variety of shots including lobs, overheads, approach shots and volleys; can place the first serve and force some errors; is seldom out of position in a doubles game.

Forehand: Dependable; hits with depth and control on moderate shots; may try to hit too good a placement on a difficult shot.

Backhand: Player can direct the ball with consistency and depth on moderate shots; developing spin

Serve/Return of serve: Places both first and second serves; frequent power on first serve; uses spins; dependable return of serve; can return with depth in singles and mix returns in doubles

Volley: 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

Special Shots: Can put away easy overheads; can poach in doubles; follows aggressive shots to the net; beginning to finish point off; can hit to opponent weaknesses; able to lob defensively on setups; dependable return of serve

Playing Style: Dependable ground strokes with directional control and depth demonstrated on moderate shots; not yet playing good percentage tennis; teamwork in doubles evident; rallies may still be lost due to impatience

NTRP Level 4.5

This player has begun to master the use of power and spins; has sound footwork; can control depth of shots and is able to move opponent up and back; can hit first serves with power and accuracy and place the second serve and is able to rush the net with some success on serve in singles as well as doubles.

Forehand: Very dependable; uses speed and spin effectively; controls depth well; tends to overhit on difficult shots; offensive on moderate shots

Backhand: Can control direction and depth but may break down under pressure; can hit power on moderate shots

Serve/Return of Serve: 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

Volley: Can handle a mixed sequence of volleys; good footwork; has depth and directional control on backhand; developing touch; most common error is still overhitting

Special Shots: Approach shots hit with good depth and control; can consistently hit volleys and overheads to

end the point; frequently hits aggressive service returns

Playing Style: 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

NTRP Level 5.0

This player has good shot anticipation; frequently has an outstanding shot or exceptional consistency around which a game may be structured; can regularly hit winners or force errors off of short balls; can successfully execute lobs, drive shot, half volley and overhead smashes; has good depth and spin on most second serves.

Forehand: Strong shot with control, depth, and spin; uses forehand to set offensive situation; has developed good touch; consistent on passing shots

Backhand: Can use backhand as an aggressive shot with good consistency has good direction and depth on most shots; varies spin

Serve/Return of Serve: Serve is placed effectively with the 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 serve to force weak return or set up next shots; can mix aggressive and off paced serve returns with control, depth, and spin

Volley: Can hit most volleys with depth, pace and direction; plays difficult volleys with depth; given opportunity, volley is often hit for a winner

Special Shots: Approach shots and passing shots are hit with pace and a high degree of effectiveness; can lob offensively overhead can be hit with from any position; hits mid-court volley with consistency; can mix aggressive and off-paced service returns

Playing Style: Frequently has an outstanding shot or attribute around which his game is built; can vary game plan according to opponent; this player is 'match wise', plays percentage tennis, and 'beats himself' 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

NTRP Level 5.5

This player can execute all strokes offensively and defensively; can hit dependable shots under pressure; is able to analyze opponents' styles and can employ patterns of play to assure the greatest possibility of winning points; can hit winners or force errors with both first and second serves. Returns of serve can be an offensive weapon.