

# **Pickleball Skill Level Guidelines**

## **for Greenglade Community Centre, North Saanich**

### **Middle School & Panorama Recreation Centre**

The following pickleball skill sets, defined by Pickleball Canada, are a guide for evaluating your own skill level. Players of all skill levels are welcome within Everyone Welcome and Reservable playtimes but, Beginner playtimes are reserved for those of a 2.0-3.0 skill level, and Intermediate times of a 3.0+ skill level. For those brand new to the game, Intro to Pickleball Lessons are offered weekly and can be booked with reception.

#### **2.0 Skill Level**

- Moves in a balanced and safe manner
- Gets at least 50% of serves in the service court and returns 50% of serves received
- Is learning where to stand on court during serves, returns and point play but, is still not comfortable with all positions
- Knows the 2 bounce rule and applies it during games
- Can comfortably keep score
- Has basic ground strokes, but a very limited use of backhand, overhead and volley
- Capable of keeping ball in play for a couple of shots

#### **2.5 Skill Level**

- Knows the basic rules including the “two bounce rule” and scoring
- Attempts to control forehand groundstroke (direction, depth, height over net)
- Attempts backhand groundstroke
- Gets 60% of serves in the service court and returns 60% of serves received
- Knows where to stand as the server, server’s partner and receiver
- Consistently approaches the non-volley line for volleys

- Can keep the ball in play for longer lasting rallies
- Sometimes lobs with forehand
- Attempts to “dink” the ball at the net and can do so for short durations
- Moves in a safe and balanced manner
- Developing good hand-eye coordination

### **3.0 Skill Level – (also possesses most/all of the 2.5 skills)**

- Knows basic rules including how to keep score
- Developing control on forehand groundstroke (placement, direction, depth)
- Developing control on backhand groundstroke (placement, direction, depth)
- Getting 70% of serves and return of serves “in”
- Beginning to develop placement of serves and striving to place serves deep into the court
- Uses deeper and higher returns of serve to allow time to approach the net
- Approaches the non-volley line quickly rather than staying back
- Can sustain a short volley session at the net
- Exhibits correct court positioning for doubles and how to “move as a team”
- Beginning to use the forehand lob with some success
- Developing a sustained “dink” exchange at the net
- Attempting to hit a soft “drop shot” to approach the net (3rd, 5th, etc shot)
- Attempting to adjust to differing ball speeds (hitting & returning)
- Has good mobility
- Developing good hand-eye coordination

### **3.5 Skill Level – (also possesses most/all of the 3.0 skills)**

- Knows all the main rules including how to refigure the score and correct server
- Demonstrates control on forehand groundstroke (direction, depth, pace)
- Demonstrates some control on backhand groundstroke (direction, depth, pace)
- Getting 80% of serves and return of serves “in”
- Regularly placing serves deep into the court
- Regularly uses deeper & higher returns of serve to allow time to approach net
- Approaches the non-volley line quickly (when appropriate) rather than staying back
- Able to play with partners effectively. Beginning to use court strategies such as partner communication and team coverage of court
- Avoids hitting “out” balls
- Hitting the ball lower over the net consistently
- Developing a wide variety of shots with some consistency
- Learning when to use soft shots vs. power shots to their advantage
- Developing consistency on shot placement, including ability to create and hit “gaps”
- Sustains a short volley session at the net with some control and placement
- Initiates and maintains a sustained “dink” exchange at the net
- Able to execute a soft “drop shot” to approach the net (3rd, 5th, etc shot)
- Able to adjust to differing ball speeds consistently
- Developing ability to hit overheads with control
- Using a forehand and backhand lob when appropriate
- Developing patience in rallies
- Has good mobility, quickness and hand-eye coordination

#### **4.0 Skill Level – (also possesses all of the 3.5 skills)**

- Controls and places 90% of both serves and returns of serves
- Consistent and dependable forehand and backhand groundstrokes, volleys and overheads, including some directional control, depth, placement, pace
- Has good accuracy in placing lobs
- Consistently makes successful “drop shots” from the back court to approach the net (3rd, 5th, etc shot)
- Regularly initiating and sustaining a “dink” exchange at the net until a “put away” shot is received
- Able to change from a soft shot strategy to a hard shot strategy, and vice versa
- Can block and return hard volleys
- Developing the ability to return overheads hit at their feet
- Can handle speed on shots without over-hitting or hitting out of bounds
- Moves effectively with partner, easily switching courts and communicating when required
- Can control play at the non-volley zone line, keeping their opponents back, driving them off the line and controlling the speed or placement of the ball
- Consistently uses shots to create and hit “gaps”
- Recognizes and exploits the weaknesses in their opponent’s game
- Can poach effectively
- Maintains patience in rallies
- Has good mobility, quickness and hand-eye coordination

#### **4.5 and 5.0 Skill Level**

The 4.5 player is distinguished from the 4.0 player by increased skills, a higher level of strategy, quickness of hands, judicious use of power, superior placement of shots and consistently fewer unforced errors. The 5.0 player is even more consistent in all skills than the 4.5 player with very few, if any, unforced errors.