

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF NATIONAL TENNIS RATING PROGRAM PLAYING LEVELS

NTPR 1.0 - This player is just starting to play tennis.

NTPR 1.5 - This player has limited experience and is still working primarily on getting the ball into play.

NTPR 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.

Characteristics of a 2.0 Player

- Forehand: incomplete swing; lacks directional intent
- Backhand: avoids backhands; erratic contact; grip problems
- Serve: incomplete service motion; double faults common; toss is inconsistent
- Return of Serve: erratic
- Volley: reluctant to play net; avoids BH; lacks footwork
- Playing Style: familiar with basic positions for singles and doubles play; frequently out of position

NTPR 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.

Characteristics of a 2.5 Player

- Forehand: from developing; prepared for moderately paced shots
- Backhand: grip and preparation problems; often chooses to hit FH instead of BH
- Serve: attempting a full swing; can get the ball in play at slow pace; inconsistent toss
- Return of Serve: can return slow paced serve
- Volley: uncomfortable at net especially on the BH side; frequently uses FH racket face on BH 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

NTPR 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.

Characteristics of a 3.0 Player

- Forehand: fairly consistent with some directional intent; lacks depth control
- Backhand: frequently prepared; starting to hit with fair consistency on moderate shots
- Serve: developing rhythm; little consistency when trying for power; second serve is often considerably slower than the first
- Return of Serve: can return serve with fair consistency
- Volley: consistent FH volleys; inconsistent BH volleys; has trouble with low and wide shots
- Special Shots: can lob fairly 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

NTPR 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.

Characteristics of a 3.5 Player

- 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 shot defensively
- Serve: starting to serve with control and some power; developing spin
- Return of Serve: can return serve
- Volley: more aggressive net play; some ability to cover side shots; uses proper footwork; can direct FH volleys; controls BH volleys but with little offense; difficulty in putting volleys away
- Special Shots: consistent overhead on shots within reach; developing approach shots, drop shots, and half volleys; can place the return of most second serves
- Playing Style: consistent on moderate shots with directional control; improved court coverage; starting to look for the opportunity to come to the net; developing teamwork in doubles

NTPR 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.

Characteristics of a 4.0 Player

- 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: places both first and second serves; frequent power on first serve; uses spin
- Return of Serve: dependable return of serve; can return with depth in singles and mix returns in doubles
- Volley: depth and control on FH volley; can direct BH 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's weaknesses; able to lob defensively on difficult shots and offensively on setups
- Playing Style: dependable 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

NTPR 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.

Characteristics of a 4.5 Player

- Forehand: very dependable; uses speed and spin effectively; controls depth well; tends to over-hit on difficult shots: offensive on moderate shots
- Backhand: can control direction and depth but may break down under pressure; can hit with power and moderate shots
- Serve: aggressive serving with limited double faults; uses power and spin; developing offense; on second serve frequently hits with good depth and placement

NTPR 4.5 (continued)

- Return of Serve: 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 directed control on BH; developing touch; most common error is still over-hitting
- Special Shots: approach shots hit with good depth and control; can consistently hit volleys and overheads to end the point
- 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 in common in doubles; good anticipation; beginning to handle pace

NTPR 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.

Characteristics of a 5.0 Player

- Forehand: strong shot with control, depth, and spin; uses FH to set up offensive situations; has developed good touch; consistent on passing shots
- Backhand: can use BH as an aggressive shot with good consistency; has good direction and depth on most shots; varies spin
- Serve: placed effectively with the intent of hitting a weakness or developing on 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
- Return of Serve: can mix aggressive and off-paced service returns with control, depth, and spin
- Volley: can hit most volleys with depth, pace, and direction; plays difficult volleys deep; given opportunity, volley is often hit for a winner
- Special Shots: 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 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

NTPR 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.

Characteristics of a 5.5 Player

Player can hit dependable shots in stress situations; has developed good anticipation; can pick up cues from such things as opponent's toss, body position, back-swing, preparation; first and second serves can be depended on in stress situations and can be hit offensively at any time; can analyze and exploit opponents weaknesses; has developed power and/or consistency as a major weapon; can vary strategies and style of play in a competitive situation.

NTPR 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.