

## **ARC Pickleball Club Rating System Updates - September 23, 2021**

As a club, our goal is to use ratings to provide fun and competitive play as well as fairness in club run tournaments. Ratings have different types from different sources and nearly all are fraught with challenges which make it hard to use ratings from one source. Because of these challenges, we created and continue to develop and improve our Club Rating system. In the spirit of providing a better club experience, we are making several changes to our Club Rating system particularly when it comes to access to current ratings and access to Intermediate and Advanced Drop In sessions.

To provide some clarity and background to this complicated issue, let's look at the types of rating systems commonly used in pickleball, the system we use and why, how to get a club rating, and what changes are being made to our club rating system to improve the member experience.

### **Types of Rating Systems**

UTPR-this rating comes from USA Pickleball, the governing body of Pickleball much like USTA is in tennis. UTPR is the official rating used to show player ratings and to limit how low players can play in sanctioned tournaments. The only way to change this rating is to play sanctioned tournaments. There is no such thing as a certified rater that can influence or rate you for UTPR. USA Pickleball has acknowledged that their system has plenty of opportunity for improvement and is planning to make significant changes in the next few months.

IPTPA-International Pickleball Teaching Professional Association (IPTPA) is a teaching organization with their own standards for rating players. If you hear someone say that official ratings can only be given by a certified rater, this is what they are speaking of. These ratings do not count towards UTPR and typically require a fee to go through the rating process. A ratings assessment includes various standards for the level you are wanting to be evaluated at which the rater judges subjectively followed by a test to see if you can hit a certain percentage of given shots successfully.

DUPR-this is a new rating system partnering with both PPA and APP professional tours. It works very similar to our current club rating system. It is a universal rating system meaning that player ratings are based purely on results and not delineated by age or gender like UTPR ratings. Results take into account points and not just wins or losses. Players can set up a free DUPR account and play rated matches set up privately. To get a verified DUPR rating which is required to play DUPR sanctioned tournaments, you will need to subscribe to DUPR+ which starts at \$9 a month.

ARC Club Rating System-this is a universal rating system much like DUPR. Universal systems treat everyone equally in the sense that we do not have separate ratings for age, gender, and mixed play like UTPR. Results take into account points and not just wins or losses. This system is almost entirely objective being based on results rather than subjective evaluation. There is no additional cost for participating in ladders and obtaining a club rating.

### **Why use a Universal Rating System?**

The Universal System treats all players the same regardless of age, gender, or type of play (mixed versus doubles). In terms of managing club sessions and keeping the skill ratings consistent to provide a fun and competitive experience, the universal system is the best system we have seen thus far because we rely on actual performance rather than subjective evaluations. We gladly invite constructive feedback and work to improve the system as no system will ever be perfect but we will do everything possible to keep improving it.

## Why use a club rating system rather than UTPR, IPTPA, or DUPR?

Some of the advantages of using a club system and disadvantages of other systems are:

- Accuracy
  - Our system was reviewed by a 5.0 US Open Champion and another 5.0 instructor brought in to help develop our club ratings and both fully endorsed our club rating system as being more accurate over trying to observe players directly
  - UTPR is widely criticized as highly inaccurate and difficult to improve so much so that USA Pickleball is completely overhauling their ratings system
  - IPTPA depends largely on the rater's subjective judgment
  - DUPR relies heavily on self ratings as the starting point for player ratings
- Frequency of updates
  - Club ratings are updated weekly
  - UTPR is updated quarterly, IPTPA requires a rating session each time you want to be evaluated
- Cost
  - There is no additional cost to being rated through our club system through the ladders
  - Between travel, hotel, and tournament fees, a typical tournament costs hundreds of dollars to participate and often times only the very top teams will actually increase their UTPR Ratings and only in very small increments
  - IPTPA ratings typically require a fee
  - DUPR verified ratings required for DUPR sanctioned tournament requires a subscription starting at \$9 a month

## What are club ratings used for and how do players start out in the ladder system?

Club ratings are primarily used for access to drop in sessions, seeding club tournaments, combined ratings used to keep leagues competitive, and for seeding our weekly ladders. For drop in sessions, we have broken skill levels up into the following categories:

- Beginner 2.0+ rating (new players start at 2.0)
- Intermediate 3.25+ rating
- Advanced 4.0+ rating

Please keep in mind these are official club drop in sessions and ratings must be earned to play in them. If a new or visiting player is deemed to be clearly at or above the minimum level required to play at a given level, they have been permitted to do so temporarily. New players may be allowed to initially play in a given level but must participate in the ladders to earn that rating within a month. Starting ratings are typically a quarter point below estimated actual ratings so that everyone must earn their rating. We don't put all new players on the bottom courts automatically because that would create a poor playing experience for everyone. Our goal is to create fun and competitive playing experiences.

## How do I get an ARC Club Rating?

1. UTPR-a player's UTPR rating will always override a player's club rating when it comes to accessing drop in sessions and determining minimal level for tournament participation.
2. Ladder System-the ladders offered weekly at ARC are used to track points which are used in a formula to increase or decrease a players rating. A brief description of how the ladder system works:
  - a. We place you on a court with 3 or 4 similarly skilled players. We seed the starting positions in order of club rating. You play with everyone else as your partner 1 time. The top total point scorers will move up a court, the bottom scorers will move down.
  - b. We take an average of the ratings of the players on your court to create a base rating. The base rating is what you will have if you have zero points. Every point scored adds to your base rating. Most players have to score around 75% of the total points possible to break even. So if there are 44 points

possible in 4 games to 11, if you score 33 you will be rated at the court average rating. If your rating is lower than the average on your court, you don't need to score as many points to break even. If your rating is higher than the average on your court, you will need to score more than 33 points to break even. In other words, a lower rated player has more to gain than a higher rated player if they end up on the same court.

- c. We only count the last three ladder performances towards your club rating. A bad day can be removed from your record by playing 3 more ladders.
- d. We offer 5 ladders per week including a beginner half ladder and a ladie's ladder in addition to the 3 standard ladders Tuesday, Saturday, and Sunday. All ladders count exactly the same in our club rating system.

### What changes are being made to the Drop In Sessions in regards to club ratings?

**Beginning November 1st, 2021, all players will be required to have either a UTPR or club rating in order to play the Intermediate Drop Ins and Advanced Drop Ins.** Brand new members and out of town visitors may be given an initial evaluation and permission to play a given drop in for up to one month. If, after one month, the player has neither UTPR or a Club Rating, the only option will be ladders, Beginner Drop Ins, and self-organized play. These will be enforced and if you are playing in a drop in session for which you do not have the appropriate rating, you can expect to immediately be asked to leave that session.

**UTPR Ratings stand indefinitely if you have played a rated tournament within two years. Club Ratings will stand within 6 month periods.** If you reach the benchmark to play the Advanced Drop In sessions for example, you will continue to be able to play Intermediate or Advanced Drop Ins until the next reset on May 1st. You will not lose your ability within that time even if your rating drops below the threshold. However, on May 1st, your current rating will determine which sessions you can attend. If relying on club ratings, we also require that you play in the ladders at least once within the 3 months prior to the reset date. These requirements are all designed to keep ratings current and relevant to maintain quality of play. Club ratings will never be changed because of inactivity in the ladders, but in order for club ratings to count, we require at least one ladder participation 3 months prior to each reset date.

**Additionally, the Committee and staff have determined that we will make the rating required to play Advanced Drop In sessions to be 3.75 for women and 4.0 for men.**