

Level – Skills Guide for Team Placement

AA LEVEL

This player will execute all shots—forehand, backhand, serve, & return—with a high level of ability, accuracy, and with touch, spin, and pace.

DINK: has mastered the dink and drop shots, is able to move opponents with shot placements; will exhibit patience during rallies; will deftly create offensive opportunities.

3RD SHOT: has mastered the 3rd shot choices and strategies to create opportunities for winning points; is able to drop and drive ball from both the forehand and backhand side with high level of consistency.

VOLLEY: can block hard volleys and drop them into the NVZ; places overheads with ease; is able to volley shots at opponents' feet; is comfortable with the swinging volley.

STRATEGY: has mastered multiple strategies and styles of play in competitive matches; will convert defensive shots into offensive shots; has excellent footwork and is quick on the court.

UNFORCED ERRORS: rare.

A LEVEL

This player has a high level of consistency with forehand shots using pace and depth to force errors and set up the next shot; can effectively direct the backhand with varying depth and pace.

SERVE: serves with power, accuracy, and depth; will vary the speed and spin.

DINK: able to place the ball consistently and with offensive intent; recognizes attackable dinks.

3RD SHOT: will consistently execute effective 3rd shot strategies that are not easily returned; will intentionally and consistently place the ball.

VOLLEY: can block hard volleys and consistently drop them into the NVZ; is comfortable with the swinging volley; hits overhead shots consistently, often as put-aways.

STRATEGY: understands strategy and will adapt the game plan according to the opponents' strengths and weaknesses; very effective at the NVZ; communicates and moves well with partner; has good footwork and moves well laterally, backward, and forward.

UNFORCED ERRORS: rare.

HIGH B

This player consistently hits forehand shots with depth and control, but still perfecting shot selection and timing; has improved stroke mechanics with moderate success hitting the backhand.

SERVE / RETURN: can place majority of serves and returns with varying depth and speed.

DINK: has increased consistency with moderate ability to control height and depth; may dink rally due to lack of patience; can recognize attackable balls and those that are not.

3RD SHOT: mixes power shots with soft shots to create an advantage with inconsistent results.
VOLLEY: able to volley a variety of shots at different speeds; is still developing consistency and control; beginning to understand block/reset volley.

STRATEGY: is aware of partner's position on the court and will move as a team; will change direction in an offensive manner; has broad knowledge of the rules; solid understanding of stacking and how to use it.

UNFORCED ERRORS: moderate number of unforced errors.

LOW B LEVEL

This player has improved forehand stroke development with moderate control and is starting to develop consistency with the backhand but will avoid the backhand if possible.

SERVE / RETURN: consistently gets serve and return in play with limited ability to control depth.

DINK: Increased consistency but with limited ability to control height and depth; beginning to vary pace.

3RD SHOT: is developing the drop shot to get to the net.

VOLLEY: can volley medium paced shots with some control.

STRATEGY: moves quickly to the NVZ; is trying to vary pace as a strategy; can sustain short rallies; has basic knowledge of stacking and knows where it can be effective.

HIGH C LEVEL

This player can hit a medium paced forehand shot but lacks directional intent and consistency; the backhand is very inconsistent, and the player will avoid using the backhand.

SERVE / RETURN: able to hit a medium paced shot but lacks depth, direction and consistency.

DINK: cannot sustain a dink rally.

3RD SHOT: will generally hit a medium paced ball with little direction.

VOLLEY: able to hit a medium paced shot; lacks direction and consistency.

STRATEGY: understands fundamentals; is learning proper court positions; has fundamental understanding rules and can keep score.

LOW C LEVEL

This player is just starting pickleball and has little experience with organized sports; minimal understanding of the rules; can sustain a short rally with players of equal ability; has basic ability to keep score.

