

# St. Albert Pickleball Club Board Policies

## Operational

### Player Ratings Policy

#### **Policy**

All members of the St. Albert Pickleball Club (SAPC) are expected to be aware of the International Federation of Pickleball (IFP)/United States Pickleball Association (USAPA) ratings system and their own rating. Members are expected to play at recreational and tournament play events that are appropriate for their rating, regardless of the type of rating they have (see “Types of Ratings” below).

SAPC may share a member’s rating, when requested, with tournament organizers within the Club and with other clubs.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure fairness when members play in recreational events and tournaments—both for themselves and for fellow pickleball players from other clubs. This policy was developed in consultation with other pickleball clubs and organizations in the Edmonton area, in Alberta, and in Canada.

#### **Introduction**

The IFP/USAPA ratings system ensures players with similar skills are grouped together in club-organised play (i.e. paddle play, round robins, ladders, etc.) and tournaments. The ratings system typically goes from 1.0 to 5.0. Players who are completely new to pickleball and have no previous skill with the sport start with a rating of 1.0; top players in the sport almost always have a 5.0 rating. Each rating level is defined by certain skills and abilities which players at that level are expected to have; descriptions of these are available on the IFP’s website.

There are three types of ratings a player can have, depending on the method by which the rating was assigned. These three types are a Self-rating, a Club rating, or a UTPR rating (previously known as a “Tournament” rating).

A player’s rating can increase as the player improves his or her skills. The method by which a rating increases depends on the type of rating the player has. Depending on the type of rating, it can also decrease for a variety of reasons, such as deterioration of skills, medical conditions, or poor results at tournaments.

## Types of Ratings

### Self Rating

A Self rating is a rating that players assign to themselves. Self ratings are used only when a player is relatively new to pickleball, has no Club or UTPR rating, and wants to participate in club-organized play or enter a tournament. New players who join SAPC, after having their first beginner lesson, should give themselves a Self rating of 2.0.

After playing for a while, you may feel your skills may have improved enough to increase your Self rating. Before doing so, **you must carefully read the skill descriptions on the IFP's website to ensure that your Self rating is not too high. You must be able to demonstrate command of most or all of the skills listed for a particular rating level.**

If the Board of Directors becomes aware of a player who has a Self rating that is clearly not appropriate, the Board is empowered to assign a more appropriate Club rating to that player. A Self rating is only accepted at the St. Albert Pickleball Club until you have earned a Club or UTPR Rating. **Once a member has earned a Club or UTPR Rating, it replaces the member's Self-rating.**

The highest Self rating you are allowed to have as an SAPC member is 2.5. **Members must acquire a Club or UTPR rating to become rated 3.0 or higher.**

### Club Rating

A Club rating is a rating assigned by a pickleball club (SAPC in this case) to one of its members. Although a Club rating can be unilaterally assigned to a player by the club, it is more commonly assigned in response to a member's request. A member can be assigned a Club rating anywhere from 1.0 up to 4.0; **any rating higher than 4.0 can only be achieved via a UTPR rating.**

At SAPC, if a member is assigned a Club rating, **the Club rating always replaces any Self rating.** For example, if a member has a Self rating of 3.0, but subsequently receives a Club rating of 2.5, the Self rating is no longer valid and the member can no longer give himself or herself any Self rating.

SAPC honours Club ratings assigned by other clubs. For example, if a player has a 3.5 Club rating assigned by a different club, that player will be considered to have a 3.5 Club rating assigned by SAPC, as soon as the player who wishes to use another club's rating presents a signed and dated letter or Completed Ratings Sheet stating the other club's rating of that member to SAPC.

### USAPA Tournament Player Rating (UTPR)

Beginning on January 1, 2019, the IFP and USAPA instituted a new ratings type for players who participate in tournaments. This new rating, known as “UTPR” (short for “USAPA Tournament Player Rating”), replaces the previous “Tournament rating” used by the IFP/USAPA.

A UTPR is a rating assigned by Pickleball Canada or any other official national pickleball organization, such as the USA Pickleball Association. A UTPR is assigned to players after they have competed in one or more **sanctioned** pickleball tournaments (a sanctioned tournament is officially recognized by Pickleball Canada, the USAPA, or another official national organization; not all tournaments are sanctioned).

**If you are assigned a UTPR, it supersedes any other rating you may have.** For example, if you receive a UTPR of 4.0 from Pickleball Canada, you are immediately also assigned a Club rating of 4.0. Similarly, if you have a Self rating of 3.0 but receive a UTPR of 2.5, the UTPR replaces your Self rating.

If you have questions about your UTPR, please contact the pickleball organization that assigned it (e.g. Pickleball Canada or the USAPA). SAPC has no control over UTPR ratings.

## **SAPC Rules Regarding Tournaments**

Tournaments are usually divided into different groups by rating level. As a member of SAPC, whenever entering **any** tournament (whether it is sanctioned or unsanctioned), **you must enter at the rating level that is at or above your own current rating.** For example, if you have a 3.0 rating, regardless of whether it is a Self rating, Club rating, or UTPR, you must enter tournaments in the rating group of 3.0 or higher. **If you are entering a tournament as a team, your team must enter at or above the rating level of the partner whose rating is higher, not lower.** For example, if you are rated 3.0 and your partner is rated 3.5, your team must enter at 3.5 or higher.

*Note: Entering tournaments at a lower rating level than the player’s actual rating is called “sandbagging”. Players who sandbag at tournaments usually do so in order to give themselves a better chance of winning a medal by playing against weaker players. Sandbagging is unethical, and such unsportsmanlike behaviour reflects poorly on the player and the St. Albert Pickleball Club and goes against SAPC’s Code of Conduct.*

Club members who are found to have violated SAPC rules regarding tournaments are subject to possible disciplinary action by SAPC and tournament organizers.

## **Club Rules Regarding Ratings**

- Do not tell another SAPC member that his or her rating is incorrect. If you believe someone’s rating is incorrect, please contact the Captain at the venue.
- Do not tell another SAPC member not to attend club-organized play for a particular rating level because you think he or she isn’t good enough to do so. If you believe someone is attending club-organized play that is inappropriate for his or her rating level, please contact the Captain at the venue.

- SAPC members are allowed to attend club-organized play for their 9 level or lower. For example, an SAPC member who is rated 3.5 can attend club-organized play for 3.5, 3.0, 2.5, etc., but cannot attend play for 4.0 or higher. This gives advanced players a chance to help mentor less-skilled players, who in turn have an opportunity to learn by playing with better players; it also allows players recovering from an injury to ease back into playing.
- Couples who want to play together must play at events intended for the **lower** of the two ratings. For example, if one person is rated 3.5 and the other is rated 3.0, when playing together they must play at events for players rated 3.0. If an event includes play for both rating levels (such as “3.0+” in the previous example), they must each participate with the players at their own level—e.g. the 3.0 player should play with the other 3.0 players in attendance, and the 3.5 player should play with the other 3.5 players in attendance—unless the event mixes everyone together.
- Do not use the ratings system as an excuse to behave poorly toward other players. It’s all too easy to look down on players who have a lower rating than you, or to resent players who have a higher rating than you. Always respect your fellow club members, regardless of their rating.

## Ratings Questions

If you have any questions regarding the ratings system or want to confirm your own rating, please check the FAQ section on the website or email SAPC’s Membership and Volunteer Director.

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