

On September 28, 2022 at the monthly board meeting, the Board approved the recommendations to eliminate ratings and move Round Robins to groups based on parity of play. As we enter October, we wanted to give you an update on the new Round Robin structure.

Our goals are simple:

- Improve parity of play for members participating in Round Robins to make them more fun.
- Increase the number of groups to provide better parity of play
- Use observation of members play in round robins to determine the group that is most comparable for their playing abilities.

For the those who play in Round Robins with some regularity we need your assistance.

- If you think you have initially been placed in the wrong group, please sign up and play at least 2 weeks. After playing for two weeks, if you still believe you are in the wrong group drop us an email. The Main Parity Team (Alex Potopoff, Andrea Dilger, Steve Cain and Sharon Hadley or their designees) will come and observe play in the next Round Robin and make an assessment.
- If you find that in most games you play each team is scoring at least 7 points, then even if you are winning most games, you may still be in the best group for your playing ability.
- Many players like to “play up” to challenge themselves and to see where their game needs improvement. Round Robin groupings are not designed for that, they are based on current demonstrated ability. If you want to “play up” this can be done simply by organizing games with better players. Most people if asked will play occasionally, especially with players who are working hard on their game and aspiring to get better.

Even though the color groups will be used for Round Robins, skills classes, drop-in guidelines, and the Club Championship, for the those who do not play Round Robins with any regularity, the group you have been placed into will have very little bearing on most of your play. For instance:

- You likely play drop-in or organize your own games. (See the FAQ on drop-in play)
- The Final 4 tournament is based on seeding by the tournament committee and only applies to the members who sign up for the event.
- The Club Championship allows any member to “play up” to any level they choose to test their skills.
- Skills classes are available to all levels.

As players look at their new round robin groups, some will be pleased, some neutral, and others may be disappointed. We recognize we will have misplacements and for those of you that find yourself in that position we ask for your patience. If you don't play in Round Robins we simply ask you to ignore the color groupings as they don't apply to you. If you do play in Round Robins, give your assigned group a try for a couple weeks. If after two weeks, you think you are in the wrong group email the Parity Team at rr@pcpickleball.org and make a request to be observed.

If players are having enjoyable games, then we believe that the groupings are correct. No matter whether there is a group of 18 or 180 there will always be some stronger players as part of that group. We are only looking to move those players who are dominant and can demonstrate comparable play at the next level. It is probable that some players could be dominant at one level and not be able to have like ability at the next and be moved back to their original group. Every player moved to a new group will be placed into that group contingent on the player being able to demonstrate comparable playing ability in the new group.

Thanks to everyone who have been asking us questions since the last newsletter introduced the new Round Robin and Parity (rating) system.

Below we have assembled FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) to add clarification.

FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Q. What is deemed to be comparable play or parity of play?**
 - A. Comparable play or parity of play is when both teams are scoring at least 7 points in 80% of the games. A player may win 5-6 games a week, but if the scores are close then that player is deemed to be getting parity of play.

2. **Q. How will the initial group placements be made?**
 - A. The Parity Team has received input from numerous players at all levels. However, with 1,500 member in the club, it is impossible for the Parity Team to know exactly where to place each player, especially if they did not played regularly in Round Robins last season. If a person was unknown to the committee, they were placed in the lowest group associated with their rating level. Our rationale is that it will be easier to move people up than down.

3. **Q. What if I don't agree with my group placement?**
 - A. If you do not play Round Robins your group placement will have no effect on you and should be ignored. Initially, we know not all members will be placed correctly. The first few weeks of Round Robins there will be some players moved to different groups. After the initial review, during the winter months players will still be moved if the scores of their games indicate a player is misplaced.

A player will also be able to request movement by emailing the Parity Team at rr@pcpickleball.org. If a player is winning most of their games and keeping their opponents under 7 points in those wins, that demonstrates dominance. In some cases, dominance may be indicated by other players not hitting the ball to the strongest player. If that is happening in most games, it might warrant moving a player to a higher group. Player will be observed at once or twice by the Parity Team Members, and if appropriate moved the following week. If a player feels they are weaker than the group they can request a move and if their loss record indicates that the player may be better placed in another group, the move will also be made.

4. **Q. Who makes up the Parity Team?**
 - A. The team leadership will include Alex Potapoff, Andrea Dilger, Steve Cain and Sharon Hadley. In addition, 2-3 player/observers from each color groups will be involved.

The player/observers in each color group will remain anonymous and will be providing their assessment of a player's abilities based on what they observe each week in playing with the player requesting movement. Players who have played together have the best idea of similar abilities, while the Parity Team works with these players to ensure there is continuity throughout the system.

When a player requests an assessment the main Parity Team will seek input from group player/observers prior to the observation. We believe it is in the best interest of all members that the players in each group that are providing feedback to the Parity Team remain anonymous to avoid conflicts among players in each group.

5. **Q. What if I want to get a higher USAP numerical rating?**
A. If a member receives a higher UTPR rating or a certified IPTPA rating increase, that rating can be changed on Court Reserve in the player profile. However, this rating will not affect a player's Round Robin grouping as the grouping is based on club level Round Robin play.
6. **Q. What if I don't want a club Round Robin grouping color?**
A. Players may request to not have a group color. However, those players will not be able to register for Round Robins, skill sessions or any other Club activity that are require group colors to register. Players may play ladders and if they later want to play Round Robins they would need to request to be assigned to a grouping color. To request to NOT being placed in a color group email rr@pcpickleball.org stating the request.
7. **Q. Why do players have to be observed, and not considered just for their win/loss record?**
A. First, according to the member survey, keeping score was not wanted by over 2/3rds of the respondents. A few years ago, the Club tried only using win/loss records, and this method resulted in multiple difficulties and in some cases questionable results.

In addition, sometimes dominance may present itself by a player not getting the ball hit to them because they are the stronger player on the team. If this is the case a win/loss record would not reflect the players abilities. Observing the number of unforced errors or the players ability to set up a point to get a ball to put away in comparison to the other players on the court is only apparent by observation. Simply using win/loss record does not necessarily indicate dominance.

8. **Q. I worked hard for my Club rating, what happens to that?**
A. Your current Club rating will be on your Court Reserve personal profile page. However, the Club will not be using these ratings OR doing any further ratings.
9. **Q. How many players will be in each group?**
A. Groups will be based on comparably playing ability so group sizes will vary. Plus, we do not know how many players from a color grouping will choose to play Round Robins. We expect that we may have to either add or remove some color groupings to form realistic group sizes. There needs to be enough players to fill a minimum of 2 courts each week. If a group is large enough to fill 10 or more courts, that group will likely have 2 different time slots and players may have to choose one time during the week to play.
10. **Q. Will the color groups be used in drop-in play?**
A. Yes. We will be using the color codes as suggestions on drop in courts, but as it is now there is cross pollination up and down in drop in courts. Be respectful, don't play up unless asked to join a group or they need a player to make 4. If you are not scoring at least 7 points per game drop down a level.
11. **Q. Will my color grouping be the same for gender specific Round Robins and Mixed?**
A. Yes, at least in the beginning. We may experiment down the line with different colors for men and women in Mixed Round Robins, however in the beginning we will simply use the same colors.
12. **Q. Will people be moved down in the Color groups? If so, who makes that decision and what is the process?**

- A. People can request to move down, but likely most of the time the anonymous members of the Parity Team in each color group will make a recommendation that a player may need to move down. In that case, at least 2 members of the Parity Team will observe the player in question and if it is decided their play is more comparable to a lower group the Parity Team will let them know by email as not to embarrass them at the courts. Of course any player moved down will be given the opportunity to speak with the Parity Team to either appeal the decision or understand the basis on which the decision was made.
13. **Q. What if the players I play against/within Ladder are a different color grouping than I am, will that change either mine or their color grouping? Or will Ladder play be used at all for color grouping changes?**
- A. Ladder results will have no bearing on color grouping decisions for Round Robins. Ladder play is much different than Round Robin play and as a result will not be considered. The ladder captains may use color grouping to assist in player placements.
14. **Q. Will the new groups be always on the same day and time?**
- A. The new color group round robins, will be scheduled the same as in the past. Groups will have an assigned date and time for both gender based and mixed round robins. Once a group is assigned a day and time, we try very hard not to change that during the season. However, depending on participation levels it may be necessary to occasionally move a groups day and time.