



A Guide to  
The Ranking System  
August 2021

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# Introduction

Table Tennis England commissioned a new Ranking System for the 2014/15 season.

The new computer rating system was developed by Table Tennis 365<sup>1</sup> and builds on the principles of our old system, whilst addressing the known limitations. Our new system has a number of major improvements which have led to more accurate, faster and fairer ratings for all.

Major changes in the new system are:

- We now operate on a single fixed season of 1<sup>st</sup> August to 31<sup>st</sup> July
- Results will be input when they are received, which can be several weeks after a tournament, but the system will then apply the results to the date of the tournament and re-calculate results since then to provide more accurate ratings
- Improvements have been made to decrease the amount of time it takes to achieve a new rating and appear on the lists
- Input errors, when corrected, are recalculated from the date of the tournament, leading to more accurate ratings for all

This guide aims to cover how the principles of the Ranking Scheme work in a manner suitable for the experienced and novice alike.

Should you have any questions unanswered by this guide, please contact us on [rankings@tabletennisengland.co.uk](mailto:rankings@tabletennisengland.co.uk) and we will endeavour to answer them for you.

## The Principles of the Ranking System

The Table Tennis England Ranking Scheme was born from the need for some system of determining the relative standards of our players. Above all else, the system needed to be fair and based on objective criteria rather than on someone's subjective opinion.

Every player has a rating which is a guide to how good a player he or she is. If players improve, their rating will go up; if they experience a drop in performance, their rating will fall. The number of points gained or lost depends on the difference in ratings between them and their opponent and the weighting of the tournament they are playing in.

The Rankings list comprises only players who are eligible to play for England. The Ratings list includes all players who compete in this country, regardless of their nationality.

The system works on the odds of whether a player should win or lose based on the difference between the players' ratings.

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<sup>1</sup> As of August 2019, the rating system is delivered by Sport:80

Players on equal ratings should have a 50-50 chance of winning or losing. The points to be won and lost are therefore low. Players with a separation of 100 rating points represents about a 1 in 4 (or 25%) chance of an upset, with the stronger player likely to win on three occasions out of four. The points won or lost in the event of the stronger player winning are less than those won or lost in the event of the weaker player winning.

Whenever a match takes place between two players who have a large difference in ratings the expectation is that the stronger player will win. When the stronger player beats the weaker player there are only a few points to be gained or lost; if the weaker player unexpectedly wins there is a far greater gain of points for them and loss of points for their opponent. In other words, an unexpected result will create a bigger points addition or deduction.

The more results entered for any player, the greater the accuracy of the rating it produces. A player's rating should eventually reach a stable level that reflects the balance between points won and points lost. When achieved, only an improvement in performance should improve the ranking position.

Since men do not play women at all levels, men's and women's ratings are not comparable in our system except at the very bottom.

## Event Categories

There are four separate rating categories:-

Cadet – For those under the age of 15 as of 31<sup>st</sup> December during the current Administrative Year (01 August – 31 July)

Junior – For those under the age of 19 as of 31<sup>st</sup> December during the current Administrative Year

Senior – No age restriction

Veteran – For those 40 years of age and over on 31<sup>st</sup> December during the current Administrative Year

Points are earned depending on the category of event entered (Cadet/ U15, Junior/ U19, Senior/ Open or Veteran).

Age group lists for U11 and U13 boys and girls events are extrapolated from the Cadet/ U15 list, U17 from the Junior/ U19 list, and U21 from the Senior/ Open list.

Mixed events can be registered, however multi-gender encounters will only be used for calculating ratings if both participants have a rating less than 600.

## Starter Events

There is a “Beginner” incentive in place for those who are new to ranking competitions. This could be National Junior League, National Cadet League, or some veteran events. This incentive can only be won as long as the player is still unrated.

Any player having three wins in a playing day against unrated players, will be awarded 100 starter points to get them on the rating list.

If they play enough rated players to obtain a rating, then the normal rules apply.

If an unrated player has a win against a rated player with 200 points and above the original points calculation will apply ( see below). If the rated player has less than 200 points the result will only attract points if it counts towards the 3 wins in a playing day.

## Unrated Players

Unrated players gain a rating by playing at least 4 matches against players who already have a rating and achieving at least one win. The rating allocated depends on both how many wins and how high the rating of the opponents were.

- 1 Win – allocated same rating as opponent less 100 points
- 2 Wins - the median of the rating points of the two opponents
- 3 Wins – the median of the ratings of the three opponents plus 100 points
- 4 Wins or more with some losses – allocated same rating as highest opponent less 100 points
- 4 Wins or more with NO losses – allocated same rating as highest opponent plus 100 points

When an unrated player achieves a rating, the system will allocate this as his or her starting point and recalculate every result again from the start to produce an accurate rating for all players and all matches played.

**IMPORTANT:** the level of the event at which a player gains their initial rating may constrain the potential value of that initial rating. If an unrated player is experienced and capable, as opposed to a beginner, it is important to a) ensure the event is the correct level in order that the initial rating is gained against opponents of an appropriate rating, and b) actively liaise with the Referee of the event to ensure that the unrated players’ event seeding/ banding/ grouping is appropriate. If an event entry form does not include the ability to state this information, it is recommended that an unrated player contact the Referee directly prior to the event draw. Failure to do so may result in an undervalued initial rating, although this will normalise with further competition.

If an error occurs, the system, when corrected, will recalculate all results **from the start of the administrative year**, so no player is disadvantaged.

## Foreign Players, including Home Country Players, playing in TTE Competitions

Foreign players are likely to play less often and might never get a real rating on the Table Tennis England list, so if they are in the top 30% of the ITTF World Ranking List then they are given a “dummy rating” before any results are entered. This constitutes a genuine initial rating in the system, and is based on an ITTF-TTE points equivalency. Those not in the top 30% are given a zero rating and will be required to earn their rating as any other zero rated player, regardless of their previous ability in another country.

ITTF dummy ratings are applied from the most recent ITTF ranking available on the most recent TTE ranking date.

The ITTF-TTE equivalency will be recalibrated annually before the first TTE list of each season<sup>2</sup>. The points equivalent of a particular ITTF Position in the list is always available on the website.

Foreign players from the home countries that meet the criteria will receive the ITTF “dummy rating”. The majority, who do not qualify, will continue to be allocated event-only dummies.

If a TTE player plays against an ‘unrated’ foreign player, they will win 1 point, as per an ‘expected win’. A loss will result in zero points loss.

Foreign players who are members of Table Tennis England are listed with the ratings but players with dummy values according to their ITTF Position are not listed in the main rating list.

## Table Tennis England players playing in ITTF sanctioned events where ITTF points are awarded

In these events foreign players without an existing TTE rating are given a “dummy rating”, in line with foreign players playing in Table Tennis England tournaments, if they are in the top 30% of the ITTF World Ranking List (as currently available and used per age group)<sup>3</sup>. They are given this “dummy rating” before any results are entered. Those not in the top 30% are given a zero rating.

Table Tennis England players<sup>4</sup> will score or lose points as in Table Tennis England events if they are playing against players in the ITTF top 30% or who also have a TTE rating. However

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<sup>2</sup> As the ITTF lists have recently changed and remain in a state of flux, the TTE equivalencies will be recalculated every quarter during season 21/22

<sup>3</sup> Please note that as from mid-way through the 20/21 season, ITTF lists have been published weekly rather than monthly. This means that the equivalency is based on the most recently published ITTF list in relation to the TTE results processing date, not the date of the result itself. It is possible that an opponents’ position may have changed in the interim, giving a small risk of an adverse outcome

<sup>4</sup> This includes all players on the TTE rankings list, plus players on the TTE ratings list whose ‘home’ affiliation is Table Tennis England, and also any player in the TTE rating list (only) who plays a TTE ranking list player in an ITTF event

when playing against foreign players in ITTF sanctioned events outside the ITTF top 30% or who do not have a TTE rating, they will be awarded 1 point for a win or 0 points for a loss.

## ITTF Override

In order to ensure clarity, where ITTF ranking order and TTE do not align, TTE will apply an override to mirror the ITTF ranking order, for the Top 250 Senior ITTF positions and Top 150 Cadet and Junior ITTF positions.

## Result Calculations

The Ranking Season runs from the 1<sup>st</sup> August through to 31<sup>st</sup> July.

The Ranking System is now a one-year system, where all calculations are worked from the players' starting points as at 1<sup>st</sup> August (the beginning of the season).

All results from Table Tennis England ranking events are entered into the system when they are received at Head Office (this can take several weeks, but remember, results are calculated based on the date of the tournament and the system re-calculates intervening results). For every match the computer compares the ratings of the players involved and calculates the appropriate points. These depend on the difference in the players' ratings and on the importance of event in which the matches were played. **See sections below on Weighting Table and Points Table.**

## Bonus Points

The ranking system also rewards success in Tournaments by giving bonus points to winners and others who perform well at an event. Bonus Points are given for those events with a weighting 1.5 or greater according to the table below. Bonus points will only be awarded if at least 16 players played in the event.

Weighting	last 8	last 4	Runner-up	Winner
1.5+	+2	+5	+10	+20
2.0	+5	+10	+20	+30
2.5	+10	+15	+30	+50
3.0	+20	+50	+75	+100

When any results are entered into the system it calculates from the player's starting point in strict order of play.

## The Ranking and Ratings Lists

The Ranking and Ratings Lists will be published once a month. The dates for publication are advised at the beginning of the season on the Table Tennis England website. The tournaments that have been included will be published on the first page of the Ratings Lists. These lists will be accurate for that date.

The Ranking System is constantly changing as and when results are entered, corrections are made or when a player achieves their initial ranking. Please note, although the Ranking System constantly changes, the lists published on the website will only be updated once a month, on the advertised publication date.

As tournament results are not received in strict date order, they are often processed in different months to which they are played. The new system takes into account when they were played. This makes it a fluid system with ratings changing daily as results are input into the system.

Let us look at what happens to the ratings of one player –

Player Z plays in 7 tournaments in the first three months of the season.

Name of Tournament	Date Played	Results Entered	Points Earned
Tournament A	16-Aug	28-Aug	A
Tournament B	31-Aug	04-Sep	B
Tournament C	06-Sep	01-Oct	C
Tournament D	13-Sep	18-Sep	D
Tournament E	20-Sep	06-Oct	E
Tournament F	04-Oct	24-Oct	F
Tournament G	18-Oct	21-Oct	G

The Ratings Lists are published 29/8, 30/9 and 31/10

Date	Rating Points
01-Aug	X
28-Aug	X + A
04-Sep	X + A + B
18-Sep	X + A + B + D
01-Oct	X + A + B + C + D*



06-Oct	$X + A + B + C + D^* + E$
21-Oct	$X + A + B + C + D^* + E + G^*$

\* denotes a recalculated total

When the first list is published he has  $X + A$  points

When the second list is published he has  $X + A + B + D$  points

When the third list is published he has  $X + A + B + C + D^* + E + F + G^*$  points

In the fourth month a player whom Player Z played in tournament A gains a ranking, the system reworks the points from A and proceeds to use the new rating on B, C, D, E, F and G in turn creating an updated rating for Player Z without him entering tournaments in this month.

Player Z's rating when the fourth list is published in November is therefore  $X + A^* + B^* + C^* + D^* + E^* + F^* + G^*$  points.

You can see now that if we had audited a player (ie produced his rating) after period 2 he would have  $X + A + B + D$  points. Auditing him in Period 4 would show him having  $X + A^* + B^* + C^* + D^*$  for period 2 - a different figure. The only truly fixed ratings will be the starting points from which all calculations are done and the final rating at the end of the season when all results and adjustments have been completed.

Although this may seem complicated compared with the monthly fixed ratings it does produce a more accurate and fairer assessment of each player's rating.

**Please note** that all event results are applied to individual players as though all matches within that event were played simultaneously – except for British League, where ratings points are applied to individual players in match order.

## Inactive Periods <sup>5</sup>

The Ratings Lists have a column stating inactive periods. The number of inactive periods will appear in this column – they may not have played, or they may have played in events not registered for the ranking scheme. Continued inactivity incurs penalties as detailed in the table below:

Completed inactive periods	Action taken
1-5	Numbers appear against player

<sup>5</sup> Please note that due to COVID-19, inactive periods in Season 19/20 and Season 20/21 will not be counted for months when sanctioned and/ or national events have been cancelled or postponed

6	Player not published on list but does not lose points
12	Player loses their rating

Players temporarily removed from the list will reappear at the same rating if they begin to play again within 12 months. Players who have been deleted from the computer database will be treated as new players if they begin to play again. They will only reappear on the list when they have collected the basic requirement of 4 matches and 1 win so that their initial rating can be calculated.

## Dummy Ratings Allocated by Tournament Organisers/ Referees

Tournament Organisers/ Referees may need to allocate a dummy rating to a player in order to band or seed players (eg for new, unrated, foreign or inactive players) This number is based on an informed decision and is relevant for the competition in question ONLY (ie will not count towards ranking/ ratings points)

## The Weightings Table

As discussed in the previous sections, the amount of points won or lost in an encounter between two players is not only dependant on the ratings of the two players but in the importance of the tournament played – its “weighting”.

**Note:** Where both individual and team events are played in the same Competition, the team events will be 0.5 below the overall Competition weighting. The Weightings for Competitions as at 2021/22 are shown below.

Tournaments highlighted in red type are those where players need a valid *Compete Plus* membership (formerly ‘Player Licence’)

Day Licences can be purchased for *Compete Plus* - level events, apart from British League, where a full *Compete Plus* membership must be purchased.

## 2021/2022 Event Weightings<sup>6</sup>

<p>X 3 Olympic Games * World Championships *</p>	<p>X 1.5 Friendly International Matches * 3 Star Open Tournaments 2 Star Open Tournaments</p>
<p>X 2.75 European Championships (Senior) *</p>	<p>County Championships (Premier) VETTS Regional Tournament (Over 40s only) English Leagues Cup Competition - Finals Table Tennis England Grand Prix &amp; Satellite Grand Prix</p>
<p>X 2.5 European Games * Olympic Qualification Tournaments * Commonwealth Games * Euro-Asia Matches * European Top 16 * European Top 10 (Juniors) * WTT senior events * European Champions League * ITTF World Team Cup * ITTF World Cup * European Championship (Youth) *</p>	<p>Home Countries Championships * VETTS Rating Tournaments (<i>starter pts</i>) Inter Regional Championships Home Nations (Cadet &amp; Junior) * JBL, VBL &amp; WBL Premier Divisions</p>
<p>X 2.25 Commonwealth Championships * European Championships Qualification Matches * ETTU Europa Cup * WTT Feeder series * English Senior National Championships</p>	<p>X 1.25 County Championships (not Premier) British League / Play-Offs Inter Regional Qualifications JBL, VBL, WBL &amp; SBL (not premier divisions)</p>
<p>X 2 English National Championships (Cadet &amp; Junior &amp; U10-U13) Veteran National Championships Other Foreign Open Championships * WTT Youth events * ETTU Trophy * Cadet Six Nations * Senior National Championships Qualifier</p>	<p>X 1 English Leagues Cup Competition National Junior League (<i>starter pts</i>) National Cadet League (<i>starter pts</i>) Regional Tournaments</p>
<p>X 1.75 4 Star Open Tournaments Under 12, Cadet and Junior National Cup VETTS National Masters (Over 40s only) Home Countries International Competitions * Senior British League (Premier)</p>	<p>X 0.75 1 Star Open Tournaments</p>
	<p>X 0.5</p>

<sup>6</sup> Events shown in **red** require England affiliated players to have a TTE *Compete Plus* membership (formerly 'Player License'). Events shown in **black** require England affiliated players to have a TTE *Compete* membership (formerly 'Player Membership').

\* Events so denoted utilise ITTF equivalents for opponents of TTE players on the ranking list

# The Points Table

(Difference in player ratings shown down the left; Tournament Weighting shown across the top)

EXPECTED LOSSES						UNEXPECTED LOSSES				
	0.5	0.75	1.0	1.25	1.5	0.5	0.75	1.0	1.25	1.5
<b>0-24</b>	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6
<b>25-49</b>	-2	-3	-4	-5	-5	-2	-3	-4	-5	-8
<b>50-99</b>	-2	-3	-3	-4	-5	-3	-5	-6	-8	-9
<b>100-149</b>	-1	-2	-3	-4	-4	-4	-6	-8	-10	-12
<b>150-199</b>	-1	-2	-2	-3	-3	-5	-8	-10	-13	-15
<b>200-299</b>	-1	-2	-2	-2	-2	-6	-9	-12	-15	-18
<b>300-399</b>	0	-1	-1	-1	-1	-8	-12	-16	-20	-24
<b>400-499</b>	0	0	0	0	0	-10	-15	-20	-25	-30
<b>500+</b>	0	0	0	0	0	-13	-20	-26	-33	-39
EXPECTED WINS										
	0.5	0.75	1.0	1.25	1.5	1.75	2.0	2.25	2.50	3.0
<b>0-24</b>	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	24
<b>25-49</b>	4	6	7	9	11	12	14	16	18	21
<b>50-99</b>	3	5	6	8	9	11	12	14	15	18
<b>100-149</b>	3	4	5	6	8	9	10	11	13	15
<b>150-199</b>	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	12
<b>200-299</b>	2	2	3	4	5	5	6	7	8	9
<b>300-399</b>	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6
<b>400-499</b>	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	3	3
<b>500+</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
UNEXPECTED WINS										
	0.5	0.75	1.0	1.25	1.5	1.75	2.0	2.25	2.50	3.0
<b>0-24</b>	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	24
<b>25-49</b>	5	7	9	11	14	16	18	20	23	27
<b>50-99</b>	6	9	11	14	17	19	22	25	28	33
<b>100-149</b>	7	11	14	18	21	25	28	32	35	42
<b>150-199</b>	9	13	17	21	26	30	34	38	43	51
<b>200-299</b>	11	17	22	28	33	39	44	50	55	66
<b>300-399</b>	15	23	30	38	45	53	60	68	75	90
<b>400-499</b>	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	120
<b>500+</b>	25	38	50	63	75	88	100	113	125	150

When consulting the table above you need to know the ratings of both players at the time the tournament was played and the weighting of the tournament.

By calculating the difference in ratings between the players you can see the points that will be gained or lost for each outcome.

Example:

Player A rating 1472 plays Player B rating 1247 in a 1.5 weighted tournament.

Difference in rating 225.

As the stronger player A is expected to win and if the match goes this way Player A gains 5 points and Player B loses 2 points.

If Player B wins unexpectedly Player B gains 33 points and Player A loses 18 points.

## Personal Audit Trails

A player's personal audit trail is available in their Sport:80 membership account

## Seeding

Table Tennis England qualified referees are provided an 'Alpha List' of rankings and ratings each month when the new rankings/ ratings are published. The Alpha List includes the rankings/ ratings of players who do not appear in the published lists due to inactivity. This enables a referee to make an informed decision on seeding/ banding/ grouping for events that inactive players may enter.

## End of Season

To aid competitiveness at the end of each season all ratings are reduced in value by 10%<sup>7</sup>. This serves to bring players closer together without changing the rating order thus increasing the possibility of a lower-rated player overtaking a higher-rated player.

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<sup>7</sup> Please note that due to COVID-related disruption of Seasons 19/20 and 20/21, the 10% reduction will not be applied in the end-of-season process.

Where players move up from Cadet to Junior or Junior to Senior, or when they become Veterans, their points in the new section will be transferred from the previous level if the points at that level are greater than the points at the new level. For example, a Cadet who has 1,539 Cadet points and 1,412 Junior points will be listed at 1,539 Junior points when they move up to the higher age group.

## Administration

Data entry and ranking management in Milton Keynes is under the control of the membership and rankings team. All questions, queries and complaints should be directed in the first instance to [rankings@tabletennisengland.co.uk](mailto:rankings@tabletennisengland.co.uk),

Players who think that there is an error with their rating can query it in writing to [rankings@tabletennisengland.co.uk](mailto:rankings@tabletennisengland.co.uk)

## Important Notice

Whilst every care is taken that the data inserted into the system is accurate, the occasional error is inevitable.

Table Tennis England accepts no responsibility of any kind for such errors and their consequences. Any mistake will be investigated and proven errors will be rectified in a subsequent list.

Any queries from the list should arrive within three weeks of the list publication date and be sent to [rankings@tabletennisengland.co.uk](mailto:rankings@tabletennisengland.co.uk) or by post to the address below.

## End Note

The Table Tennis England Ranking Scheme has proved itself to be accurate and consistent, and the concept of ratings is becoming more widely understood. We have a system which gives the highest ratings to those players who consistently perform the best. Above all it is a dynamic system that changes players' ratings if their playing standard changes.

This document is neither definitive or exhaustive. Any discrepancies or inconsistencies will be addressed and updated on a case-by-case basis as they arise.

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