

The Fives Ranking System

Singles

There were several reasons behind the introduction of Singles Rankings in 1981, namely to provide guidance for tournament seeding, to give individuals a form of yardstick against which to measure progress (or decline!), and also to provide something of a talking point over a beer after the game.

Every so often I attempt to summarise how the ranking system works. It is quite a complex series of calculations, but the basic idea is fairly straightforward. Here goes!

1. Tournament Points

Players can win points by getting to the later rounds of any of the 9 major open singles championships, or the University and Under 25 championships (see points table below).

	National Singles	SW, SE, London, Yorks, WofE, NW, NofE, Scotland	University, U25s
Winner	30	6 - 20	1 - 3
Losing finalist	20	3 - 13	0 - 2
Losing SF	10	1 - 7	0 - 1
Losing QF	4	0 - 2.5	0 - 0.5
Last 16	1		

The number of points actually available is geared to the size of entry and so can vary within the ranges above. In any season, only a player's best 3 tournament points count, thereby avoiding too much weight being given to sheer perseverance. Points are also awarded for Plate success. The University & U25 events were added in more recent years, but as you can see offer reduced points, since they are not open events.

The total number of points that a player can accumulate is the sum of the points from the current and previous 2 seasons. However, the points for previous seasons are gradually aged so that, for example, in May 2015 (end of season), you get all the points for the 2014/15 season, half of 2013/14, and 2012/13 has dwindled to zero.

2. Performance Adjustment

The second important element in the system is a "performance adjustment", whereby a player loses a portion of his points if he loses to a player with fewer tournament points, and gains points by beating players above him. (Please try to avoid doing this too often, as it makes extra work for me!)

For example, if you have no points now, but beat Will Ellison in the next tournament (good luck!), you can expect a juicy haul of 35 points (a third of the difference), while Will would lose this amount. But note that if you have defeats during the last 2 years against players who have less than 35 points, then this would drag you back down, while Will would not in fact lose as many as 35 points because of his many wins against high ranked players. As with the tournament points, the effect of these adjustments fades over the course of time.

Doubles

A Doubles Rankings system was introduced in 1993. This is simpler than the singles in that there is no performance adjustment, only tournament points awarded for a player's best 3 results from the 11 qualifying championships (National Doubles, SW, SE, London, Yorks, WofE, NW, NofE, Scotland, University, U25s). Points are awarded to each member of a pair but added up on an individual basis, with contributions aged over a 3 year time span, as in the singles.

I don't believe the perfect ranking system exists, but what we have seems to work pretty well, and it has the merit of being applied in the same way for everyone. I occasionally still make minor tweaks in an effort to improve things further, and I am always open to suggestions if you have any (providing they don't make things even more complicated!).

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Feb 11th 2015