



ITA Rankings: Frequently Asked Questions

SINGLES/DOUBLES RANKINGS

Q: I beat the No. 40 and 70 players in this ranking, but am unranked - how can this be?

A: This is probably because these players were unranked in the last (preseason) rankings, or they were not ranked as high. Credit is given to where player/teams are in the previous set of rankings. Wherever opponents are ranked in the previous rankings (the September preseason rankings) are what a player/team will receive credit for in the next rankings. Losses are also a factor in ranking. So expect more big changes throughout the next set of rankings on February 19. These will be a reaction to all the changes from this set of rankings. As the season goes on there are less and less big jumps, drops.

Q: What is the formula?

A: The formula for singles, doubles, and teams works as follows: Points from x best wins divided by [Points from all losses + the countable matches/wins for that particular ranking period] = overall average. If player had a 2 wins over No. 50 and No. 80 (and several unranked wins) and 2 losses - 1 to No. 40 and an unranked loss, his/her average would work as follows: 62 points from wins divided by [1.90 losses + 5 countable matches] = 8.98 average

Q: Does last season count for anything? A player's reputation? A player's/doubles team's preseason ranking?

A: No, each season everyone starts at 0-0. The computer is blind to a player's reputation or performances from previous seasons.

Q: I'm 60 spots lower than where I was ranked in the preseason – how can this be? And/Or that player jumped 80 spots?!!

A: As stated earlier, everyone starts at zero for this first computer ranking. The player who was ranked No. 1 in the preseason is starting at the same point as someone who was unranked. The only thing the No. 1 ranking meant was that was the value his or her opponents received for wins and losses to him/her during the fall. So if the No. 1 player's results or lack of results warrant a No. 60 ranking, their preseason No. 1 ranking had nothing to do with them moving to this spot. Along these lines, a player that was No. 100 and is now No. 20 really didn't jump 80 spots. The No. 100 ranking was based on a vote and has no impact where they will be when the results are calculated by the computer.

Q: Is my season ruined if I'm not ranked right now?

A: Not at all. Not even close. Every year several players are ranked outside the top 100 at this point in the season who make strong runs towards the top of the rankings. Jesse Levine started the season

unranked when he entered school in January 2007 at Florida, but was in the top three by season's end. Stanford's Theresa Logar was No. 89 and finished No. 8. That said each year there are also players who start the season in the top 20, but who eventually dropped outside the top 80, 100, etc.

Q: Is there any type of vote involved in the spring dual-match season for singles/doubles rankings?

A: No. The preseason rankings in September for singles and doubles were a committee vote, based mainly on where players finished in the rankings from the previous season. All spring single/doubles rankings are solely computer generated, but giving the ITA National Ranking Committee the ability to review the rankings and adjust 2 players/teams in singles in doubles per region that were significantly out of line with how their regional rankings reflected those players. The first computer ranking for January 6 is the only computer singles/doubles ranking during the season that has a committee review.

Q: Why is a player I beat ranked in front me?

A: Direct head-to-head wins and losses do not factor into the formula. Players and teams should really root for their opponents to stay as high as possible in the rankings. A win over a player over No. 15 is obviously worth a lot more than a win over No. 30. There is no way humanly possible to have every player ranked in front of all the players they beat. If you beat No. 40, but don't have any other ranked wins and/or several unranked losses, you will probably be ranked below 40. You need to also look at where that player was in the last ranking - he/she may be No. 40 now, but they could have been No. 80 in the last ranking, and that is what was used for the calculation.

Q: Are there bonus points for winning tournaments?

A: No. There have not been bonus points awarded for advancement in tournament play since the 1999 season.

Q: What happens if a player I beat moves up or down in the rankings?

A: A player or team's value is what they are in the most current ranking. If you beat the No. 10 player from the previous rankings, you are given credit for a win over No. 10. If that player is No. 5 in the new rankings, you'll get credit for a win over No. 5 in the next rankings. However, it also works the same when players drop in the rankings.

Q: What should I pay attention to when looking at the averages?

A: It's very important to look at the averages, especially later on in the season. A player may be down at No. 80 but just a few tenths of a point away from No. 60, or just one good win away. Sometimes one really good win could mean the difference in at least 15-20 spots.

Q: Does the score of a match factor into the formula?

A: It does not. A 6-0, 6-0 loss counts the same as a 6-7, 7-6, 7-6 loss, and a 7-0 team loss counts the same as a 4-3 team loss.

Q: Do walkovers or defaults count as wins or losses?

A: No. A point must have been played in a match for it to count for ranking purposes.

Q: Do players with longer records do better in the rankings?

A: Not necessarily. Each week the computer uses a certain amount of wins. For a ranking in which a player's 10 best wins counted towards their point average, it would not matter if they were 10-2 or 23-2. For this first ranking a player's 5 best wins in singles, 4 best wins in doubles and all losses were calculated.

Q: I keep winning, but my ranking keeps dropping?

A: There are a few reasons why this could happen. First and foremost, what did your best wins/losses do in the last ranking? If most of them dropped in the rankings, that will affect your ranking. Also as the season goes along we count more and more wins. One week we used each player's 5 best wins, but the next week used the 6 best wins, and you could get passed if other players ranked behind you have a better sixth win. Also, sometimes you don't really drop but get "passed" by a team or player with some recent big wins.

Q: My regional ranking doesn't seem to mesh with my national ranking?

A: Keep in mind that regional rankings are done by committee vote and not by computer. A regional committee gets a preview of the national rankings and sometimes uses those as a guideline, however regional rankings tend to use the regional tournament, ITA national Indoors, and the All-American championships as more of a guideline for placement than a computer ranking would. The national rankings do not have to be in the same order a region placed its players (and vice versa) and often are not.

Q: What can I do if after looking at the way the points work, there appears to be a mistake in a player's math-points?

A: After looking at the points and something still doesn't look quite right, an ITA coach should first view their player's results on the ITA homepage (www.itatennis.com) to make sure they were entered correctly. It is not uncommon for a school to miss a few player results (we try to check, but it's impossible to know what is missing or not missing for the thousands of singles/doubles results). After that, an ITA coach can contact the ITA office – Jason Berney (men's rankings coordinator, jberney@itatennis.com) and Rachel Kushma (women's rankings coordinator, rkushma@itatennis.com). If there is ever a mistake, we'll be sure to fix it immediately.

TEAM RANKINGS

Q: How do the team computer rankings work?

A: The main thing to remember for the first team computer ranking in March is that it is administered in an entirely different method than the rankings published during the first five weeks of the spring season. The weekly poll is based primarily on week-to-week results. For example, a voter looks at the No. 10 team and asks themselves, "what did this team do last week (or recently)," and then decides to move them up, drop them or keep them in the same spot. Whereas each week the computer determines what a team has done up to that point in the entire season. Where a team is ranked on one week has no impact where it will be ranked the next week - it is where its opponents are ranked that matters most.

This is a scenario that typically happens during the first computer rankings to several teams: a team is No. 20 this week; it started there in the preseason ranking and stayed within a couple spots of that ranking in the ensuing weeks; it has a 6-3 record - all of its losses are to teams ranked in front of them, while all its wins are ranked past No. 50. This team is probably going to drop some. Also, for about 50-60 of the top 75 teams in the rankings there will be likely little change in their March 1 ranking. But there are going to be about 15-25 teams that make significant moves (up, down and out) and that will impact the second computer rankings (so if you beat a team that was No. 40 in the first computer ranking that drops to No. 60 in the second computer ranking, it will hurt you in the third computer ranking). There is still some voting in these rankings. For the fourth straight season the ITA National Ranking Committee continued to vote on and review spots No. 51-75 in the first few computer rankings.

Q: When do the team rankings go to the computer?

A: The first week of March. And not that, while convenient, it's actually not entirely correct to say a team "climbed" or "dropped," in these first rankings since we are administering the first computer ranking in an entirely different method than the previous ranking. These are the first "computer" rankings of the season. One more thing to remember - a team is given credit for where its opponents are ranked the previous week. So if you beat a team when it was No. 40 back on Jan. 29 and it is No. 10 on Feb. 24 - you'll be given credit for a win over No. 10. Conversely, if that team went from No. 10 to No. 40, you'd be given credit for a win over No. 40. Each week you'll want to keep a close tab on where teams you've played go in the rankings because it will impact your ranking average in the next ranking.

Q: Are the team rankings and singles and doubles rankings calculated the same way?

A: They are calculated using the same method but points allotted for wins and points deducted for losses are different. (See question regarding for ranking calculation details on page one)

Q: Why is the computer formula secret?

A: It's not. Many ITA coaches already have it and any coach who doesn't can request a point chart. Also, an ITA staff member can work with a coach to explain it in greater detail upon request. **The point chart is only available to ITA-member coaches.** This 2010-11 season the ITA will conduct an aggressive campaign to arm the coaches with as much information on the rankings they wish to have. It will also be available for them to look at (without requesting) it and ideally enable them to make suggestions to improve the formula in future seasons.