

VERMONT STATE RATING METHOD

The rating method given below is what we've used in Vermont since the early 80's. It was based on what was the USTTA method at the time. Lim Chui, a nationally top rated player and computer expert, resided in Vermont during that period. He helped develop the national rating system and it was from him that I got the algorithm. The USATT has since changed their method but the results are still very similar.

Also, there is now a new rating service called Ratings Central run by David Markus of the Boston area. Vermont may switch to this service in the future.

Vermont ratings track national ratings on average but they are separate. A Vermont player does not have to join any club to be rated. Nationally sanctioned tournaments do not normally use Vermont ratings. Vermont tournaments will use a national rating if a Vermont rating is not available or out-of-date. Individuals who have both ratings may notice a difference between the two. This is not an error. It reflects the different playing styles between national and local tournaments.

1. The whole tournament cycle begins with the mailings. Since I maintain a master data base of all who have ever played in a Vermont sanctioned tournament (and a few who haven't), it is convenient to have the computer spit out mailing labels. Generally, I only make labels for players who have been active within the last two years to save on mailing costs, but this still comes to about 300 labels! The rating that will be used to place you in the tournament's events will be on the label. A mailing list for emailing tournament notices is also available. Email is much cheaper and easier so please give your tournament director an up-to-date and legible address. The total number of mailings and whether they are email or snail-mail is up to the tournament director.

2. Prior to the tournament, I also print out the data base for the tournament director so that he will have all the necessary information for doing the draws. He needs to know ratings, birthdays, and addresses or club affiliations to properly seed the player into events and to create the best mix for round robins.

3. Then comes the tournament. If the computer is there scheduling matches, it is also acquiring match results; if not,

I will have to enter the results later. Only the outcome of singles matches are used for ratings; scores and individual games do not affect ratings unless this is your first rating. More on that later.

4. After the tournament, new players must be entered into the master data base. Besides entering their address, date of birth, etc., I must make a best guess at their rating. This involves examining the results of the tournament for each new player making a list of wins and loses. The closer I get on this first guess, the less chance there is that I will have to reprocess the data later; but don't worry, if I guess wrong, the computer will let me know. However, if the new player did not play anyone close to their own ability, neither I nor the computer will be able to come up with an accurate rating. We'll have to wait until the next tournament to zero in on it.

5. While I'm entering the new players, I also double check the data on all other entry forms against what is in the data base. It's important that if you have a change of address or birth date that you fill in the new data on your entry form. We get a few "forwarding address expired"s back from every mailing. Hand written email addresses are very hard to decipher so please be clear. (Just kidding about the birth date change :)

6. If the computer was not at the tournament, I must now enter every singles match played into the computer. I enter the player number of both competitors and indicate which one won. I use player numbers instead of names to avoid confusions due to misspellings and similarly named players.

6. Next is the rating calculation. For every match played, the computer looks up the rating for both players, takes the difference, and looks up the rating change in the following table.

Point Spread	Higher Wins	Lower Wins
0 - 12	8	8
13 - 37	7	10
38 - 62	6	13
63 - 87	5	16
88 - 112	4	20
113 - 137	3	25
138 - 162	2	30
163 - 187	2	35
188 - 212	1	40
213 - 237	1	45
238 - up	0	50

An example: if a player beats another who is rated 100 points less than him, he will gain 4 points and the loser will lose 4 points. However, if the higher rated player loses, he will lose 20 points while the winner will gain 20 points. Actually, except for exceptional cases, rating points are not created or lost; they are exchanged. For every point you gain someone else loses one. These rating changes are accumulated for all the matches a player has played, they are not immediately applied to his rating; the whole tournament is processed using the ratings as they were at the start of the tournament.

7. I next print a list of all the rating changes for all the players. This is when I try to catch all my mistakes and fix exceptions. Basically, if a rating change looks suspiciously large, I go through the records and double check the number by hand. If there are mistakes, I fix them and go back to step 6. If everything looks all right, I next look for anyone whose rating jumped up more than 50 points. I adjust their rating in the master data base to the new higher value and go back to step 6. The tournament is now processed as if they were a higher rated player. The purpose of this artificial boost in rating is to prevent a rapidly improving player from dragging everyone else's rating down; it's acknowledging that his old rating was not correct. Likewise, for previously unrated players, I take the rating change the computer calculated and refine my initial guess.

8. Steps 6 and 7 are repeated until I get a rating change listing that looks good.

9. The detailed rating stats sheets are printed for each player. I leave it to the tournament's sponsor to distribute these sheets and they usually go out with the announcement of the next tournament or with a newsletter.

10. When I am sure that there aren't any disastrous errors, I incorporate the rating changes into the master data base. Everything's now ready for the next tournament.

11. Every few years I compare USATT ratings to Vermont ratings; if there is a noticeable difference on average, I then develop a correction factor and apply it to everybody's rating.