

# Rating Systems

Chess

What a rating means, and why it moves the way it does.

Elo and Glicko systems estimate strength from results, adjusting after each game by how surprising the result was against that opponent.

**+200 PTS**

~76% expected

**+400 PTS**

~91%

**COMPARABLE?**

no, across systems

- Beating a stronger opponent gains more than beating a weaker one.
- A 200-point gap implies roughly a 76% expected score.
- A 400-point gap implies roughly 91%.
- K-factor sets volatility; new players move faster.
- Online and over-the-board ratings are not comparable.
- Different sites' ratings are not comparable either.

## LOOK FOR IT

Losing to someone 400 points below you costs far more than beating them gains.

Rating fluctuates by 50–100 points around true strength. A bad week is noise, not a decline.