



Special Olympics Minnesota Tennis Handbook

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COACH CERTIFICATION RATIO TABLE

The updated coach certification ratio tables can be found in the Special Olympics Minnesota Coaches Portal under policies and fact sheets, or here: [Coach Ratio Table](#)

MORE INFORMATION

Practice ideas, skill assessment/development, and rules can be found in the SOI Quick Start Guides and SOI Rules for each respective sport can be found at www.specialolympics.org/sports.aspx

For more rule clarifications, please visit <https://www.itftennis.com/en/>.

TENNIS RULES

The Rule of Tennis will govern competitions from the official code of the ITF. Please note items of interest below.

Match Play

The serving motion may be underhand or overhand. Coaches should work with their athletes to avoid bouncing the ball prior to a serve.

Competitions will be one 6-game match, with a set tiebreak. No ad set will be used, and the winner will be determined by the first to six points by a margin of two. Winner will be first to seven points if the score is six games all.

Traditional scoring of love, 15, 30, 40 will be used, or simplified scoring of 0, 1, 2, 3 may be used. At deuce (or 3-3), the server serves into the side of the court chosen by the receiver.

Court monitors will be used on each court to ensure each match runs fairly and in good faith. Monitors will allow 20 seconds between points and 90 seconds on changeovers. There is no break after the first game. Applications of the ITF Rules of Tennis will be made based on the level/ability of the athlete. Monitors will assist with the management of the match including line calls, scoring, and placement of the players.

A medical timeout for each new medical condition, or aggravation of a pre-existing condition, may be taken during the warmup or match for a treatable medical condition. Treatable medical conditions include, but are not limited to, injury, illness, cramps, and heat-related conditions. Once the court monitor is notified and the medical personnel has reached the court and made a diagnosis that the condition is treatable, there will be three minutes for the condition to be treated.

A player may request one or more-bathroom breaks during the match. Coaching is not allowed during medical timeouts or bathroom breaks. Players will be escorted during bathroom breaks.

Additional Short Court Rules

The short court competition is done on a 42 ft. court, measured service line to service line. Athletes competing in short court competition must register as such in advance.

Short Court Level 2 (red ball) athletes are allowed to legally return a ball after it has bounced twice.

Additional Unified Sports Rules

Each Unified doubles team will consist of one athlete and one Unified partner. Each team will determine its own order of service and selection of courts (ad or deuce).

INDIVIDUAL SKILLS RULES

Forehand Volley

The athlete stands approximately one meter from the net with the feeder on the other side positioned halfway between the service line and the net. Each athlete is given five attempts to hit a ball safely over the net. The feeder underhand tosses each ball to the athlete's forehand side.

The athlete scores 10 points for hitting into the backcourt on or between the baseline, service line and singles sidelines. The athlete scores 5 points for hitting into either service box.

Backhand Volley

Same as forehand volley except the feeder sends the balls to the athlete's backhand side. Each athlete is given five attempts.

Forehand Groundstroke

The athlete stands on or behind the baseline. The feeder, positioned halfway between the net and service line on the same side of the net, underhand tosses the ball so it bounces once before reaching the athlete's forehand side. Each athlete is given five attempts to hit a ball safely over the net.

The athlete scores 10 points for hitting into the backcourt on or between the baseline, service line and singles sidelines. The athlete scores 5 points for hitting into either service box.

Backhand Groundstroke

Same as forehand groundstroke except the feeder sends the ball to the athlete's backhand side. Each athlete is given five attempts.

Serve – Deuce Court

Each athlete is given five attempts to hit a legal serve from the right court to the deuce service box. A ball landing in the correct service box will count for 10 points. A score of zero is recorded if the athlete commits a foot fault or fails to get the ball in the service box. A foot fault occurs when the athlete steps on or over the baseline or the imaginary extensions of the center mark or sideline.

Serve – Advantage Court

Same as serve to deuce court but from the left court to the advantage service box. Each athlete is given five attempts.

Alternating Groundstrokes with Movement

The athlete is positioned at the center service mark on or behind the baseline. The feeder, standing halfway between the service line and net on the same side, alternates their tosses to the athlete's forehand and backhand sides. Each toss should land at a point which is both halfway between the service line and baseline and halfway between the center service mark and singles sideline.

The athlete must be allowed to return to the center mark before feeding the next ball. Each athlete is given ten attempts, with five on each side.

The athlete scores 10 points for hitting into the backcourt on or between the baseline, service line and singles sideline. The athlete scores 5 points for hitting into either service box.

Short Court Skills

The full backcourt will count as 10 points in red and orange ball division scoring.

Final Score

An athlete's final score is determined by adding together the scores achieved in each of the seven events which comprise the Individual Skills Competition.

DIVISIONING


When registering athletes and Unified partners, each participant will need to complete the individual skills stations to gather a qualifying score. Special Olympics Minnesota will use the qualifying scores, along with the levels selected, to division athletes and teams properly. If you have questions with the qualifying score process, please contact sports@somn.org for an explanation of the process.

TENNIS COMPETITION LEVELS


The competition levels listed below will be used as guidelines in the divisioning process and will indicate which ball and court size will be used in competition. Please consider which type of ball and court size has been used in an athlete's training when determining which level is appropriate. An athlete may participate in an Individual Skills or a Singles event, and one Doubles event.

Athletes may register for ONE of the following singles events:


- Individual Skills Short Court (42'x27' Court) – Full backcourt will count as 10pts

ISC Level 1: Low Compression Ball 25% (ITF approved Red Ball)	
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- Individual Skills (60'x27' Court) – Full backcourt will count as 10pts

ISC Level 2: Low Compression Ball 50% (ITF approved Orange Ball)	
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- Individual Skills (78'x27' Court)

ISC Level 3: Traditional Tennis Ball (ITF approved Yellow Ball)	
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- Singles Short Court (42'x27' Court)


Match Level 2: Low Compression Ball 25% (ITF approved Red Ball)	
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- Singles (60'x27' Court)

Match Level 3: Low Compression Ball 50% (ITF approved Orange Ball)	
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- Singles (78'x27' Court) – please indicate appropriate level

Match Level 4: Low Compression Ball 75% (ITF approved Green Ball)	
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Match Level 5: Traditional Tennis Ball (ITF approved Yellow Ball)	
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Athlete's may register for ONE of the following doubles events:


- Doubles (60'x27' Court)

Match Level 3: Low Compression Ball 50% (ITF approved Orange Ball)	
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- Doubles (78'x36' Court) – please indicate appropriate level

Match Level 4: Low Compression Ball 75% (ITF approved Green Ball)	
Match Level 5: Traditional Tennis Ball (ITF approved Yellow Ball)	

- Unified Doubles (60'x27' Court)

Match Level 3: Low Compression Ball 50% (ITF approved Orange Ball)	
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- Unified Doubles (78'x36' Court) – please indicate appropriate level

Match Level 4: Low Compression Ball 75% (ITF approved Green Ball)	
Match Level 5: Traditional Tennis Ball (ITF approved Yellow Ball)	

COURT DIAGRAMS

The levels below are suggested as a guide for use in competition, to assist the athletes in their transition from Individual Skills to traditional match play.

Level 1 (Individual Skills)

Court Dimensions: 42 feet x 27 feet

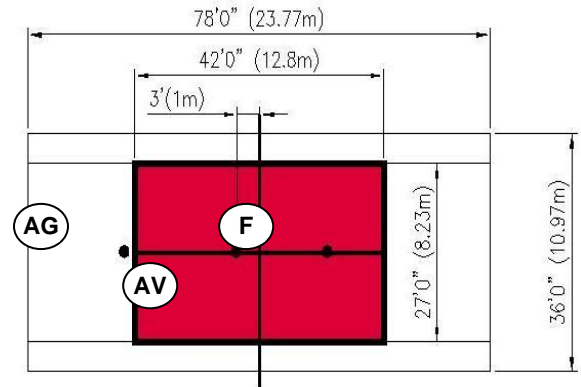
Ball: ITF approved Red Foam Ball

Court Positioning:

F: Feeder for groundstrokes & volleys

AG: Athlete for groundstrokes & serves

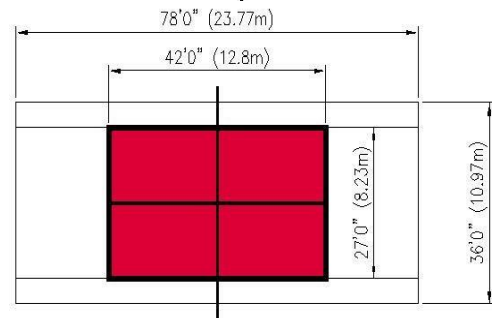
AV: Athlete for volleys



Level 2 (Short Court Match Play)

Court Dimensions: 42 feet x 27 feet

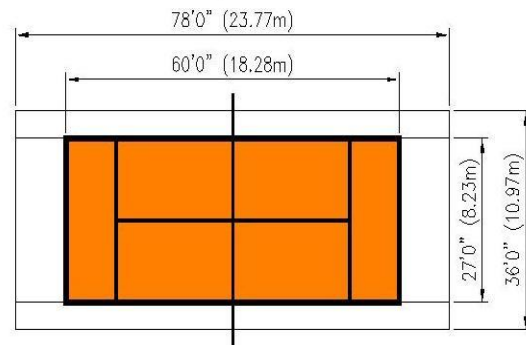
Ball: ITF approved Red Foam Ball



Level 3 (Intermediate Court Match Play)

Court Dimensions: 60 feet x 27 feet

Ball: ITF approved Orange Ball



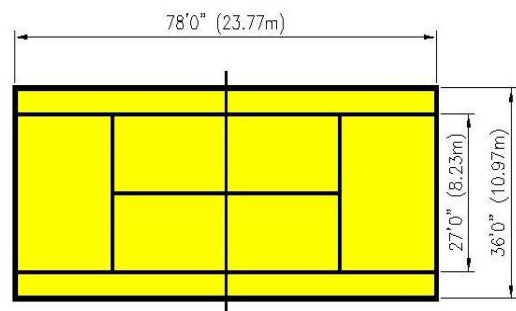
Level 4 & 5 (Traditional Court Match Play)

Court Dimensions: 78 feet x 27 feet (singles)

78 feet x 36 feet (doubles)

Ball: ITF approved Green Ball (Level 4)

ITF approved Yellow Ball (Level 5)



SPORTSMANSHIP

Good sportsmanship is both the coach's and athlete's commitment to fair play, ethical behavior, and integrity. In perception and practice, sportsmanship is defined as those qualities which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Below we highlight focus points and ideas on how to teach and coach sportsmanship to your athletes by leading by example.

Competitive Effort

- Put forth maximum effort during each event
- Practice the skills with the same intensity as you would perform them in competition
- Always finish a match/event; Never quit

Fair Play Always

- Comply with the rules
- Demonstrate sportsmanship and fair play
- Respect the decision of the officials
- Strategy discussions with any athlete and/or partner are prohibited once the match begins
 - If an official determines that a coach, partner, or spectator is violating this rule, the official may sanction the offending individual. Sanctions may include verbal warning, citing the coach/partner with unsportsmanlike conduct, or expulsion from the games.