



## **1. GOVERNING RULES**

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Tennis shall govern all Special Olympics competitions. As an international sports program, Special Olympics has created these rules based upon International Tennis Federation (ITF) Rules for tennis found at <http://www.itftennis.com/>. ITF or National Governing Body (NGB) rules shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Tennis or Article I. In such cases, the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Tennis shall apply.

Refer to Article 1, <http://media.specialolympics.org/resources/sports-essentials/general/Sports-Rules-Article-1.pdf>, for more information pertaining to Codes of Conduct, Training Standards, Medical and Safety Requirements, Divisioning, Awards, Criteria for Advancement to Higher Levels of Competition, and Unified Sports.

## **2. OFFICIAL EVENTS**

The range of events is intended to offer competition opportunities for athletes of all abilities. Programs may determine the events offered and, if required, guidelines for the management of those events. Coaches are responsible for providing training and event selection appropriate to each athlete's skill and interest.

The following is a list of official events available in Special Olympics.

- 2.1 Individual Skills Competition
- 2.2 Singles
- 2.3 Doubles
- 2.4 Mixed Doubles
- 2.5 Unified Sports® Doubles
- 2.6 Unified Sports Mixed Doubles
- 2.7 Unified Team Tennis

## **3. RULES OF COMPETITION**

### **3.1 Divisioning**

- 3.1.1 An athlete shall be divisioned based off Tennis rating

### **3.2 Match play**

- 3.2.1 A match will consist of one of the following.
  - 3.2.1.1 One Tie Break 6 game set using no-ad scoring with a margin of two games with a 7-point tie-break played at six all.
  - 3.2.1.2 In the two tie break 4 game or 6 game sets, there will be a three-minute rest period prior to the deciding 10-point tie-break.
  - 3.2.1.3 The No-Ad scoring system will be used for all match play. The No-Ad procedure is simply what the name implies: The first player to win four points wins the game, with the seventh point of a game becoming a game point for each player.



- 3.3 Singles Matches
  - 3.3.1 The receiver has the choice of advantage court or deuce court, the service on the seventh point, is to be delivered to the nominated court.
- 3.4 Doubles Matches
  - 3.4.1 The receiving pair has the choice of advantage court or deuce court, the service on the seventh point, is to be delivered to player playing in the nominated court.
- 3.5 Mixed Doubles Matches
  - 3.5.1 The player of the same gender as the server shall receive the deciding point. i.e. male to male or female to female.
- 3.6 Unified Doubles Matches
  - 3.6.1 The service on the seventh point is to be delivered athlete to athlete or partner to partner.
- 3.7 Score Calling
  - 3.7.1 The score calling may be either in the conventional terms or simple numbers, i.e., "zero, one, two, three, game."
- 3.8 Coaching
  - 3.8.1 One designated Special Olympics coach may sit on court, (off the playing surface, in a chair located at the net post next to the umpire's chair) and may coach a player when the players change ends at the end of every odd game and during the three-minute rest period prior to the deciding tie-break, and not during a tie-break game. Changes of ends must be completed within 90 seconds.
- 3.9 Tie-Breakers
  - 3.9.1 When two or more athletes or teams have the same final point score, the tie shall be broken as follows:
    - 3.9.1.1 First: the fewest number of sets lost in all matches
    - 3.9.1.2 Second: the most games won in all matches
    - 3.9.1.3 Third: the fewest number of games lost in all matches
    - 3.9.1.4 Fourth: (other than for teams) head to head results
- 3.10 Unified Sports Doubles
  - 3.10.1 Each Unified Sports doubles team shall consist of one player with an intellectual disability and one player without an intellectual disability, who have similar skills as defined by their ITN final number.
  - 3.10.2 Each team shall determine their own order of service and selection of courts (ad or deuce).
- 3.11 Individual Skills Competition
  - 3.11.1 Competition Managers must specify the type of ball to be used at each ISC competition.
  - 3.11.2 Level 1 ball is the red ball.
  - 3.11.3 Forehand Volley



- 3.11.3.1 The athlete stands approximately one meter from the net with the feeder on the other side of the net, 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.
- 3.11.3.2 The athlete scores 5 points for hitting into the service box into either service box.
- 3.11.4 Backhand Volley
  - 3.11.4.1 Same as forehand volley except feeder sends the balls to athlete's backhand side.
  - 3.11.4.2 Each athlete is given five attempts.
- 3.11.5 Forehand Groundstroke
  - 3.11.5.1 The athlete stands one meter behind the center (T) of the service line. The feeder is on the other side of the net, positioned half way between the service line and the net, underhand tosses the ball so it bounces once before reaching the athlete's forehand side. Each athlete is given five attempts.
  - 3.11.5.2 The athlete scores five points for hitting into either service box
- 3.11.6 Backhand Groundstroke
  - 3.11.6.1 Same as forehand groundstroke except the feeder sends the ball to the athlete's backhand side. Each athlete is given five attempts.
- 3.11.7 Serve — Deuce Court
  - 3.11.7.1 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 10 points. A zero (0) score 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 service line.
- 3.11.8 Serve — Advantage Court
  - 3.11.8.1 Same as serve to deuce court but from the left court to the advantage service box.
  - 3.11.8.2 Each athlete is given five attempts.
- 3.11.9 Alternating Groundstrokes with Movement
  - 3.11.9.1 The athlete begins one meter behind the center (T) of the service line. The feeder is on the other side of the net positioned halfway between the service line and the net. It alternates underhand 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 the net and halfway between the center service line and singles sideline.
  - 3.11.9.2 The athlete must be allowed to return to the center mark before feeding the next ball. Each athlete is given ten attempts.  
The athlete scores five points for hitting into either service box.
- 3.11.10 Final Score
  - 3.11.1 A player's final score is determined by adding together the scores achieved in each of the seven events which comprise the Individual Skills Competition.



#### 4. LEVELS

The following is a guide to levels designed to provide competition opportunities to athletes of all abilities. Competition events for Levels 2-Level 5 are; Singles, Doubles, Mixed Doubles and Unified Doubles.

##### 4.1

Level 1	Individual Skills Competition	ITN 10.3-10.2	42' Court – Red ball
Level 2	Matchplay: Tennis Rating 2.0-2.9	ITN 10.1	42' Court – Red ball
Level 3	Matchplay: Tennis Rating 3.0-3.9	ITN 10	60' Court – Orange ball
Level 4	Matchplay: Tennis Rating 4.0-4.9	ITN 9	78' Court – Green ball (Yellow ball with green dot)
Level 5	Matchplay: Tennis Rating of 5.0 –8.0	ITN 8,7,6	78' Court – Yellow ball
Level 6	Match play: Tennis Rating of 6.5 -8.0	ITN 7,6	78' Court – Yellow Ball

4.2 In Doubles play, both players should be rated at the same level. If not, the team must play at the level of the highest player. (Example: Level 4 and Level 5 players paired together must compete in Level 5 with the designated yellow ball and 78' ct) The combined singles rating will be used to division the team at the higher level.

##### 4.3 References:

- 4.3.1 Tennis Rating Sheet - [http://media.specialolympics.org/soi/files/resources/Sports-Rules-Competitions/Tennis/Tennis\\_Rating\\_Sheet\\_2012.docx](http://media.specialolympics.org/soi/files/resources/Sports-Rules-Competitions/Tennis/Tennis_Rating_Sheet_2012.docx)
- 4.3.2 Levels Court Diagram - [http://media.specialolympics.org/soi/files/resources/Sports-Rules-Competitions/Tennis/Levels\\_court\\_diagrams.docx](http://media.specialolympics.org/soi/files/resources/Sports-Rules-Competitions/Tennis/Levels_court_diagrams.docx)

## SECTION C – SPECIAL OLYMPICS TENNIS RATING SHEET

Athlete's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Delegation: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Level 1 (athlete's at this level should complete the ISC Skills Testing)	Level	E. Second Serve			Level
Player just starting to play tennis		Double faults are common			2
<b>Section A through G do not need to be completed</b>		Pushes 2nd serves			4
<b>A. Forehand</b>	<b>Level</b>	Hits 2nd serves with control			<b>6</b>
Hits inconsistent weak FH shots	2	Hits 2nd serves with control and depth			7
Hits FH shots with little directional control	3	Hits 2nd serves with spin, control and depth			8
FH has directional control of shots, but shots lack depth	4	<b>F. Return of Serve</b>			<b>Level</b>
FH has sufficient control to sustain a short rally and is developing depth	5	Has difficulty returning serve			2
Rallies with control and depth, but has difficulty when shots are high or hard	6	Returns serve occasionally			3
Rallies consistently with depth, becomes inconsistent when adding pace	7	Returns 2nd serve consistently			4
Sustains an extended rally with direction, pace and depth	8	Returns some 1st serves, returns 2nd serves consistently			5
<b>B. Backhand</b>	<b>Level</b>	Returns 1st and 2nd serves consistently			<b>6</b>
Hits inconsistent weak BH shots	2	Aggressive return of 2nd serve and consistent return of 1st serve			7
Hits BH shots with little directional control	3	Aggressive return of 1st and 2nd serves			8
BH has directional control of shots, but shots lack depth	4	<b>G. Volleys</b>			<b>Level</b>
BH has sufficient control to sustain a short rally and is developing depth	5	Hits inconsistent volleys; avoids net			3
Rallies with control and depth, but has difficulty when shots are high or hard	6	Hits consistent FH volleys; BH volley is inconsistent			4
Rallies consistently with depth, becomes inconsistent when adding pace	7	Hits consistent volleys; has problems approaching the net			5
Sustains an extended rally with direction, pace and depth	8	Has ability to approach the net and hits consistent volleys			6
<b>C. Movement</b>	<b>Level</b>	Comfortable moving to net, moves laterally well for both FH and BH volleys			<b>7</b>
Stationary position; does not move to ball to hit shots	2	Hits aggressive FH and BH volleys			8
Moves only 1-2 steps toward ball to hit shots	3	<b>Section</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Moves toward ball; but court coverage is poor	4	A	Forehand		
Movement allows sufficient court coverage of most shots	5	B	Backhand		
Has good court coverage, reacts well enough to sustain a short rally	6	C	Movement		
Reacts quickly to the ball and has very good court coverage	7	D	First Serve		
Exceptional court coverage, reacts quickly to the ball and recovers after each shot	8	E	Second Serve		
<b>D. First Serve</b>	<b>Level</b>	F	Return of Serve		
1st serve is weak	2	G	Volleys		
Hits 1st serves in at a slower pace	4	<b>Total of Sections A through G</b>			
Hits 1st serves with pace	6	divided by 7			
Hits 1st serves with pace and control	8	<b>FINAL RATING</b>			

Rater's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Competition level for athletes**

**Tennis Rating of 1.0 – 1.9**

**Tennis Rating of 2.0 – 2.9**

**Tennis Rating of 3.0 – 3.9**

**Tennis Rating of 4.0 – 4.9**

**Tennis Rating of 5.0 – 8.0**

**Athlete should compete in:**

**Athlete should compete in:**

**Athlete should compete in:**

**Athlete should compete in:**

**Athlete should compete in:**

**Level 1 – Individual Skills Competition**

**Level 2 – 42' Court – Red foam ball**

**Level 3 – 60' Court – Orange ball**

**Level 4 – 78' Court – Green ball**

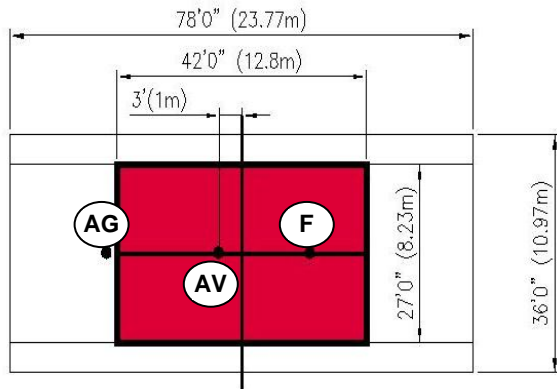
**Level 5 – 78' Court – Yellow ball**

## SUGGESTED COMPETITION LEVELS

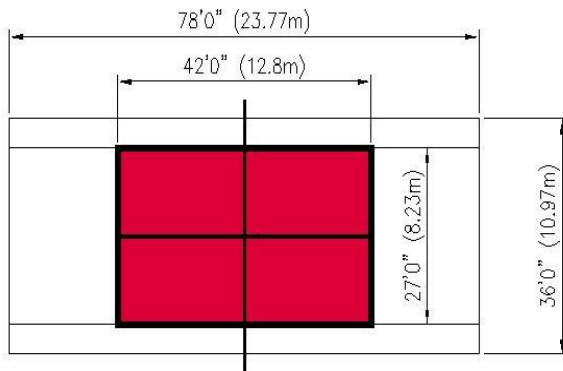
The levels below are suggested as a guide for use in competition, to assist the athletes in their transition from ISC to traditional matchplay.

The choice of level offered in a competition will depend on the ability levels of athletes entering.

Consideration must also be given to whether the athlete's training has included these balls and court sizes.



**Court Positioning** F: Feeder for groundstrokes & volleys AG: Athlete for groundstrokes & serves AV: Athlete for volleys



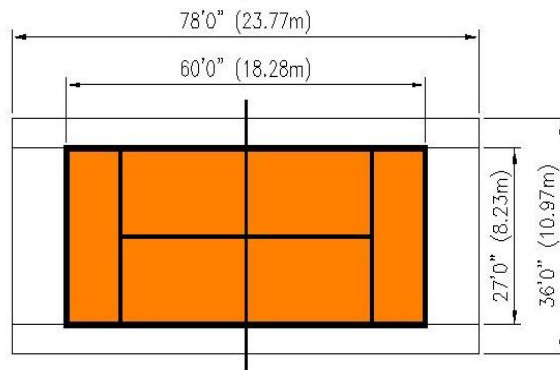
### LEVEL 2 – Short Court Matchplay

**Court Dimensions:** 42' x 27'

**Ball:** ITF approved Red Foam Ball



Level 2 is suggested for athletes rated between 2.0 & 2.9.



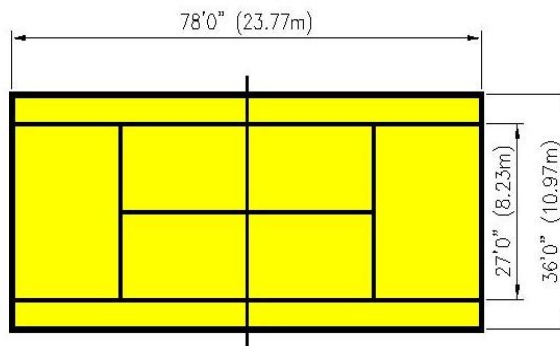
### LEVEL 3 – Intermediate Court Matchplay

**Court Dimensions:** 60' x 27'

**Ball:** ITF approved Orange Ball



Level 3 is suggested for athletes rated between 3.0 & 3.9.



### LEVELS 4 & 5 – Traditional Court Matchplay

**Court Dimensions:** 78' x 27' for singles

78' x 36' for doubles

**Ball:** ITF approved green ball (level 4)

ITF approved Yellow Ball (level 5)



Level 4 is suggested for athletes rated between 4.0 & 4.9

Level 5 is suggested for athletes rated between 5.0 & 8.0.

**\*Tennis balls shown are examples only and are typical of ITF approved tennis balls**