



Inclusive Tennis For All

Tennis for people with disabilities can be broken down into four areas:

- Blind and visually impaired tennis
- Physical disabilities tennis
- Deaf tennis
- Learning disabilities tennis

Below we have summarised a few adaptations we hope will help you to include children with any disability in your tennis coaching / PE session.

Blind and visually impaired tennis

Tennis for blind and visually impaired people focuses on the use of sound and brighter, larger balls.

- Use modified balls that are larger, brighter and have bells inside
- Modifying the rules makes it easier – allow two bounces for visually impaired or three bounces for blind players
- Weather plays a large part in B/VI tennis – on windy days it is probably better to play inside to allow the player to hear the ball better. Also wet balls will bounce lower so make players aware
- Demonstrations should be very audible as opposed to visual with more verbal instruction than signals or gestures
- Ensure there are no obstacles in the playing area – try to use bright spots/flat markers as opposed to cones that can be easily tripped over

Tennis for people with physical disabilities

- Wheelchair Tennis
The ONLY rule change from the conventional game is that the ball is allowed to bounce twice, first bounce must be inside the confines of the court, the second can be taken outside. Allowing players to hit the ball after a second bounce in coaching/PE gives players more time to get into position

- Starting off a rally can be the hardest obstacle for players with upperbody disabilities. As a teacher/coach you can demonstrate by putting the ball in your elbow joint and tossing the ball upward. The beginner serve can be taught by starting out with just holding the ball on the strings of the racquet. Loft the ball upward from the racquet and strike. Having one's left foot (right foot if left handed) facing straight ahead helps with balance and accuracy, and starting close to the net helps to ensure immediate success.
- Volleys (striking the ball in the air before the bounce) will give anyone, especially children, instant success and may be a better starting point than groundstrokes (hitting the ball after a bounce).
- Use lightweight balls and rackets.
- Try to use partners who can feed accurately and softly.

Deaf tennis

When teaching players who are deaf/hearing impaired it is important to always face the player when speaking to them – players may use both sign language and/or lip reading to communicate so its important to face the player, speak clearly and do not cover your mouth when speaking.

- Always demonstrate
- Cones / Scoreboards can be used to help keep track of scores
- Ensure players who are deaf/hearing impaired play facing towards the other children so they can see if a ball is coming towards them. If possible try not to have people playing behind a player who is deaf/hearing impaired as they may not hear warnings of people/balls in their way as they move backwards.

Learning disabilities tennis

When teaching tennis to people with learning disabilities try to keep the demonstrations short and sweet

- Establish a routine and stick to it
- Demonstrate activities – keep verbal instructions to a minimum
- Provide constant repetition
- Be generous with praise
- Allow players to work at their own pace in their own space
- Ensure players are always active – no standing around
- Maintain a high degree of structure and control
- Use activities that encourage social contact (e.g., Caterpillar race and team tennis)
- Be flexible about participation, as mood swings are frequent

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