

III. Level 2 Matchplay

- ♦ 42' court with Red Foam Ball
- ♦ Suggested athlete rating: 2.0-2.5 21-23" racquet recommend

Assessing Player Readiness

Level 2 is for Beginners who have been successful in Level 1 and ready to transition to matchplay. Level 2 athletes learn to combine strokes with movement. Athletes tend to need a slower ball and a smaller defined space. Common mistakes are over hitting, poor footwork, lack of court coverage, little preparation, and double service faults. Balance lessons by warmup, lesson focus , drill, game and wrap up..

Suggested lesson activities

A. Warm-up

3 ball line run

- ♦ Place 1 ball at the net in the ad alley, 1 ball at the net at the center line and 1 ball at the net in the deuce alley.
- ♦ Players form a single line at the baseline in the ad alley. Each player has 1 ball.
- ♦ 1st players runs toward the net with their ball, bends down and replaces ball at the net. Then runs backwards to the service line, shuffles to the center line, runs up and exchanges balls, runs backwards back to the service line, shuffles over to deuce alley, runs up and exchanges ball the runs backwards to the baseline and shuffles across to go to the end of the line.
- ♦ The 2nd player goes when the 1st player shuffles toward the center line.

Shuffle Watch

- ♦ Players form a single file line, facing the net and the 1st person is 3 feet from the net.
- ♦ The coach stands on the opposite side of the net. The coach points to either of the alleys. The players must shuffle in that direction until the coach points to other alley. The time between changing directions shortens. Athletes must keep their eyes on the coach at all time and their shoulders square to the net.

Run and Shuffle

2 cones for each player. Set one for each player on the deuce single sideline and one on the ad single side line.

- ♦ Players form a single file line, facing the net and the 1st person is 3 feet from the net. On signal, players run to the Deuce-Single sideline, touch the cone with their left hand and shuffle back to center.
- ♦ Players then run toward the Ad-Alley, touch the cone with right hand, then shuffle back to the center.

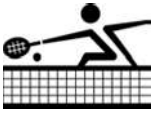
Agility – Racquet quickness

- ♦ Two players stand facing one another, each standing a racquet on the tip of the frame with the handle pointing up. At the count of three, the players will switch place and catch the other player's racquet without letting it drop. After several successful trials, move the children back a half step at a time and see how far they can go without letting the racquets drop.

Cone Topple

12 – 6" cones spread all over court. ½ are upright and the other ½ are on their side.

- ♦ Players form two teams. Each team has a specific job. 1st job is to tip over the cone that is upright with their hand. 2nd job is to set the cones upright. Play for 1 minute and see which team has the most. Then switch jobs.



B. Sending/Receiving/Rally/Movement

- ◆ **Koosh ball pass**

Use one Koosh ball or beanbag for each pair. Have the players begin by standing close together with their racquets, passing the Koosh ball back and forth from one racquet to another. After several successful trials, have them move back so they use a gentle toss to get the Koosh ball from one racquet to the other. Add a challenge by tossing the Koosh ball low, high, and even adding a creative catch, such as standing on one leg, between the legs, just above the ground, on one knee, etc.

- ◆ **Koosh ball step back**

This is similar to the above activity but kids move one step apart each time they toss and catch the Koosh ball. See how far apart the players can get without dropping the Koosh ball.

- ◆ **Rally Me**

Toss ball up, let bounce in ring, tap up, let bounce in ring, and repeat for 1 minute.

First use – Palm up tap, then palm down tap and finally alternate palm up /palm down.

- ◆ **Partner Rally**

Same as Rally Me but partners alternate tapping up after bounce in target ring.

Count to see how many they can do in 1 minute.

- ◆ **Toss and Tap – Players stand 6-8' part.**

One player tosses the ball to the other player who traps the ball against the racquet strings (1 bounce). The tosser tries to move their partner up and back and side to side. (When trapping, the racquet butt cap should be pressed up against the waist near the belt buckle and the ball should be caught (trapped) against the strings with non-dominant hand. The trapper rolls the ball back to the tosser.

- ◆ **Toss, Hit and Catch**

Players are 8-10 feet apart. One player tosses a ball underhand so it bounces once. The partner hits the ball with a forehand groundstroke back to the tossing partner who catches the ball and tosses it back. See how many times you can toss, hit and catch without a miss.

- ◆ 1st round – forehand ground stroke
- ◆ 2nd round – backhand ground stroke
- ◆ 3rd round – forehand volley
- ◆ 4th round – backhand volley

- ◆ **Feed and Trap**

Players are 8-10 feet apart Players take turns drop- hitting to each other and trapping the ball on their strings with their hand.

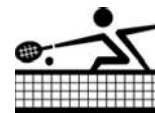
- ◆ **Feed-hit-Trap**

Player A feeds (drop hits) the ball to Player B. Player B hits the ball back to Player A (groundstroke or volley) Player A traps the ball on the strings and repeats the sequence.

- ◆ **Toss and Trap**

Player stands with non-dominant shoulder to fence, court curtain or wall.

With ball in non-dominant hand, palm up, player tosses the ball up and tries to trap it with racquet strings.



- ♦ **Serve and Trap**

Player serves to wall target and tries to trap the rebound with the racquet strings and non-dominate hand.

- ♦ **Serve, Return and Trap**

Player A serves to Player B, Player B returns to Player A; Player A traps the ball on the strings with hand. Then serves again. After 2 serves, switch.

- ♦ **Wall Rally**

Players attempt to rally the ball against a wall and set a personal best for longest rally. Players can be required to alternate hitting forehands and backhands. Note: Targets can be taped against the wall for players to aim toward. Players can also work together and alternate hits.

- ♦ **Rally poker**

1 person closet to coach runs and gets a card they must rally that number in a row over the net. Once done they can get another card. After 3 minutes make best poke hand.

- ♦ 1st round – forehand,
- ♦ 2nd round – backhand
- ♦ 3rd round alternate

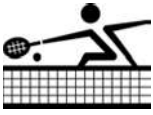
Tag singles

Players form 2 single file lines across the net from each other. The first person in each line starts on the service line and the others stand behind a safe distance. The player hits the ball and rotates to end of their line.

- ♦ 1st round – hit straight ahead both service boxes.
- ♦ 2nd round- hit straight ahead both service boxes using forehand only.
- ♦ 3rd round – hit straight ahead both service boxes using backhand only.
- ♦ 4th round – hit straight ahead both service boxes alternating forehand and backhand.
- ♦ 5th round – diagonal (Deuce service box to deuce service box) and continue.
- ♦ 6th round – diagonal (Ad service box to ad service box) and continue.

Round the World

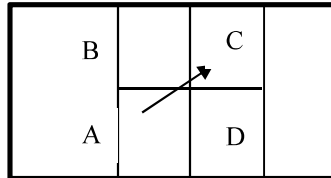
Players form 2 single file lines across the net from each other. The first person in each line starts on the service line and the others stand behind a safe distance. The player hits the ball and runs to their right, around the net and goes to the end of the opposite line. See how many consecutive hits can be done.



C. Lead Up Games – Red foam ball and 42' court (service boxes only)

Throw It – Doubles – Players A, B and Players C, D

- ♦ Players stand behind service line facing their opponents on opposite service line.
- ♦ Player A begins and has 2 attempts to throw the ball overhand over the net to the diagonal service box. (Deuce

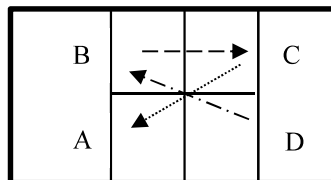


to deuce) If both attempts fail, Player B is next to throw and throws to Player D.

- Player C catches it after 1 bounce and throws it overhand over the net. The ball must bounce in either service box.
- ♦ Play continues until a mistake is made and point is awarded to the winner.
- ♦ Player B next to serve. Player B serves to Player D and play continues as before.
- ♦ Player C serves the 3rd point and Player D the 4th point.
- ♦ Play continues until one team has 4 points.

Figure 8 Rally

- ♦ Four players practice keeping one ball in play following a figure 8 pattern. After each successful four shot rally, player rotate.

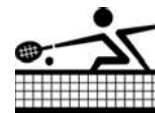


D. Tournament Warm - up:

Each match has a 5 minute warm-up period. After the official has flipped the coin to decide server/receiver, players warm up on the side they will begin play on.

- ♦ Rally straight ahead – 2 minute
- ♦ Practice volleys -1 minute (one at net-one service line and switch positions after 30 seconds)
- ♦ Practice serves 2 minutes
 - ♦ Use two balls.
 - ♦ Serve 2 and receiver catches each one.
 - ♦ Receiver becomes the server and serves 2 back

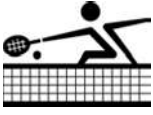
Special Olympics Tennis Coaching Guide Teaching Tennis Skills – Level 2



Coaches Tip:

- Build up athletes' stamina for competition. Matches can last from 15 minutes to 90 minutes.
- Encourage them to drink plenty of water, choose nutritious food and develop an exercise plan.

Activities, drills & techniques can be learned by attending an ITF coaches workshop, USTA Recreational Coach Workshop, USTA 10 and Under Coach Workshop, PTR coaches' training or USPTA coaches' workshops along with their publications. All are held throughout the year. Check web sites for details. www.itftennis.com/coaching, www.USTA.com, www.pptrennis.org, www.uspta.com



Teaching Drills

Drills for Forehand and Backhand Groundstrokes

The following drills are presented in a progression from basic to advanced skill level. Some Special Olympics athletes will be able to move quickly through the progression and others may stay at certain levels for a prolonged time. Be flexible and monitor athlete success in these drills. Be cautious of using athletes as training partners, as delivering the ball to each other may be difficult, hampering their success.

Shadow Drills

These drills are done without a ball and are an excellent way to monitor proper stroke production. Examples of common game formats include the following.

- ♦ Follow the leader: athlete or coach leads the group and coach checks technique.
- ♦ Simon Says: athletes follow the leader's instructions only when he says "Simon Says, hit a forehand."
- ♦ Freeze: the coach calls out a command for forehand or backhand and then calls out "freeze." Check for proper grips and technique at this point.

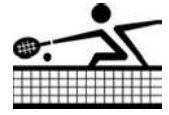


Self-Drop Forehand and Backhand Drills

These drills can be also be modified to become a relay race. Each team has 20 balls to hit over the net. Start with a drop hit groundstroke. If the ball lands within the court the athlete repeats the skill. If a mistake is made, the next person in line takes a turn. The first team to hit all the balls is the winner. An adaptation is to have the coach stand to the side of the athlete and drop the ball.

The athlete should:

- ♦ Hold the racquet with the proper grip and stand sideways to the net, with the racquet pointing toward the back fence.
- ♦ Drop a ball from the non-racquet hand, in front and to the side of the body.
- ♦ Step toward the ball with the front foot and stroke the ball over the net and into the court.
- ♦ Record the number of successful drop hits and monitor improvement as the season progresses.



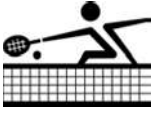
Alley Rally

- ♦ The athlete stands on the singles sideline facing a coach or partner on the doubles sideline 3 feet away.
- ♦ Place one tennis ball on the singles sideline and another one on the doubles sideline.
- ♦ Have athletes stand just behind the targets and, using the proper grip, gently bump the ball the partner's target.
- ♦ Partners rally back and forth.
- ♦ Monitor how many times the target is hit.
- ♦ To increase or decrease difficulty, use smaller or larger targets.



Tossed Ball Drills

- ♦ A partner or coach tosses tennis balls to the forehand and backhand sides.
- ♦ Athletes contact the ball after the first bounce and bump it over the net and into the court.
- ♦ Use targets, count consecutive hits and keep score between players. Be creative and keep athletes interested.
- ♦ Have a line of athletes “shadow” the hitter. The hitter stands at the service line and athletes follow the movements of the hitter



Teaching Drills Serves

Throwing Drill

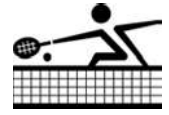
- ◆ Throw a ball over the net and into the appropriate service box.
- ◆ Using an overhead throwing motion, throw a designated number of balls into the appropriate service box.
- ◆ Athletes struggling to get the ball over the net can start at the service line and gradually work to the point of throwing from behind the baseline.
- ◆ Use various balls, such as footballs, foam balls, etc.



Toss Drill

- ◆ Stand in the ready position with a ball in the non-racquet hand.
- ◆ Hold the ball with the fingertips and point the palm upward.
- ◆ With a straight arm, raise the ball upward and let go of the ball when the hand reaches its highest point.
- ◆ Allow the ball to drop back into the left hand while the right arm is outstretched.
- ◆ Count the number of successful tosses and catches.
- ◆ Variations:
 - ◆ Put the racquet on the ground to the right side of the server to act as a target.
 - ◆ Toss the ball as if to serve, but allow the ball to drop to ground.
 - ◆ Count the number of times the ball hits the racquet strings.
 - ◆ Toss the ball while standing alongside the fence. The ball should not touch the fence. This drill helps show the athlete if the toss is going straight up.





Arm Reach Drill

- ◆ Position your feet as if you were serving into the court. Begin with your elbow pointing at the back fence with the upper arm forming a 90 degree angle so that it points up.
- ◆ Lead with the elbow toward the net and extend the arm until it is straight and slightly in front of the shoulder.
- ◆ Now try the drill with a racquet in the hand. The racquet will point up at the start. As the elbow leads, the racquet drops before it reaches up to a fully extended arm.



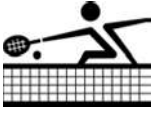
Catch a Ball from the Service Toss

- ◆ Start with a ball in the tossing hand and the serving arm in the back scratch position with palm against the back of the neck “scratch your back.”
- ◆ Toss the ball and extend the arm as in the Arm Reach Drill and catch the ball with the arm fully extended.



Serving practice

- ◆ With a bucket of balls at the baseline, practice serves from the deuce court and the ad court. Two athletes can practice serves at the same time.
- ◆ Aim for targets or count the consecutive number of successful serves.
- ◆ Play in teams and race to see which team can get 10 serves in the correct box first. When an athlete misses a serve, they go to end of line.



Teaching Drills Return of Serve

After the serve, the return of serve is the most important shot in tennis. Successful tennis players have consistent returns.

Assessing Player Readiness

Special Olympics athletes must constantly be reminded to be ready and pay attention to the server. Teach players to watch the ball during the toss. This allows for immediate tracking skills to take place. It is often necessary for the athlete to move toward the ball for the return. These can be very difficult concepts to master, but are necessary for the athlete to progress.

Teaching the Skill

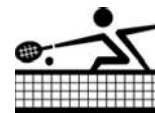
- ♦ The basic ready position (using a forehand grip), presented in the groundstroke lesson, is used in the return of serve. Use the key words “relax,” “look for the ball” and “be ready.”
- ♦ Athletes should begin near the baseline, close enough to touch the singles sideline. The position is the same for both singles and doubles play.

Return of Serve Stroke

- ♦ The return of serve is similar to the forehand and backhand, with a shorter backswing due to decreased time to react to the ball. Use the key words “turn,” “shorten your backswing” and “move to the ball.”
- ♦ The student turns as if preparing for a volley and takes the racquet back as the body is turning. This helps teach a shorter backswing.
- ♦ Footwork is similar to groundstroke preparation. With limited reaction time, the athlete may take just one step toward the ball before contact. Be sure that the initial step or steps will achieve a suitable position. A step in the wrong direction will tell the coach that more time is needed working on tracking skills.
- ♦ To practice return of serve, have the athlete track the oncoming serve and catch the ball in a short court format. Increase distance as skill progresses.

Key Words

- ♦ “Relax”
- ♦ “Look for the ball”
- ♦ “Be ready”
- ♦ “Turn”
- ♦ “Shorten your backswing”
- ♦ “Move to the ball”



Teaching Drills Movement

- ◆ Demonstrate the correct way to move to the ball
- ◆ Exaggerate what happens if the athlete forgets to take the racquet back while running to the ball.
- ◆ Show the hesitation step to prevent running through the ball.

Shadow Drills

- ◆ Coach calls out "running forehand." Athlete runs to hit an imaginary forehand and completes a forehand stroke, executing a "split step" after recovering from each stroke.
- ◆ Coach calls out "running backhand." Athlete runs to hit an imaginary backhand and completes a backhand stroke, executing a "split step" after recovering from each stroke.



Tossing Drills – Hand feed with underhand toss.

- ◆ Toss balls to alternating sides and have athletes hit and move.
- ◆ Toss balls progressively farther away from athletes.
- ◆ Toss balls without a pattern and have athletes hit and move.

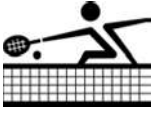
Feeding Drills with a Basket

- ◆ Athletes stand in a line at the baseline.
- ◆ Players respond one at a time by hitting and moving to a ball fed by the coach.
- ◆ Athletes run side to side to hit a designated number of alternating forehands and backhands.

Five Ball Drill

- ◆ Coach feeds five balls in the following sequence: forehand, backhand, mid-court forehand, backhand volley, forehand volley.
- ◆ Athlete hits five balls and returns to the hitting line.





Agility Drills

- ◆ Shuttle Runs: The doubles sideline is the starting line. Run to the center service line and back to the doubles sideline. Then run to the singles sideline and back. Continue running to far service sideline and back. This can be done several times in a row or on several courts.
- ◆ Run the lines: Starting in the corner of the doubles sideline, run to the net and backpedal back to the corner. Shuffle over to the singles sideline and run to the net. Backpedal to the service line and shuffle to the center service line.
- ◆ Line jumps: Athletes stand on one side of any line on the court. As fast as possible they jump back and forth over the line for 30 seconds.
- ◆ Jump roping: A great way to increase agility. Do various skipping and hopping routines. Go for speed and endurance.



Key words

- ◆ “Relax”
- ◆ “Look for the ball”
- ◆ “Be ready”
- ◆ “Split step”
- ◆ “Take little steps”