



### 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.

# Special Olympics Tennis Quick Start Guide

## On-Court Training Activities



### 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.

### 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.

## Special Olympics Tennis Quick Start Guide On-Court Training Activities

- ◆ 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.