

**Special Olympics Tennis Quick Start Guide**  
**Tennis Glossary**



**Tennis Glossary**

| Term                    | Definition   |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Ace</b>              | Ball served so well that the opponent fails to touch it with his/her racquet.  |
| <b>Ad</b>               | Short for advantage in traditional scoring. It is the first point scored after deuce. Not used in the no-ad scoring system used for Special Olympics tennis competition.   |
| <b>Ad Court</b>         | Left service court.  |
| <b>Alley</b>            | The area between the singles sideline and the doubles sideline.  |
| <b>Approach</b>         | The shot hit from mid-court range that allows the player to come to the net to volley.   |
| <b>ATP</b>              | Association of Tennis Professionals; the organization for men's professional tennis.   |
| <b>Backcourt</b>        | Area between the service line and the baseline.  |
| <b>Backhand</b>         | The stroke that is used to return balls hit on the left side of a right-handed player and right side of a left-handed player. It can be hit with one or two hands. Note: Athletes should learn to hit a proper backhand not a right-handed forehand and a left-handed one. |
| <b>Center Strap</b>     | Strap in the center of the net, anchored to the ground to hold the net secure.   |
| <b>Cross Court Shot</b> | A shot in which the ball travels diagonally across the net from one corner to the other.   |
| <b>Deuce</b>            | A score of 40-40 in traditional scoring. Not used in the no-ad scoring system used for Special Olympics tennis competition.  |
| <b>Deuce Court</b>      | The right court, so called because the deuce point is played on that side.   |
| <b>Double Fault</b>     | The server loses the point if both of the two services attempts fail to cross the net and land in the appropriate service box.   |
| <b>Doubles</b>          | A match played by teams of two players. The court is extended to the doubles sidelines (after the serve).  |
| <b>Down the Line</b>    | A ball hit in a straight line near the sideline.   |
| <b>Draw</b>             | Procedure established to determine the position of each player in a tournament.  |
| <b>Drop shot</b>        | A touch shot that is hit softly over the net to force the opponent to run forward.   |
| <b>Etiquette</b>        | Rules of behavior on the tennis court.   |
| <b>Fault</b>            | A served ball that does not fall into the service box or goes into the net.  |
| <b>Fifteen</b>          | First point won by a player.   |
| <b>Foot Fault</b>       | An illegal serve caused by the server stepping on or over the baseline before hitting the ball.  |
| <b>Forehand</b>         | The stroke used to return balls hit to the right side of a right-handed player or the left side of a left-handed player.   |
| <b>Forty</b>            | Player's score after winning three points.   |
| <b>Game</b>             | The part of a set that is completed when one player or team wins four points. In no-ad tennis the scoring is 1, 2, 3, "game."  |
| <b>Good</b>             | A ball that lands inside the court or on the line forming the boundary of the court.   |



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| <b>Grip</b>          | Bottom part of the racquet that is used to grasp the racquet.   |
| <b>Groundstrokes</b> | Strokes played after the ball has bounced. Forehands and backhands are called groundstrokes.  |
| <b>Half Volley</b>   | Ball hit immediately following the bounce of the ball on the court.   |
| <b>In</b>            | A ball which lands within the boundaries of the court. Balls that hit any portion of the line are good in tennis.   |
| <b>ITF</b>           | International Tennis Federation.  |
| <b>Let</b>           | A point replayed because of interference; such as a ball rolling onto the court during play. This point would be replayed with two serves.  |
| <b>Let Serve</b>     | A serve that hits the top of the net and lands in the appropriate service box is replayed.  |
| <b>Lob</b>           | A stroke hit high in the air with the intent of being hit over a net playing opponent.  |
| <b>Love</b>          | A score of zero.  |
| <b>Match</b>         | A Special Olympics tennis match consists of one no-ad set. Traditional tennis matches are best 2 out of 3, or best 3 out of 5 sets.   |
| <b>Mixed Doubles</b> | Doubles play in which a male and female team up to oppose another male and female team.   |
| <b>Net</b>           | The 3-foot barrier which divides the two sides of the court. To “play the net” means to attack your opponent by positioning yourself close to the net and hitting the ball before it bounces.                                   |
| <b>No-ad Scoring</b> | The scoring system used in Special Olympics tennis in which the first player to win 4 points wins the game. If the point score reaches 3-3, the next point decides the game. The receiver has the choice of sides at 3-3.       |
| <b>Out</b>           | A ball is “out” if it lands outside of the boundaries of the court.   |
| <b>Overhead</b>      | An aggressive stroke played normally at the net when the ball is above the head.  |
| <b>Point</b>         | The smallest unit of score, awarded to a player when the opponent does not return a ball in play.   |
| <b>Racquet</b>       | An implement used to strike the tennis ball.  |
| <b>Rally</b>         | A series of good shots exchanged between players. Also a term used for the type of practice where players intentionally hit balls back and forth to each other.   |
| <b>Receiver</b>      | The player who receives the service.  |
| <b>Referee</b>       | The official in charge of a tournament.   |
| <b>Serve</b>         | Short for service. It is the stroke used to put the ball into play. A server gets two chances to put the ball in play diagonally into the service box. The serve must be struck from a tossed ball (not off of a bounced ball). |
| <b>Server</b>        | Player who serves the ball.   |
| <b>Service Box</b>   | Court area where a serve should be played. Deuce court or Advantage court.  |

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| <b>Set</b>  | The scoring unit that is awarded to the player or team that has won 6 games by a margin of at least 2 games. Examples: 6-2, 6-4 or 7-5. If the game score reaches 6-6 a tie-breaker is played.                              |
| <b>Singles</b>  | A match played by two players.  |
| <b>Tie-break – 7 point</b><br><b>Match Tie-break – 10 point</b> | A system used to decide a set when the score is 4 – all (4-4) or 6-all (6-6).<br>A system used to decide the match in lieu of a 3 <sup>rd</sup> set in the best of 2 of 3 set match. When 1 <sup>st</sup> 2 sets are split. |
| <b>Thirty</b>   | Score which indicates a player has won 2 points.  |
| <b>Umpire</b>   | The person who officiates at a match.   |
| <b>Unified Sports Doubles</b>                                   | A Special Olympics event played with a doubles team, consisting of a Special Olympics tennis player and a peer tennis partner. Ideally, teammates would be of similar ages and ability levels.                              |
| <b>Volley</b>   | A stroke made by hitting a ball before it has touched the ground. Normally done inside the service line.  |
| <b>WTA</b>  | Women’s Tennis Association; the organization for women’s professional tennis.   |