

Special Olympics Tennis Quick Start Guide

On-Court Training Activities



Volley

A volley is a stroke that is played before the ball bounces. It is normally hit when the player is inside the service line.

Assessing Player Readiness

Beginners are sometimes more successful with hitting the volley because it does not require the eye-hand coordination of playing the ball off the bounce. Common mistakes made by beginning and intermediate players are taking too big a swing or swinging down on the ball. Players should be reminded to focus on control rather than speed and power

“Grips, Preparation and Swing Path” Courtesy Of USTA

Forehand Volley



Preparation

Backswing

Contact

Finish

Backhand Volley (left handed shown)



Preparation

Backswing

Contact

Finish

Grip

The Continental grip should be used for both the forehand and backhand volley. This grip is half way between the Eastern forehand and Eastern backhand grip. This grip can also be used for the overhead.



Continental Grip



Athletic ready position



Unit turn with non-dominant hand on the throat for the backhand volley

Preparation

Preparation at the net begins with an athletic ready position with eyes forward, racquet in front at eye level, knees flexed, weight forward and feet slightly wider than shoulder width. A split step is made as the opponent contacts the ball and the body and racquet move together as a unit sideways so that the strings of the racquet face the ball. The non-dominant hand helps set the racquet face behind the ball on the backhand side.

Swing Path

The swing path moves in a straight line from slightly above the contact point to a position above the net. The racquet face is slightly open when contact is made from below the top of the net.



The swing path is linear starting just above the point of contact and finishing at net level



Coaching Tips

❑ Ready Position

The ready position is the same as for the forehand and backhand.

❑ Volley Stroke

The volley progression includes the following steps:

1. Begin with the athlete blocking the ball with his/her hand (hand up in the air as if giving a “high five”).
2. Add the racquet, with the athlete holding the racquet near the throat, so that the fingers are behind the strings, making a “big hand.”
3. The same progression is followed for the backhand, with a “big thumb” instead of a “big hand.”
4. Athletes turn sideways to the approaching ball.
5. There is no backswing in the volley stroke.
6. The ball should be met in front of the body with a short motion.
7. The wrist is kept firm.



❑ Follow-Through

1. The racquet head should remain above the wrist throughout the volley.
2. There is a short follow-through, finishing in the ready position for the next volley

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Teaching the Skills Tips

Volleys

Athlete stands anywhere from in front of service line to net. The athlete may not touch the net or contact the ball on the opponent's side of the net. Racquet is held higher in Ready Position, the closer the athlete stands to the net. Shoulder turn is a key component of preparation prior to contacting the ball.

Progressions

Progressions are key in stroke development.

1. Easy to difficult	(Hand to Racquet)
2. Slow to fast	(Balloon to Red Foam ball)
3. Known to unknown	(Hold racquet to Continental Grip)
4. General to specific	(Volley over the net to Volley to a target)
5. Start to finish	(Ready position, shoulder turn, step, tap, ready position)

Volley Tap – Level 1

- ◆ Athlete stands in the ready position and the coach tosses or hits a balloon or red foam ball to him/her.
- ◆ Athlete turns shoulder, steps in with a crossover step and taps the ball with outstretched hand, simulating a forehand or backhand volley. Repeat several times.
- ◆ Athlete holds the racquet by the throat and repeats the above drill.
- ◆ Athlete holds the racquet by the grip with continental grip and repeats the above drill.
- ◆ Repeat drill sequence with partner on other side of net.
- ◆ In forehand volley position, tap balloons back and forth with hands then add racquets
- ◆ From Ready Position, shoulder turn step and repeat above.



Cup/Cone Catches

- ◆ Using a large cup/ cone or fishing net, have athletes catch a tossed ball.
- ◆ This emphasizes that athletes do not need to swing to hit a volley.





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Volley Toss

- ◆ Coach or partner tosses a ball and players hit a forehand or backhand volley.
- ◆ Using proper volleying technique, players hit volleys to a partner.
- ◆ Count how many tosses and catches can be completed before a miss.

Volley Feeding Drills

- ◆ Coach feeds balls from a hopper to a single-file line of players.
- ◆ Players hit a specified number of balls and return to the end of the line.
- ◆ Targets are used for placement.

Coaching Tips

- ❑ If an athlete has trouble stepping forward to contact the ball with the correct foot, remove the athlete's shoe from the stepping foot. The athlete then steps forward with their sock foot.
- ❑ Athletes must return to Ready Position quickly to prepare for the next shot.