

ADAPTED TENNIS

GUIDELINES



ABOUT ATHLETICS FOR ALL

History

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) of the U.S. Department of Education issued a Dear Colleague Letter on January 25, 2013 clarifying elementary, secondary, and postsecondary level schools' responsibilities under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehab Act) to provide extracurricular athletic opportunities for students with disabilities. The guidance clarifies when and how schools should include students with disabilities in mainstream interscholastic athletic programs, defines what true equal treatment of student athletes with disabilities means, and urges schools to create adapted interscholastic athletic programs for students with disabilities.

The OCR Dear Colleague Letter helps clarify the existing regulations and statute under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehab Act) to provide interscholastic, club, and intramural athletics for students with disabilities. The Rehab Act protects the rights of students with disabilities from discrimination in educational programs and activities in colleges and universities. The Rehab Act requires that students with disabilities be provided equal opportunity for participation in interscholastic, club, and intramural athletic programs offered by a school.

What the Athletics for All Task Force Offers

Introductory sport guidelines and best practices for adapted sports considered easy to adapt to mainstream interscholastic sports

Facilitation of training for your coaches and officials with adaptive sports experts

Access to hundreds of community based adaptive sports organizations, resources and tools for specific sports

Decades of experience in disability sport training, sport adaptations and adaptive equipment

Sports Are Important for Students with Disabilities

Benefits for students with disabilities who participate in sports are similar to students without disabilities:

- More likely to have better grades, school attendance and lower dropout rate
- Build discipline, self-esteem, confidence, and independence
- Learn team work, skill development and goal setting
- Promote healthy lifestyle
- Can be a predictor of later successes in college, career and community
- Students with disabilities do not receive the same amount of physical activity and athletic opportunities as students without disabilities
- According to the CDC, youth with disabilities are twice as likely to be physically inactive, resulting in obesity rates almost 40% higher than in youth without disabilities creating much higher risks for health-related diseases

Due to the resources available, it is possible to add adapted sports within school athletic programs without creating an undue administrative burden for State High School Associations or requiring the association to change existing rules for the athletes without disabilities.

Tennis events for students with physical disabilities can be easily integrated into existing local school level tennis events in regular and post-season competition.

Over the past several years, more State High School Associations have incorporated events for students with physical disabilities into their regular and post-season competition schedules.

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- Provides comprehensive definitions for wheelchair tennis terms

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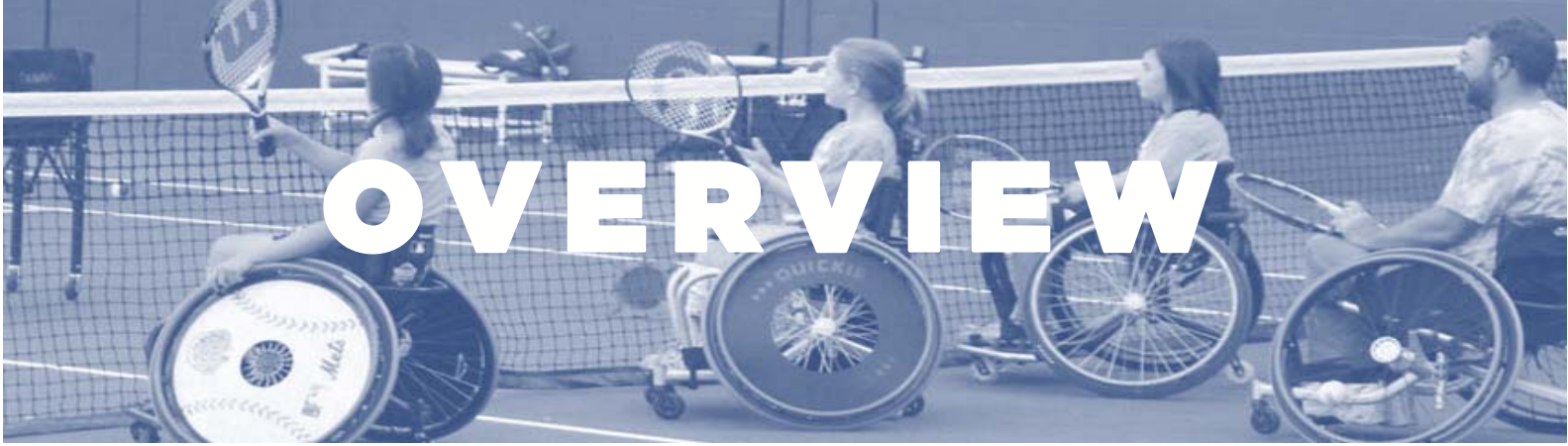
- In this section you can find frequently asked questions about wheelchair tennis and helpful coaching resources



Contributing Resources:
Michael Mercier, Head Tennis Professional,
Harvard University USPTR Wheelchair Tennis
Tester

Contributing Reviewers:

The content in this document is intended to provide guidelines for the sport and should not be used for legal purposes.



OVERVIEW

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Wheelchair tennis is played as an integrated sport, where individuals with disabilities play alongside individuals without disabilities. There are only a few modifications to the rules of tennis that apply to wheelchair tennis.

Anyone having some mobility in both arms can participate in the sport. There is no restriction on using a power-assisted wheelchair. Tennis is also often divided between junior and adult players, although there is no official restriction preventing mixing of ages in a tennis program.



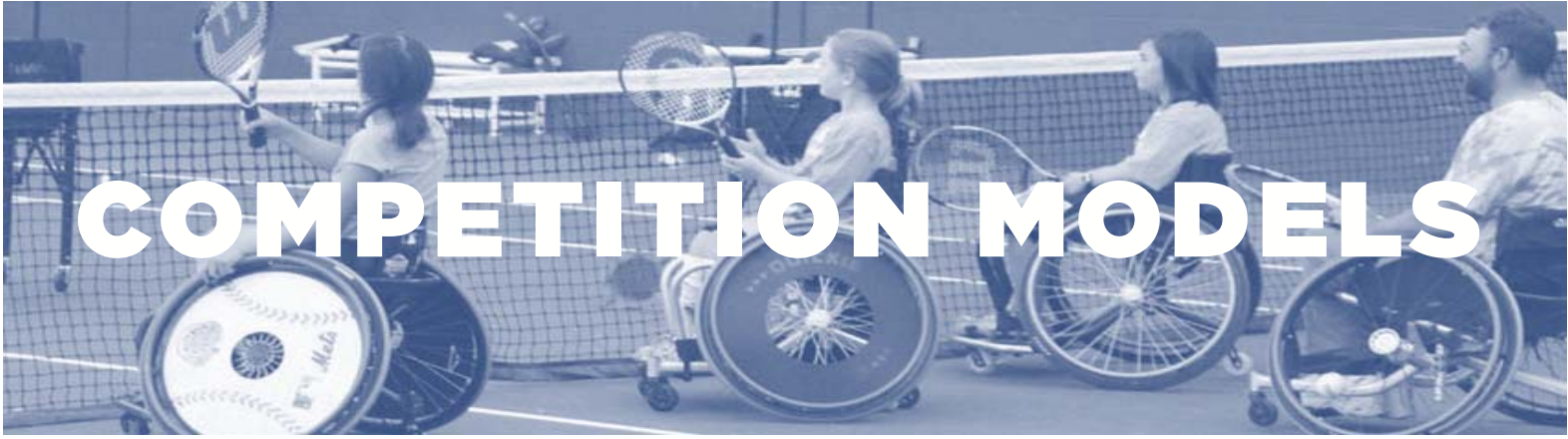
ADAPTED TENNIS RULES

Competition rules for athletes with disabilities would be the same as those for all athletes with a few exceptions.

RULE MODIFICATIONS

Two Bounce Rule	The wheelchair tennis player is allowed two bounces of the ball. The player must return the ball before it bounces a third time. The second bounce can be either in or out of the court boundaries.
The Wheelchair	The wheelchair is considered part of the body and all applicable rules which apply to a player's body shall apply to the wheelchair.
The Service Area	Immediately before commencing the service, the server shall be in a stationary position. The server shall then be allowed one push before striking the ball.
	The server shall throughout the delivery of the service not touch with any wheel, any area other than that behind the baseline within the imaginary extension of the center mark and sideline.
	If conventional methods for the service are physically impossible, then the player or another individual may drop the ball for such a player and allow it to bounce before it is struck. If this is the case, the same method of serving must be used for the entire match.
Player Loses Points	If the player fails to return the ball before it has bounced three times.
	If the player uses any part of his feet or lower extremities against the ground or against any wheel while delivering service, striking a ball, turning, or stopping while the ball is in play.
	If the player fails to keep one buttock in contact with his wheelchair seat when contacting the ball.
Propelling the Chair with the Foot	If due to lack of capacity a player is unable to propel the wheelchair via the wheel, then he may propel the wheelchair using one foot. However, no part of the player's foot may be in contact with the ground during the forward motion of the swing (including when the racket strikes the ball) or from the initiation of the service motion until the racket strikes the ball.

In an instance where a wheelchair tennis player is playing with or against an athlete without a disability, the adapted rules only apply for the wheelchair tennis athlete. Standard tennis rules apply to the athlete without a disability.



COMPETITION MODELS

There are several models for competition in tennis.

Open Competition	All players compete against each other regardless of any age or ability classifications. The only groupings are men's, women's, and quad.
Age Classifications	All players compete against other players in the same age group. For juniors, this allows use of the US Tennis Association's 10 and under tennis format (smaller courts, lower nets, lower bouncing balls). For more information see: http://www.10andundertennis.com/ .
National Tennis Rating System	Players compete against others at their rating level. For descriptions of the ratings, see: http://usta.com/Adult-Tennis/USTA-League/ntrp/ .
Universal Rating System	This alternative to NTRP also allows players to compete against others of their rating level. For a description of the system, see: http://www.universaltennis.com/ .
Integration	As specified by the International Tennis Federation rules, wheelchair specific rules apply when the ball is played by the wheelchair player. A popular format of play is up/down doubles, where each doubles team consists of one player without a disability and one wheelchair player. It's also possible for players without disabilities to use wheelchairs. In that case, the wheelchair specific rules apply to everyone.

SCORING

There are many different schemes for structuring the scoring in tennis competition.

Full Set, Advantage Tennis	Players must win games by two points, as in professional tennis, and win two sets out of three.
Tiebreaks	To shorten match times, a shorter tiebreak can be played in lieu of a third set if the two sets have been split.
No-Ad	Games need only be won by one point. When the score is 40-40, only one more point is played. In no-ad tennis, typically the receiver determines which side the server will serve to for the deciding point.
Pro Set	Rather than multiple sets, a single set can be played until someone reaches 8 or 10 games.



TRAINING & EQUIPMENT

TRAINING

With a few exceptions, the training needs of a wheelchair tennis player are the same for players without disabilities: learning the rules of the sport, different racquet grips, the basic strokes (forehand, backhand, serve, volley), and tactics are all essential topics for training.

In addition, wheelchair players will need to learn the specifics of moving in a wheelchair and handling a racquet while in a wheelchair. Coaches should expect to spend time on drills that practice patterns of chair movement (see page 13 for coaching manuals available online).

Wheelchair players also have additional medical considerations since they tend to have health difficulties associated with their disabilities. Proper hydration, keeping cool, and replenishing electrolytes are critical, as well as looking out for pressure spots, chafing, or ill-fitting equipment.

EQUIPMENT

Standard Tennis Equipment Applies

- Racquets
- Tennis balls
- Regulation tennis courts

Junior players are encouraged to use equipment that has been sized for younger players.

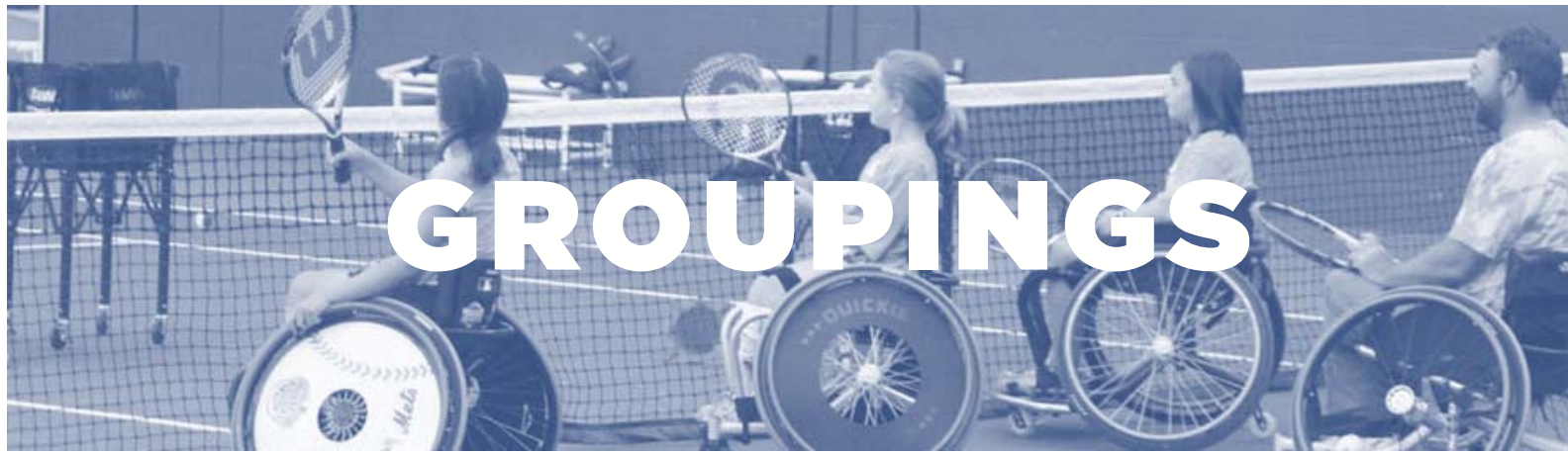
Adapted Equipment

- **Tennis specific wheelchair:** wheels are attached at an angle (cambered) to allow the player to freely swing a racquet.
- **Tire pump**
- **Straps or tape:** players place straps around their legs and the lower part of the chair in order to stabilize their legs. Quads players also often run a strap around their midsection and the upper back part of the chair for the same reason. Specialized straps are available, but Velcro straps or medical tape can be used as well.

FACILITIES

Facilities that host wheelchair tennis must be compliant with ADA regulations but also should be aware that tennis wheelchairs have a wider wheelbase than standard chairs. The minimum width for a standard wheelchair passage is 32 inches but tennis wheelchairs can require as much as 47 inches. Venues should be sure to have water and restroom facilities readily available and accessible.





GROUPINGS

The groupings presented here are suggested ways to create competition classes for athletes with disabilities. In order to not be confused with the national and international classification systems, we use the term groupings for school-based sport.

Sitting: Athletes with mobility impairments who participate sitting down (examples: athletes with spinal cord injuries, above knee amputations, spina bifida, etc)

Standing: Athletes with mobility impairments who participate standing up (athletes with arm amputations, single leg below knee amputation, or impairments that impact balance)

Visually Impaired (VI): Athletes with visual impairments or blindness

Role of Athletes Without Disabilities

Programs may wish to consider a policy whereby athletes without disabilities may enter the adapted program temporarily while rehabilitating from an injury, so long as the injury present in such a way that the athlete might otherwise otherwise qualify someone with a permanent disability experiences the same physical limitations. For example, any injury or surgery where the physician has recommended the athlete stay off the limb for a period of time and where that time spans a full season of an adapted sport, the athlete might qualify to participate in adapted sports regularly.

How will a state determine who is eligible? There are several different models to determine eligibility and minimal disability criteria. When possible and appropriate, it is best to stay within the three categories: sit down, stand up, and visually impaired.

Athletes with a disability have impairment (s) that may lead to competitive disadvantage in sport. Classification is the process by which athletes are assessed relative to the impact of impairment on their ability to compete in a specific sport.

Within the classification system, criteria are put in place to ensure that winning is determined by skill, fitness, power, endurance, tactical ability and mental focus, the same factors that account for success in sport for athletes without a disability.

Classification is sport specific. Each sport has established groups, called sport classes, to group athletes for competition based on activity limitation for that sport.

The international classification system for individual sports can be viewed online at: Paralympic.org/classification. Most IPC classification systems are not appropriate (too detailed) for a high school setting. It is suggested to modify to simplified / grouped classes such as sitting (wheelchair athletes), visually impaired, and ambulatory.

Disabilities

At the interscholastic level, these disabilities can be served in tennis:

- Achondroplasia
- Amputee
- Arthrogryposis
- Avascular Necrosis
- Birth Defect
- Brachial Plexus Palsy
- Caudal Regression
- Cerebellar Disgenesis
- Cerebral Palsy
- Congenital Hypotonia
- Congenital Limb Loss
- Diplegia
- Dystonia
- Dwarfism
- Dysmelia
- Erb's Palsy
- Femoral Focal Deficiency
- Femoral Hypoplasia
- FMD
- Full Joint Ankylosis or Replacement
- Guillain-Barre Syndrome
- Hearing Impaired
- Hip Dysplasia
- Larsen's Syndrome
- Leigh's Disease
- Lower Limb Paralysis
- McCunne Albright Syndrome
- Mitochondrial Disease
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Muscular Dystrophy
- Osteogenesis Imperfecta
- Parkinson's
- PFFD (Proximal)
- Post-polio
- Progressive Neurological Disorder
- Pseudo Achondroplasia
- Sacral Agenesis
- Severe Amblyopia
- Severe Scoliosis
- Spastic Diplegia
- Spastic Paralysis
- Spina Bifida
- Spinal Cord Injury
- Spinal Muscular Atrophy
- Stroke
- Transverse Myelitis
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Vertigo/Balance Issues
- Visual Motor Integration Impairment
- Visually Impaired
- Type 1 Diabetes
- Any other medical doctor diagnosed permanent lower body disability that prevents a player from competing in mainstream sports



Student athletes with disabilities do not represent a higher level of liability risk or risk management concern than student athletes without disabilities. With proper planning and contingencies, student athletes with disabilities can seamlessly integrate into the dynamics of an interscholastic team. Individualized assessments can help assess or identify any potential safety concerns.



SAFETY RESOURCES

Ensuring athlete safety is a priority. Through education, resources, and training, members of the sport community can recognize, reduce, and respond to misconduct in sport. Please refer to the following resources for more information.

What is SafeSport?	http://safesport.org/what-is-safesport/
Coaches Toolkit	http://safesport.org/toolkit/coaches/
SafeSport Trainings	http://safesport.org/take-the-training/



GLOSSARY

Ad Court: Left side of the court of each player, so called because the ad (advantage) point immediately following a deuce is always served to this side of the court.

Advantage Set: Set won by a player or team having won at least six games with a two-game advantage over the opponent.

Backhand: Stroke in which the ball is hit with the back of the racquet hand facing the ball at the moment of contact.

Backcourt: The area of the tennis court between the baseline and the service line.

Backswing: Portion of a swing where the racquet is swung backwards in preparation for the forward motion to hit the ball.

Ball Toss: The action of throwing up the ball prior to the serve.

Chip: Blocking a shot with underspin, creating a low trajectory.

Deuce: Score of 40-40 in a game. A player must win two consecutive points from a deuce to win the game, unless the tournament employs no-ad scoring. A player who has won one point after deuce is said to have the advantage.

Deuce Court: Right side of the court of each player, so called because the ball is served into it when the score is deuce.

Drop Shot: Play in which the player hits the ball lightly enough to just go over the net, usually with backspin; designed to catch a player who is away from the net off guard.

Fault: Serve that fails to land the ball in the opponent's service box, therefore not starting the point.

Forehand: Stroke in which the player hits the ball with the front of the racquet hand facing the ball; contrasted with backhand.

Groundstroke: Forehand or backhand shot that is executed after the ball bounces on the court.

Half Volley: A groundstroke shot made immediately after a bounce or simultaneous to the bounce and played with the racket close to the ground.

Let: A call that requires the point to be replayed.

Lob: Stroke in which the ball is hit high above the net.

Love: Scoring term indicating zero.

No-ad Scoring: A scoring method in which the first player to reach four points wins the game.

No-man's Land: Area between the service line and the baseline.

Out: A ball that has landed outside the playing area.

Overhead: Stroke in which the player hits the ball over his/her head.

Return: Stroke made by the receiver of a service.

Serve: The starting point stroke of each game. The ball must be hit into the opponent's half within the service box.

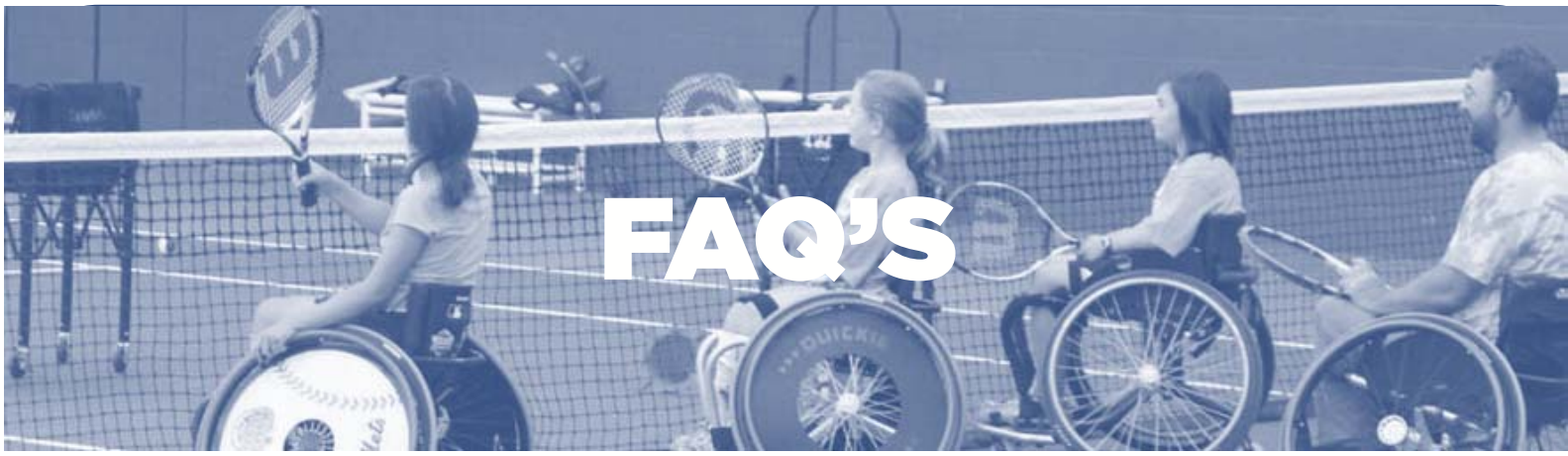
Service Box: Rectangular area of the court, marked by the sidelines and the service lines, that a serve is supposed to land in.

Slice: Shot with underspin (backspin), or a serve with a sidespin.

Topspin: Spin of a ball where the top of the ball rotates toward the direction of travel.

Volley: A shot hit, usually in the vicinity of the net, by a player before the ball bounces on their own side of the court.

Winner: A shot that is not reached by the opponent and wins the point.



FAQ'S

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the minimum equipment required for a wheelchair tennis program?

The minimum requirement is a tennis court, tennis balls, racquets, and tennis wheelchairs. For junior players, there are smaller rackets and lower bouncing balls available to make tennis easier to learn.

What support is there for funding wheelchair tennis programs?

The USTA provides support for junior tennis (Quick Start) equipment, as well as grants for wheelchair tennis programs at schools and nonprofit organizations. For nonprofit organizations, also look to connect with charities and other adaptive sports groups to share resources and in-kind or monetary donations.

What are some of the most important aspects of training wheelchair players?

Wheelchair players need to learn a lot about mobility because it's harder to maneuver in a chair than it is for an athlete without a disability. There are many drills available online and in the USTA's Wheelchair Tennis Manual. It is also important to integrate physical training routines with work on the mental aspects of playing a sport: dealing with pressure, positive thinking, self-motivation, and competitiveness.

How do I approach coaching a wheelchair tennis player?

Wheelchair players are just like anyone trying to learn a sport. Except for drills to learn the specifics of moving in the tennis wheelchair, students can be fully integrated into any group of players of similar ability. Wheelchair players are striving to reach the same goals as students without disabilities: technical skills, tactical knowledge, and psychological as well as physical fitness. These are pathways to success for all athletes.



RESOURCES

United States Tennis Association (USTA)	http://www.usta.com/
	http://www.usta.com/adult-tennis/wheelchair-tennis/wheelchair/
10 and Under Tennis	http://www.10andundertennis.com
Friend at Court Tennis Rulebook	http://s3.amazonaws.com/ustaassets/assets/1/15/2014fac_final.2.pdf
How to Start a Wheelchair Program	http://s3.amazonaws.com/ustaassets/assets/1/usta_import/usta/dps/doc_13_15564.pdf
International Tennis Federation (ITF)	http://www.itftennis.com/wheelchair/home.aspx
United States Professional Tennis Association (USPTA)	http://www.uspta.com
	<i>Wheelchair Certification:</i> http://www.uspta.com/default.aspx?menugroup=certification <i>Adaptive Tennis Programs:</i> http://uspta.com/default.aspx/MenuItemID/2236/MenuGroup/About.htm
United States Professional Tennis Registry (USPTR)	http://www.ptrtennis.org/
	<i>Wheelchair Certification:</i> http://www.ptrtennis.org/workshops.htm#WHEEL
Randy Snow Push Forward Foundation	http://www.randysnow.org/
Blaze Sports America	http://www.blazesports.org/

MISSION

The mission of the Athletics for All Task Force is to inform and provide the tools and guidelines by which coaches, athletic directors and school administrators can include students with physical disabilities in interscholastic sports.

VISION

It is the vision of the Athletics for All Task Force that students with disabilities will have access to athletic opportunities throughout the United States in an equal manner as students without disabilities. The Task Force envisions an educational system that provides equal opportunities for student-athletes to derive the physical, mental, and emotional benefits of interscholastic sports, enabling each to develop into healthy, well-adjusted, contributing members of their respective communities.

ATHLETICS FOR ALL TASK FORCE

Active Policy Solutions

www.activepolicysolutions.com

American Association of Adapted Sports Programs (AAASP) www.adaptedsports.org

Bay Area Outreach and Recreation Program (BORP) www.borp.org

BlazeSports America

www.blazesports.org

Bridge II Sports

www.bridge2sports.org

Competitive Edge Management

Move United

www.moveunitedsport.org

Great Lakes Adapted Sports Association (GLASA)

www.glasa.org

Lakeshore Foundation

www.lakeshore.org

Louisiana Games Uniting Mind and Body (GUMBO) sites.google.com/site/louisianagumboinc/home

National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability (NCHPAD)

www.nchpad.org

National Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA)

www.nwba.org

Special Olympics

www.specialolympics.org

United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA)

www.usaba.org

Wheelchair & Ambulatory Sports USA (WASUSA)

www.wasusa.org



For more information, visit: www.athleticsforall.net

