

Tennis Rule Interpretations

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Updated: 8/28/23

Replaces: 8/1/20

**Special
Olympics**
Illinois



SECTION A - GENERAL RULES

- A-1.** In cases not covered by these interpretations, United States Tennis Association (USTA) rules will govern. Rules can be obtained at www.usta.com
- A-2.** The Games Rules Committee will make all final decisions including protests. Coaches have 10 minutes after completion of match to present protest to tournament director.
- A-3.** No advertising or sponsorship is allowed to be worn on competition uniforms or warm-ups. Athletes will not be allowed to wear jewelry or awards during competition. No jeans, jean shorts or street shoes will be allowed to be worn during the competition. Athletes will be expected to dress appropriately for the weather and competition. Athletes not in the proper attire will be disqualified.
- A-4.** At all times athletes are expected to compete to the best of their ability to ensure a quality competition at all levels. Coaches are expected to provide accurate/honest scores of their athlete's ability.
- A-5.** Athletes/Partners must qualify from a Region Qualifier to attend the State Tennis Tournament. Athletes in Individual Skills must receive a gold medal from a Region Qualifier to attend the State Tennis Tournament. See Criteria for Advancement for specific advancement procedures.
- A-6.** Athletes can participate in either Match Play or Individual Skills, NOT BOTH.
- A-7.** Athletes can participate in either Short Court or Traditional Match Play, NOT BOTH. In Match Play athletes may participate in 2 events. (Singles and Traditional Doubles or Unified Doubles).
- A-8.** Special Olympics Inc. has determined that an athlete cannot be a Unified Partner.

SECTION B - AGE GROUPS AND DIVISIONS

- B-1.** Age groups and divisions will be determined based on the number of entries received by the registration deadline.
- B-2.** A match play tennis rating score must be submitted at the time of the postmark entry deadline on the individual entry forms. If assistance is needed to determine the match play rating, contact the Special Olympics Illinois Director of State Championships.

SECTION C - THE GAME PLAY

- C-1.** A 50 minute time limit is used for all matches at all levels of play. Matches are scheduled in 1 hour blocks allowing 50 minutes for court play (includes a 5 minute warmup) and 10 minutes for transition between matches.
- The 50 minute time begins when the 5 minute warm up begins.
 - Play begins after the 5 minute warm up.

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- C-2.** The choice of sides and right to be server in the first game will be decided by a flip of a coin.
- C-3.** The No-Ad scoring system will be used for all Match Play. No-Ad indicates that the first player to win four points within a single game, wins the game. A player does not need to win by a margin of 2 points within a single game.
- C-4.** Traditional Match Play will consist of Level 5 athletes and will play 2 full (6 game) sets using no-ad scoring with a 10 point tie-break to determine the winner of the match.
- If the 2nd set has not been completed when time expires then the total number of games played are counted and the player with the most games wins the set.
 - If 2 sets have been completed before time is called and sets are tied, then a 10 point match tie-break is played:
 - If time expires during the tie-break then whichever player is ahead will be declared the winner.
 - If tie-break score is tied, 1 point is played. The server whose turn it is to serve, serves the last point and the next receiver receives the ball.
- C-5.** Players will change ends of the court at the end of each odd number game.
- C-6.** One designated Special Olympics coach may sit on court (off the playing surface, in a chair located at the net post next to the umpire's chair) and may coach a player when the players change ends at the end of every odd game and during the during the 3 minute rest period prior to the deciding tie-break, and not during a tie-break game. Change of ends must be completed within 90 seconds.
- C-7.** The following process will be used for all Special Olympics Illinois round robin tournaments:
- First: the fewest number of sets lost in all matches
 - Second: the most games won in all matches
 - Third: the fewest number of games lost in all matches
 - Fourth: (other than for teams) head to head results
- C-8.** Penalty for late arrivals:
- 0-5 minutes late = loss of 1 game
 - 5:01-10 minutes late = loss of 2 games
 - 10:01-15 minutes late = loss of 3 games
 - 15:01 or more minutes late = default of match
 - Clock starts when athlete is called to report to court. Can appeal late penalty with a valid excuse. Will be tournament director's decision.

SECTION D – SHORT COURT MATCH PLAY LEVEL 2

- D-1.** Singles and Unified Doubles competition are offered in Short Court Match Play.
- D-2.** A tennis rating score will be required for Short Court Match Play.

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- D-3.** All tennis rules will apply except for the size of the court (42' x 27') and the tennis ball (ITF Red Felt Ball).
- D-4.** All play will be conducted within the service box area. The serve shall begin from behind the service line (not the Baseline).
- D-5.** Level 2 athletes will play in a match that consists of 1 full set, in which the first player/team who wins 6 games wins that set, provided there is a margin of 2 games over the opponent(s). At 6-All, a 7 point tie-break is played to determine the winner of the match.
- If the set has not been completed when time expires then the total number of games played are counted and the player with the most games wins the set.
 - If games are tied when time expires then 1 point is played. There server whose turn it is to serve, serves the last point and the next receiver receives the ball.

SECTION E - FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

- E-1.** The Level 5 court will be a rectangle 78 feet (23.77m) long and 27 feet (8.23m) wide. No adaptations will be made to court size for traditional match play. The Doubles court will be a rectangle 78' x 36'.
- E-2.** The racket's strung surface will not exceed 15 1/2 inches in overall length and 11 1/2 inches in overall width. Racket must conform to all other USTA standards.
- E-3.** The approved red felt ball will be used for Individual Skills Competition and Level 2 Short Court Match Play. An approved standard yellow ball will be used for Level 5 Match Play and Unified Match Play.