

## Tennis for Disabled People in Scotland

This fact sheet provides an overview of tennis for disabled people in Scotland. It also provides useful contact details to signpost you to your local club to develop your skills and start to play or coach disabled people in tennis.

### The Development of Tennis

Tennis is a completely inclusive sport with everyone being able to participate in tennis in its full format or when adapted and the most well-known versions are deaf, learning disability, wheelchair and visually impaired tennis.

But social play isn't restricted to a particular type of tennis, disabled people can play against their non-disabled friends or family and take part in inclusive sessions and/or impairment specific sessions. Tennis doesn't just offer people the chance to

develop their fitness and coordination, but also to build social skills, confidence, self-esteem and independence.

That's why the Tennis Foundation is supporting both coaches and venues to help them offer improved opportunities to disabled people. This includes people trying the sport for the first time through to elite performance as well as putting on competitions and major events.

Whether you're just getting started, you want to compete in an event or would like information on talent ID,



you can find out more via the website for each type of tennis and don't forget, tennis can be adapted for any other disability too so just contact us to find out more.

See more at:

<http://www.tennisfoundation.org.uk/pla-y-tennis/>

Wheelchair tennis is a technical and tactical sport, very similar to its Olympic counterpart. It is also very popular: wheelchair tennis is played by athletes in more than 100 countries and first appeared as a Paralympic sport I Seoul 1988 (demonstration sport) and then as a full sport in Barcelona 1992 (men's and women's singles and doubles) and Athens 2004 (quad events added).



Learning disability tennis is played with no adaptation to the rules of tennis. There are a number of learning disability tennis sessions available for beginner and developing players across the country and the game can

be adapted according to a player's ability. For example, playing mini tennis with softer balls and smaller courts can build confidence on court.

See more at:

<http://www.tennisfoundation.org.uk/pla-y-tennis/learning-disability-tennis/>

Deaf tennis has a long history in British tennis and playing the sport requires no adaption apart from making sure communication is clear between players, coaches and officials. People can play against other deaf tennis players, and alongside or against non-disabled friends and family.

See more at:

<http://www.tennisfoundation.org.uk/pla-y-tennis/deaf-hearing-impaired-tennis/>

Visually impaired tennis is one of the newer versions of the game and is played on a smaller tennis court using smaller rackets, an audible ball and raised lines. Players who are totally blind are allowed three bounces while partially sighted players are allowed two bounces. Tape can be put on the court to create raised lines and players communicate at the start of each point to make sure their opponent is ready.

See more at:

<http://www.tennisfoundation.org.uk/play-tennis/blind-visually-impaired-tennis/>

The Tennis Foundation is supporting 40 disability tennis networks in the UK. Five of these are in Scotland. The main aim of these networks is to get more tennis venues offering opportunities for more disabled people to play tennis.

## **Coach Education**

Disability Awareness in the Coaching Pathway

Disability awareness is now fully embedded in the coaching pathway (Level 1, 2 and 3), meaning every future qualified coach will have knowledge of specific impairment groups and the skills to deliver sessions accordingly.

## **CPD Opportunities**

There are two main CPD opportunities for coaches in this area:

- The **Disability Awareness Course** (DAC) provides a foundation for coaches to understand impairments, communicate effectively and coach disabled people. Find out more about the [Disability Awareness Course](#) (DAC).
- **Specific Impairment Group**

**CPDs** – building on from the DAC, these are advanced courses designed to develop knowledge and skills for coaches to work with grassroots up to national standard players in specific impairment groups: wheelchair, hearing impaired and learning disability.

## **The Classifications**



*Photo courtesy of Akira Ando via Tennis Foundation*

One of the biggest myths about wheelchair tennis is that you have to use a chair in your everyday life in order to be eligible to play. In actual fact, the game is open to anyone with a physical disability including, but by no means limited to, spinal injuries, spina bifida, limb loss, hyper mobility and cerebral palsy. The quad event is open to any athletes of either sex whose impairment affects three or more limbs, while the singles event is open to other classifications.

## **Learning Disability**

Anyone with an IQ of below 75 is eligible to participate in the Special Olympics programme.

## **Deaf**

Deaf players often compete in non-disabled tournaments but if you have a hearing impairment of 55db or more in your best ear, you are also eligible to compete nationally and internationally. The National Deaf Tennis Championships are held annually and a Great Britain squad competes in the Dresse and Maere Cups (the deaf tennis version of the Davis and Fed Cups) and also at the Deaflympics every four years.

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## **Helpful Resources**

### **ITF Wheelchair Tennis**

Take Two – launched in March 1998, 'TakeTwo' is a colour magazine published quarterly that covers the events and issues important to wheelchair tennis, including feature interviews with top players, development news around the world and news from the NEC Wheelchair Tennis Tour.

ITF Wheelchair Classification manual –  
[www.itftennis.com/media/166078/166078.pdf](http://www.itftennis.com/media/166078/166078.pdf)

A full History of Wheelchair Tennis can be found at:

[www.itftennis.com/wheelchair/organisation/history.aspx](http://www.itftennis.com/wheelchair/organisation/history.aspx)

Anyone for Tennis Video: Are you thinking about taking up wheelchair tennis or coaching wheelchair tennis? Then this video is for you. Find out all the information you will need to know from different types of wheelchairs and different playing techniques.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=W01sh8Yvk0A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W01sh8Yvk0A)

INAS/Special Olympics – An introduction to tennis for those with a learning disability:

<http://www.tennisfoundation.org.uk/pla-y-tennis/learning-disability-tennis/>

Visually Impaired Tennis – an introduction to tennis for those with a visual impairment

<http://www.tennisfoundation.org.uk/play-tennis/blind-visually-impaired-tennis/>

### **Some Facts and Figures**

- The sport has grown steadily since 1992, when the NEC Wheelchair Tennis Tour started with just 11 international tournaments. There are currently over 170 tournaments taking place in over 40 countries across the world and wheelchair tennis is now a part of all four Grand Slams.
- Four-time Paralympian Jayant Mistry was British no.1 for 15

years before retiring from international competition in 2007.

- Retired Dutch wheelchair tennis player Esther Vergeer after her final tournament, when she won the Paralympic gold medal at London 2012 had extended her winning streak to 470 matches over 10 years without losing a match. In the able bodied game the longest match winning streak in the open era is Martina Navratilova with a 74 match winning streak in 1984.
- The longest tennis match in history was at Wimbledon in 2010 and was played over 3 days, John Isner (USA) bt Nicolas Mahut (FRA) 6-4, 3-6, 6-7 (7), 7-6 (3), 70-68. It lasted 11 hours 05 minutes duration and the final set lasted 8 hours and 11 minutes. Isner served the most aces in a match – 113 – and they went through 123 tennis balls.



## **Leading Scottish Performers**

**Gordon Reid** (Helensburgh) – world no.3 wheelchair player

Career titles (singles): 25 including first ever Wimbledon men's singles champion; career titles (doubles): 24. Britain's youngest national champion at the age of 15 in 2007. In January 2009 he became the world No.1 junior.

## **Competitions**

**Wheelchair** – There are opportunities to enter tournaments from beginner level right up to the ITF Wheelchair Tennis Tour, where the world's top players compete in three divisions – men, women and quad, which is for those with a disability in three or more limbs. As well as a record nine events in Great Britain on the 2014 ITF Tour, there is a Wheelchair Tennis Development Series open for absolutely anyone who would like to compete and there are plenty of other local events too.

See more at:

<http://www.tennisfoundation.org.uk/pla-y-tennis/physically-impaired-tennis/>

There are currently over 170 tournaments taking place in over 40 countries across the world and

wheelchair tennis is now a part of all four Grand Slams. There is also a Tennis Foundation Development Series in the UK that sits just below the ITF events for new and developing players.

**Learning Disability** – INAS Games, Special Olympics. There are a number of participation and performance based events nationally and internationally which are organised by the Tennis Foundation, Special Olympics and INAS. There is a Regional Series of learning disability tennis events taking place across the country.

See more at:

<http://www.tennisfoundation.org.uk/pla-y-tennis/learning-disability-tennis/>

**Deaf** – Deaflympics. Deaf players often compete in non-disabled tournaments but if you have a hearing impairment of 55db or more in your best ear, you are also eligible to compete nationally and internationally. The National Deaf Tennis Championships are held annually and a Great Britain squad competes in the Dresse and Maere Cups (the deaf tennis version of the Davis and Fed Cups) and also at the Deaflympics every four years.

See more at:

<http://www.tennisfoundation.org.uk/pla-y-tennis/deaf-hearing-impaired-tennis/>

**Visually Impaired** – As the sport is in the early stages of development, there aren't yet formalised ITF rules for visually impaired tennis competitions.

## Key Contacts

Andrew Raitt – Tennis Scotland Lead for Disability Tennis

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**Head Office**, Tennis Scotland, 177 Colinton Road, Edinburgh EH14 1BZ

T: 0131 444 1984

## Disability Tennis Network

### Contacts

#### Aberdeen

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#### Edinburgh

Anna Myatt

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#### Stirling

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#### Glasgow

Lesley Whitehead

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#### Prestwick

Janice Rogerson

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But there is a widely adapted set of rules that are used in Great Britain and an increasing number of visually impaired events and competitions.

See more at:

<http://www.tennisfoundation.org.uk/pla-y-tennis/blind-visually-impaired-tennis/>

## Key Websites

Tennis Scotland

[www.tennisscotland.org](http://www.tennisscotland.org)

Scottish Disability Sport

[www.scottishdisabilitysport.com](http://www.scottishdisabilitysport.com)

British Paralympic Association

[www.paralympics.org.uk](http://www.paralympics.org.uk)

IPC

[www.paralympic.org](http://www.paralympic.org)

Lawn Tennis Association

[www.lta.org.uk](http://www.lta.org.uk)

Parasport

[www.parasport.org.uk](http://www.parasport.org.uk)

UK Deaf Sport

[www.ukdeafsport.org.uk](http://www.ukdeafsport.org.uk)

British Blind Sport

[www.britishblindsport.org.uk](http://www.britishblindsport.org.uk)