

HOW TO RUN A DISABILITY COMPETITION - LEARNING DISABILITY

TOP TIPS

Whether you're running a weekly session or it's a one off event we have provided some top tips to take into account when working with players with Learning Disabilities. If you would like further tips and sessions plans please contact the Disability Competitions Team at disabilitycompetitions@lta.org.uk.

SPACE/ ENVIRONMENT	TASKS	EQUIPMENT/ RULES	PEOPLE/ COMMUNICATION	SAFETY
Allow extra space on courts for safety.	Break things down into simple tasks.	Could use larger sponge balls and Mini Tennis rackets.	See the ability in front of you, not the disability.	Take into account any medical or behavioural considerations.
Place players into positions on court.	Use plenty of visual demonstrations.	Use colourful equipment and visual aids.	Players need same skills as any other player.	For example, dehydration can be more of an issue for some disabled people.
Increase targets and decrease distances to make tasks easier.	Repeat steps of task frequently and allow more time for assimilation.		Need to set boundaries for behaviour.	Ensure you are aware of all of the players' whereabouts at all times as attention spans may be shorter and players could wander away from the court.
			Use lots of positive praise and feedback.	
Consider vacation procedures in an emergency.	Use trigger words to aid movement.			
Be aware of players' whereabouts at all times.				

Adapt the scoring –

Often it is easier for an individual with a learning disability to understand “1, 2, 3, 4 etc.” so don't worry about using the traditional scoring format.

Use visual aids-

For scoring use a score board or coloured cones as a visual aid. Sometimes players will not understand a score in a verbal format but will if they can see it.

Quiet Space –

Have somewhere players can escape the noise and have a quiet moment.

PRE EVENT PLANNING

1) Confirm the venue with the correct dates for the event.

If you get a range of players we would recommend booking 3 courts as you can set up 1 court with multiple mini red courts. The additional 2 courts can be used for matches of other ball colours.

2) Recruit your players through the club or external sources

Learning Disability players should be grouped on their ability rather than age. We do this through providing different ball colour divisions. We would recommend including this information on your entry form or email to ensure players first experience of the sport is against people of a similar level.

3) Divide the Players into Categories

Coaches are your best asset. If you know a number of players are coming from the same venue I would speak to coach. Before arrival make sure you identify the appropriate ball colour and ability of each player.

Ball Colour	Court Size	Level of Play
Red	Service boxes or a mini net across the side of the court.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Have difficulty hitting forehand and backhand shots.- Can serve underarm into the court.- Volley is not currently part of their game.
Orange	Singles and doubles use the orange baseline but inner tramlines as the side lines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Can hit both forehands and backhands but with little control over the direction.- Hits a serve with a slower pace.- Can return a second serve from another player.
Green	Full Sized Court	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Can sustain a short rally from the back of the court.- Hits a serve with a slower pace.- Can return a second serve consistently.
Yellow	Full Sized Court	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Can rally from the back of the court consistently.- Hits first serve with pace.- Returns first and second serves consistently.

4) Type of Event

You can run your event either as a skill based session or tennis based session or a mix of both.

Skill Based –

Points are scored for your team by taking part in a mixture of skill based games. E.g. Floor Tennis, Bean Bag throwing, Target Practice etc.

Tennis Based –

Points over a net. Players will play short sets to 4 games with sudden death deuce.

We would recommend using a Timed Tennis format as this will allow players to complete more matches/stations. Players will play until time is called for example after 15 minutes.

5) **Creating a format for the tournament**

Format is dependent on what type of event you are running. Here are a few ideas:

Individual Event

- Split into a Team A and Team B

On the day split all players equally into 2 teams, ensuring there are equal numbers in each ball colour (as close as possible).

Example:

	TEAM A	TEAM B
Red Ball	2 players	3 Players
Orange Ball	4 player	4 Players
Green Ball	2 Players	2 Players
Yellow Ball	3 Players	2 Players
	11 Players	11 Players

All players within each ball colour will play in the same round robin box, earning points for their team. If you receive a high number of entries you can then divide these out further so players can compete against others of a similar level e.g. Red 1 Box, Red 2 Box.

Team Event

- Teams are made up of 4 players with representatives of different ball colours. You can split this depending on your players, we recommend agreeing on this split before the start of the event.

Example:

- 1x red, 1x orange, 1x green, 1x yellow
- 2 x red, 2 x orange
- 3 x green, 1 x yellow etc.

Players will be numbered within their ball division and will play against the same number on the opposing team. The event can be made up as many teams as you would like.

6) **Recruit some volunteers**

Volunteers are key to the success of a Learning Disability Tournament, especially at recreational level as the players will need assistance with the scoring and the general understanding of the match format. Volunteers can also assist with picking up balls and making sure players have a drink during the match.

Coaches and Parents are great sources of help as they are usually already at the venue. However we would recommend contacting members of the club to see if you can gain some additional support.

7) **Create a quiet area specifically for the players.**

At the venue on the day we would recommend booking an additional room or space at the venue where players have access to go if they begin to feel stressed or emotional.

8) **Run the event and have fun!**