

HOW TO RUN A DISABILITY COMPETITION - VISUALLY IMPAIRED

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 a Visual Impairment. 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	SPEED OF PROGRESS
Ensure court is free of obstacles and watch out for equipment stored at the back of the court.	Explain that the best way to coach a visually impaired person is to guide them through strokes. Hold head of racket with player holding handle.	Game is played with an audible foam ball (a visually impaired 'sound ball' is larger than a regular ball and contains ball bearings for sound).	Visually impaired players can often integrate with the non-disabled, which allows groups to mix and socialise.	Depends on the ability and willingness of the individual.
Walk player around the courts, fire exits, toilet (not cubicle) and changing room areas.	Demonstrations may not work. Use lots and lots of explanation and guiding of the racket.	For visually impaired players the ball can bounce twice. For a totally blind person the ball can bounce three times.	Consider impact of being VI, e.g. cannot reach out and touch; cannot follow path of a moving object; dependent on external guidance.	It is not compulsory to progress beyond the introductory level.
Create a tactile court area, using floor tape and string, and cut out background noise.	Three basic skills to develop: spatial awareness, coordination and timing.	Think about court and ball colours e.g. dark floor and yellow ball work well, and vice versa.	Visually impaired players learn by listening and feeling.	
Need to guide players through the size of the court and height of the net.	Use sound awareness exercises e.g. ball rolling or throwing a ball against a wall and trying to catch it.			
Game can be played on a standard badminton court.	Visually impaired tennis requires more one-to-one individual coaching.			
Keep players who are waiting for a turn well away from the hitting area and court.	Tennis gets the heart going and produces a sweat. (BI players say there aren't many things they can do to exert lots of energy, but tennis does this).	Use short tennis net and rackets.		



PRE EVENT PLANNING

- 1) Confirm the venue with the correct dates for the event.**
We would recommend making sure you book courts away from other sessions taking place as due to the nature of the sport, additional sound from other courts can be distracting and be difficult for players to concentrate. You can also use both indoor and outdoor courts dependent on players' ability levels.
- 2) Recruit your players through the club or external sources.**
Visually Impaired players should be grouped on ability then vision. Speak to coaches from local clubs or schools that have links with Visually Impaired players or students.
- 3) Divide the Players into Categories**
We would recommend splitting players into Blind and Partially Sighted Groups. Before you start the tournament I would recommend speaking to each participant or coach from a team so you are aware of the number of players you will have within each group.
- 4) Creating a format for the tournament**
Format is dependent on event type. 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 divisions (or as close as possible).

Example:

	TEAM A	TEAM B
Blind	6 players	5 Players
Partially Sighted	4 player	5 Players
	10 Players	10 Players

All players within each division 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 the Partially Sighted group out further so players can compete against others of a similar level. E.g. Partially Sighted 1, Partially Sighted 2

Team Event

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

Example:

- 2 x Blind Players, 2 x Partially Sighted Players
- 1 x Blind Player, 3 x Partially Sighted Players
- 3 x Blind Players, 1 x Partially Sighted Player

Players can be numbered within their 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.

5) Balls and Bounces

A sponge ball with bells inside is used for Visually Impaired Tennis at all competitive levels. If you need to source some ball contact the disability competitions team.

Blind Players should be allowed 3 bounces before they hit the ball. However the first bounce must be inside the court. Partially sighted players can have anywhere from 1 to 3 bounces, depending on their vision.

If you do create sub groups within the partially sighted division then you can decide of the number of bounces accordingly.

Players should also complete the Ready, Yes, Procedure, before the start of each point.

6) Setting up the Court

Blind Court

What you'll need:

- 3 People
- A Tape Measure
- Different lengths of Bungee Cord
- Extra Wide Masking Tape

Tips to set up the court:

- Using your tape measure create the basic dimensions of your court.
- Mark out all the lines shown in the diagram (tactile lines are shown in block white and taped lines are shown by dots).
- For tactile lines start with the baseline by taping the end of the bungee cord down on one side.
- One person should extend the bungee cord to the other side of the baseline whilst another person applies the extra wide tape from one side to another.
- Continue this process for all the solid white lines.
- Make sure you extend the side lines past the baseline and the Centre marker past the baseline.
- The dotted lines need to be marked out by tape unless court lines are already visible.

For Doubles, extend the sideline to the Inner Tramline (as shown in the diagram).

Partially Sighted Court

- No tactile lines are needed.
- Throw down lines can be used or tape.
- Baseline should be 9.14m from the net.
- Side lines should extend to the inner tramline.
- Tramlines are used for the doubles court.

