



# Tennis

## Sport Rules

*Special Olympics*





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## **1. GOVERNING RULES**

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Tennis shall govern all Special Olympics competitions. As an international sports program, Special Olympics has created these rules based upon International Tennis Federation (ITF) Rules for tennis found at <http://www.itftennis.com/>. ITF or National Governing Body (NGB) rules shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Tennis or Article I. In such cases, the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Tennis shall apply.

Refer to Article 1, <http://media.specialolympics.org/resources/sports-essentials/general/Sports-Rules-Article-1.pdf>, for more information pertaining to Codes of Conduct, Training Standards, Medical and Safety Requirements, Divisioning, Awards, Criteria for Advancement to Higher Levels of Competition, and Unified Sports.

## **2. OFFICIAL EVENTS**

The range of events is intended to offer competition opportunities for athletes of all abilities. Programs may determine the events offered and, if required, guidelines for the management of those events. Coaches are responsible for providing training and event selection appropriate to each athlete's skill and interest.

The following is a list of official events available in Special Olympics.

- 2.1 Individual Skills Competition
- 2.2 Singles
- 2.3 Doubles
- 2.4 Mixed Doubles
- 2.5 Unified Sports® Doubles
- 2.6 Unified Sports Mixed Doubles
- 2.7 Unified Team Tennis

## **3. RULES OF COMPETITION**

- 3.1 Divisioning
  - 3.1.1 An athlete shall be divisioned based off ITN Number and ITN final score from ITN Assessment Form.
  - 3.1.2 An ITN Assessment Form must be submitted for each athlete with the registration packet for the event.
  - 3.1.3 The ITN Assessment Form is provided in Section D of the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Tennis.
- 3.2 Match play
  - 3.2.1 A match will consist of one of the following.
    - 3.2.1.1 Two Tie Break short sets using no-ad scoring with a 10 point match tie break to decide the match. In a short set, the first player/team who wins four games wins that set, provided there is a margin of two games over the opponent(s). If the score reaches four games all, a 7-point tie-break game shall be played. When the score in a match is one set all, one 10-point tie-break game shall be played to decide the match. This tie-break game replaces the deciding final set.



- 3.2.1.2 Two full 6 game tie break sets using no- ad scoring with a 10 point match tie break to decide the match. In a 6 game set the first player/team to win six games wins that "Set", provided there is a margin of two games over the opponent (s). A 7-point tie-break shall be played at six games all. When the score in a match is one set all, one 10-point tie-break game shall be played to decide the match. This tie-break game replaces the deciding final set. Not recommended for athletes with an ITN higher than 6..
    - 3.2.1.3 In the two tie break 4 game or 6 game sets, there will be a two-minute rest period prior to the deciding 10-point tie-break.
    - 3.2.1.4 The No-Ad scoring system will be used for all match play. The No-Ad procedure is simply what the name implies: The first player to win four points wins the game, with the seventh point of a game becoming a game point for each player.
  - 3.3 No-Ad Scoring
    - 3.3.1 Singles Matches
      - 3.3.1.1 The receiver has the choice of advantage court or deuce court, the service on the seventh point, is to be delivered to the nominated court.
    - 3.3.2 Doubles Matches
      - 3.3.2.1 The receiving pair has the choice of advantage court or deuce court, the service on the seventh point, is to be delivered to player playing in the nominated court.
    - 3.3.3 Mixed Doubles Matches
      - 3.3.3.1 The player of the same gender as the server shall receive the deciding point. i.e. male to male or female to female.
    - 3.3.4 Unified Doubles Matches
      - 3.3.4.1 The service on the seventh point is to be delivered athlete to athlete or partner to partner.
    - 3.3.5 Score Calling
      - 3.3.5.1 The score calling may be either in the conventional terms or simple numbers, i.e., "zero, one, two, three, game."
  - 3.4 Coaching
    - 3.4.1 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 two-minute rest period prior to the deciding tie-break, and not during a tie-break game. Changes of ends must be completed within 90 seconds.
  - 3.5 Place Tie-Breakers
    - 3.5.1 When two or more athletes or teams have the same final point score, the tie shall be broken as follows.
      - 3.5.1.1 First: the fewest number of sets lost in all matches
      - 3.5.1.2 Second: the most games won in all matches
      - 3.5.1.3 Third: the fewest number of games lost in all matches
      - 3.5.1.4 Fourth: (other than for teams) head to head results



- 3.6 Unified Sports Doubles
  - 3.6.1 Each Unified Sports doubles team shall consist of one player with an intellectual disability and one player without an intellectual disability, who have similar skills as defined by their New ITN Rating and ITN total score.
  - 3.6.2 Each team shall determine their own order of service and selection of courts (ad or deuce).
  - 3.6.3 If teammates are individually rated at different levels the team must compete at the level of the highest rated teammates.
- 3.7 Unified Team Tennis Event
  - 3.7.1 Special Olympics Unified Team Tennis program rules are governed by ruling body ITF (International Tennis Federation) and Special Olympics Tennis Rules.
  - 3.7.2 Unified Team Composition: Unified Tennis teams are composed of Unified doubles teams. Unified doubles team are comprised of one athlete with intellectual disabilities and one athlete without intellectual disabilities and who have similar skills, as defined by their rating score, and similar age.
  - 3.7.3 Individual Rating - All tennis players will be rated on the ITN Assessment Form. When assembling a Unified doubles team, the athlete and Unified partner need to be as closely aligned in ability as possible. Players either should have the same ITN final number (Player A and Player B have an ITN 8) or they shall play on the level of the highest ITN number (Player A has an ITN 9 level 3 and Player B has an ITN 8 level 4, the team will compete in level 4, ITN 8).
  - 3.7.4 Roster Sizes: Unified Team rosters consist of a minimum of 3 Unified doubles and a maximum of 6 Unified doubles teams. (Ex. A Unified Team's 3 doubles pairings should consist of: 1 Level 2, 1 Level 4 and 1 Level 5 if possible).
  - 3.7.5 Competition: Competition may be head to head or an Invitational with many teams. During head-to-head competition, both schools, agencies or clubs, field the same number of doubles teams of the same Level and similar rating.
  - 3.7.6 Formation of Team Divisions: During competition, Unified Tennis teams are divisioned based on Level and doubles team rating (combined individual rating scores). Tournament Directors pair like level and rating for competition.
  - 3.7.7 Scheduling Doubles Matches: When scheduling matches for a competition, doubles teams of similar ability levels and with similar rating scores need to play each other.
  - 3.7.8 Use of Designated Tennis Balls and Court Sizes for Competition: The ITN final score and ITN final number of doubles teams determine what type of tennis ball must be used in competition as well as the size of the court. A doubles team rating score is the combined score of the two players (i.e. Player A is a 4 and Player B is a 5 giving their doubles team a rating score of 9). Following are the requirements:
    - 3.7.8.1 Unified Team Level 5: Doubles teams with a *an ITN 9* must use a regulation yellow tennis ball on 78' court.
    - 3.7.8.2 Unified Team Level 4: Doubles teams with a *an ITN 8,7,6 or higher levels* must use a 25% lower compression ball (yellow ball with green dot) and play on a 78' court.



- 3.7.8.3 Unified Team Level 2: Doubles teams with an ITN 10 will play their matches on a 42' court (service boxes only) and use a red ball.
- 3.7.9 Substitutions: None are allowed for a doubles team during a match. If either player of a doubles team is unable to complete the match, his/her doubles team will forfeit.
- 3.7.10 Competition Formats: Following are the competition formats to be used which are based on the number of players on both teams. When one team has more players than the opposing team, those additional players compete in an exhibition singles match. *Example: Example 1: Teams A and B have 4 players (2 athletes and 2 unified partners). Competition is 4 matches and counts one point for each win. First match athlete A from Delegation One with athlete A from Delegation Two. Second match athlete B from Delegation One with athlete B from Delegation Two. Third match unified double A from Delegation One with unified double A from Delegation Two. Fourth match unified double B from Delegation One with unified double B from Delegation Two. if teams are tied, a 5<sup>th</sup> match will be played with traditional double from Delegation One with traditional double from Delegation Two. Example 2: Team A has 6 players and Team B has 8 players. Team B's two additional players play a singles exhibition match.*
  - Each team has:
    - 3.7.10.1.1 4 players: 2 singles and 2 doubles scoring matches
    - 3.7.10.2 6 players: 3 Doubles scoring matches
    - 3.7.10.3 8 players: 4 Doubles scoring matches
    - 3.7.10.4 10 players: 5 Doubles scoring matches
    - 3.7.10.5 12 players 6 Doubles scoring matches
- 3.7.11 Match Play Format: A match consists of the best 2 out of 3 short sets. The No-Ad scoring system will be used.
  - 3.7.11.1 When a rain or time delay occurs, one 6 game may be used instead:
    - 3.7.11.1.1 In a 1 set match, the team that wins 6 games by a margin of 2 games wins the set.
    - 3.7.11.1.2 At 6 games all, a 10 point tie break is played.
    - 3.7.11.1.3 No-Ad scoring will be used.
- 3.8 Individual Skills Competition – Level 1 – Comprised of 7 Skill Tests
  - 3.8.1 Level 1 ball is the red ball within a 42' court (service boxes only)
  - 3.8.2 Forehand Volley
    - 3.8.2.1 The athlete stands approximately one meter from the net with the feeder on the other side of the net, positioned halfway between the service line and the net. Each athlete is given five attempts to hit a ball safely over the net. The feeder underhand tosses each ball to the athlete's forehand side.
    - 3.8.2.2 The athlete scores 5 points for hitting into the service box into either service box.
  - 3.8.3 Backhand Volley
    - 3.8.3.1 Same as forehand volley except feeder sends the balls to athlete's backhand side.



- 3.8.3.2 Each athlete is given five attempts.
- 3.8.4 Forehand Groundstroke
  - 3.8.4.1 The athlete stands one meter behind the center (T) of the service line. The feeder is on the other side of the net, positioned half way between the service line and the net, underhand tosses the ball so it bounces once before reaching the athlete's forehand side. Each athlete is given five attempts.
  - 3.8.4.2 The athlete scores five points for hitting into either service box
- 3.8.5 Backhand Groundstroke
  - 3.8.5.1 Same as forehand groundstroke except the feeder sends the ball to the athlete's backhand side. Each athlete is given five attempts.
- 3.8.6 Serve — Deuce Court
  - 3.8.6.1 Each athlete is given five attempts to hit a legal serve from the right court to the deuce service box. A ball landing in the correct service box will count 10 points. A zero (0) score is recorded if the athlete commits a foot fault or fails to get the ball in the service box. A foot fault occurs when the athlete steps on or over the service line.
- 3.8.7 Serve — Advantage Court
  - 3.8.7.1 Same as serve to deuce court but from the left court to the advantage service box.
  - 3.8.7.2 Each athlete is given five attempts.
- 3.8.8 Alternating Groundstrokes with Movement
  - 3.8.8.1 The athlete begins one meter behind the center (T) of the service line. The feeder is on the other side of the net positioned halfway between the service line and the net. It alternates underhand tosses to the athlete's forehand and backhand sides. Each toss should land at a point which is both halfway between the service line and the net and halfway between the center service line and singles sideline. The athlete must be allowed to return to the center mark before feeding the next ball. Each athlete is given ten attempts.
  - 3.8.8.2 The athlete scores five points for hitting into either service box.
- 3.8.9 Final Score
  - 3.8.9.1 A player's final score is determined by adding together the scores achieved in each of the seven events which comprise the Individual Skills Competition.





### 3.9 Individual Skill Heat Sheet

ATHLETE NAME _____				M / F	Ball Feeder stands on opposite side of net, 2 meters from net.	ITF Approved Red Ball
Delegation _____			Division #	CIRCLE THE POINTS ON EACH ATTEMPT		
SKILL	1st ball	2nd ball	3rd ball	4th ball	5th ball	TOTAL
FOREHAND VOLLEYS Athlete Positioned at net. 2 PRACTICE/5 ATTEMPTS	0 5	0 5	0 5	0 5	0 5	
BACKHAND VOLLEYS Athlete Positioned at net. 2 PRACTICE/5 ATTEMPTS	0 5	0 5	0 5	0 5	0 5	
FH GROUNDSTROKES Athlete positioned at service line 2 PRACTICE/5 ATTEMPTS	0 5	0 5	0 5	0 5	0 5	
BH GROUNDSTROKES Athlete positioned at service line 2 PRACTICE/5 ATTEMPTS	0 5	0 5	0 5	0 5	0 5	
SERVES - DEUCE Athlete positioned at service line 2 PRACTICE/5 ATTEMPTS	0 10	0 10	0 10	0 10	0 10	
SERVES - AD Athlete positioned at service line 2 PRACTICE/5 ATTEMPTS	0 10	0 10	0 10	0 10	0 10	
ALTERNATING GROUNDSTROKES	1st ball	2nd ball	3rd ball	4th ball	5th ball	
10 ALTERNATING FH/BH Athlete positioned at service line	6th ball	7th ball	8th ball	9th ball	10th ball	
10 ALTERNATING FH/BH	0 5	0 5	0 5	0 5	0 5	
					GRAND TOTAL	





#### 4. LEVELS

The following is a guide to levels designed to provide competition opportunities to athletes of all abilities. Competition events for Levels 2-Level 5 are: Singles, Doubles, Mixed Doubles and Unified Doubles.

##### 4.1

Level 1	Individual Skills Competition	Individual Skills Heat Sheet	(ITN TOTAL SCORES)	42' Court – Red ball
Level 2	Matchplay	ITN 10.1	F/M - 1-16	42' Court – Red ball
Level 3	Matchplay	ITN 10	F -57-79 M 75-104	60' Court – Orange ball
Level 4	Matchplay	ITN 9	F -80-108 M 105-139	78" Court – Green ball (Yellow ball with green dot)
Level 5	Matchplay	ITN 8,7	F -109-171 M 140-209	78' Court – Yellow ball
Level 6	Matchplay	ITN 6,5,4	F -172-258 M 210-293	78' Court – Yellow ball

4.2 In Doubles play, both players should be rated at the same level. If not, the team must play at the level of the highest player. (Example: Level 4 and Level 5 players paired together must compete in Level 5 with the designated yellow ball and 78' ct) The combined singles rating will be used to division the team at the higher level.

##### 4.3 References:

4.3.1 ITN Assessment - <http://www.itftennis.com/>

4.3.2 Levels Court Diagram - [http://media.specialolympics.org/soi/files/resources/Sports-Rules-Competitions/Tennis/Levels\\_court\\_diagrams.docx](http://media.specialolympics.org/soi/files/resources/Sports-Rules-Competitions/Tennis/Levels_court_diagrams.docx)

##### 4.3.3 SO ITN Assessment Video

4.3.3.1 <https://vimeo.com/289520911/caff34e88b> - how to prepare the court

4.3.3.2 <https://vimeo.com/289517598/a32620c8c1> - level 4/5/6 hard court

4.3.3.3 <https://vimeo.com/289519201/48bf99adf6> - level 4/5/6 clay court

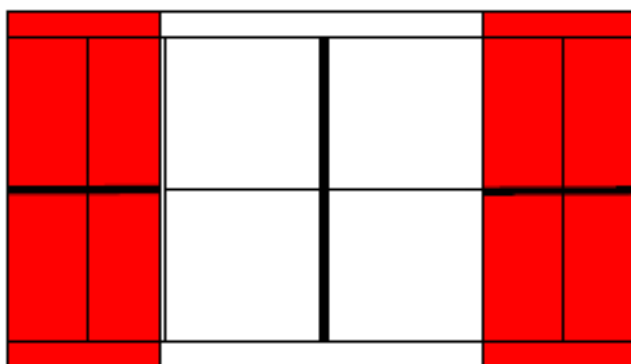
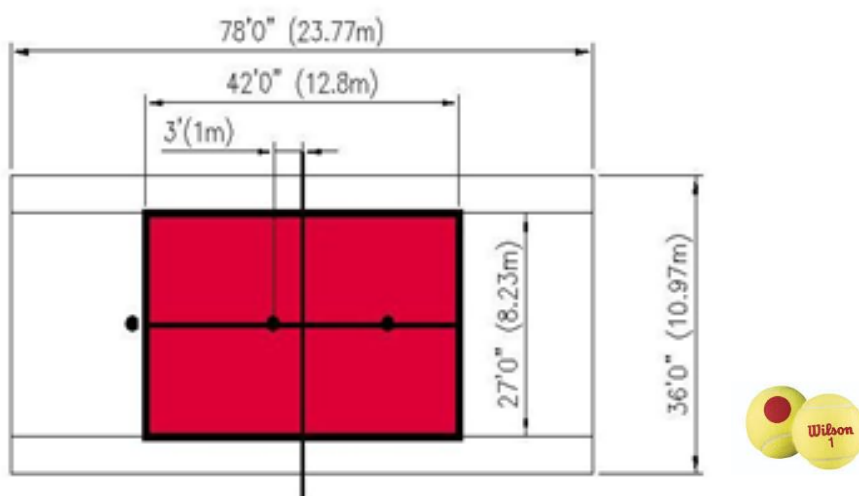
4.3.3.4 <https://vimeo.com/289516053/0f0096b73e> - level 3 clay court

4.3.3.5 <https://vimeo.com/289515397/89c2e66ba5> - level 2 hard court

4.3.3.6 <https://vimeo.com/289514735/a615dc5d35> - level 2 clay court



#### 4.4 Level Court Diagram

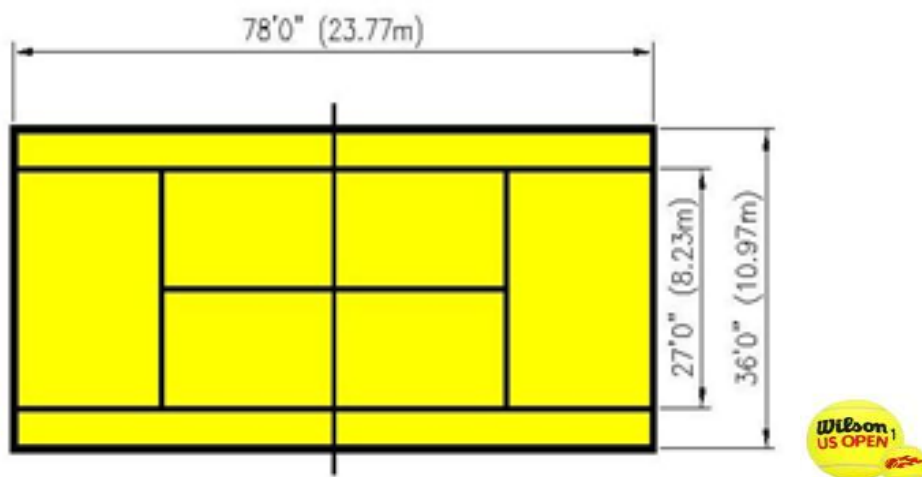


It's also possible to use the back part of the 78'x 36' court





4.4.1.3 Levels 5 and 6



SO Promotional Video





**5. ITN ASSESSMENT FORM**  
**5.1 10.1 for Level 2**

**International Tennis Number - On Court Assessment for 10.1**

Name:	Date of birth:
Assessor:	Date:

Court size for this assessment -	<input type="checkbox"/> Full court <input type="checkbox"/> Service Box Only
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Groundstroke Consistency		
Stroke	#	Score
Forehand	1	
Backhand	2	
Forehand	3	
Backhand	4	
Forehand	5	
Backhand	6	
Forehand	7	
Backhand	8	
GS Depth Total		

Volley Consistency		
Stroke	#	Score
Forehand	1	
Backhand	2	
Forehand	3	
Backhand	4	
Volley Depth Total		

Serve Consistency		
Stroke	#	Score
Right	1	
Left	2	
Right	3	
Left	4	
Serve Total		

1 point for each volley and groundstroke in service box

1 point for every serve in correct service box

what's your number?



International Tennis Number

This ITN Assessment was conducted in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the Official ITN Assessment Guide. I hereby agree to its authenticity.

Signed by/behalf of the player

Signed by the assessor

**SCORING**

Mobility Table Time Score

T	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	Time
S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	18	19	21	26	32	39	45	52	61	76	Score

Signed by the assessor

Strokes Total	Mobility Score	Total Score
		0

Number of Assessments

New ITN Rating



## International Tennis Number — On Court Assessment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: M F  
Assessor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Venue: \_\_\_\_\_



International Tennis Number

**Signed by/behalf of the player:**

**Signed by the Assessor:**

GS Depth			Volley Depth			GS Accuracy			Serve		
Stroke	#	Score	Stroke	#	Score	Stroke	#	Score	Stroke	#	Score
Forehand	1		Forehand	1		Forehand DL	1		1st Box Wide	1	
Backhand	2		Backhand	2		Backhand DL	2		1st Box Wide	2	
Forehand	3		Forehand	3		Forehand DL	3		1st Box Wide	3	
Backhand	4		Backhand	4		Backhand DL	4		1st Box Middle	4	
Forehand	5		Forehand	5		Forehand DL	5		1st Box Middle	5	
Backhand	6		Backhand	6		Backhand DL	6		1st Box Middle	6	
Forehand	7		Forehand	7		Forehand CC	7		2nd Box Middle	7	
Backhand	8		Backhand	8		Backhand CC	8		2nd Box Middle	8	
Forehand	9		Sub Total			Forehand CC	9		2nd Box Middle	9	
Backhand	10		Consistency			Backhand CC	10		2nd Box Wide	10	
Sub Total			Volley Depth Total			Forehand CC	11		2nd Box Wide	11	
Consistency						Backhand CC	12		2nd Box Wide	12	
GS Depth Total						Sub Total			Sub Total		
						Consistency			Consistency		
						GS Accuracy Total			Serve Total		

Mobility Table	Time	Score
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T	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15
S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	12	14	15	16	18	19	21	26	32	39	45	52	61	76
Score (F)	57-79				80-108		109-140		141-171		172-205		206-230		231-258		259-303		304-344		345-430					
Score (M)	75-104				105-139		140-175		176-209		210-244		245-268		269-293		294-337		338-362		363-430					
ITN	ITN 10				ITN 9		ITN 8		ITN 7		ITN 6		ITN 5		ITN 4		ITN 3		ITN 2		ITN 1					

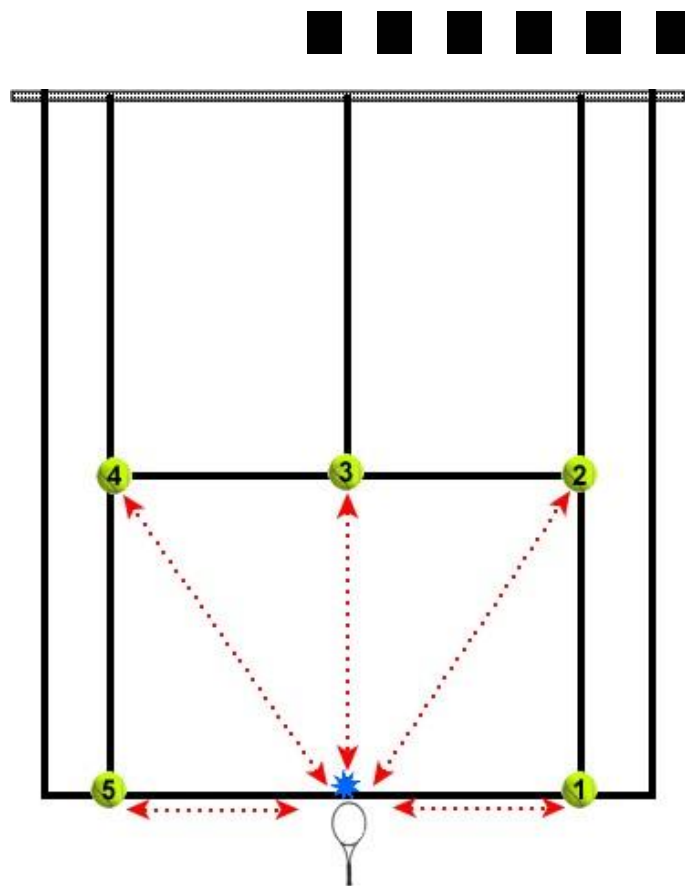
Strokes Total	Mobility Score	Total Score

Number of Assessments	New ITN Rating

**Circle players ITN level after completing the Assessment.**



### 5.3. Mobility Test For All Levels



#### Maximum Possible = 76 Points

**Mobility Assessment** This assessment measures the time it takes a player to pick up five tennis balls and return them individually to a specified zone.

The score is recorded in seconds.

Points are awarded based on the time it takes to complete this task.

The faster a player completes the task the more points are awarded.

#### Procedure:

Place a tennis racquet with the head of the racquet just behind the centre mark in the middle of the baseline. The handle of the racquet is pointed towards the back fence as shown in the diagram.

Position 5 balls on the court as shown in the diagram.



## Mobility Table

Time

Score

Example: The faster the time, the more points are allocated. **22 SECONDS = 21 POINTS**

T	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15
S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	12	14	15	16	18	19	21	26	32	39	45	52	61	76