

# WHEELCHAIR TENNIS INSTRUCTOR WORKSHOP



Toronto, March 31 2019



# WELCOME!

## GREAT TO HAVE YOU HERE!



### ■ It ain't Rocket Science!

- Few (really) new concepts for coaches to learn. Same
  - court size and rules
  - grips
  - strokes (one exception: “ the pronated backhand” )
  - tactics
  - corrective techniques
  - teaching methodologies
  - progressions, phases of play
  - etc.
- Biggest difference? **MOBILITY!**
- Mix of presentation format and on court sessions
- Recertification opportunity - 100% attendance required
- Ask Away!

Lets have fun!....and learn a few things along the way



# Purpose of course



- to provide certified Tennis Canada Instructors, teachers, occupational therapists and other persons of interest with tools to help organize dynamic, safe, fun, and active learning environments so introductory wheelchair players can **learn** and **play**.
- ‘Supplemental’ course designed to be used in conjunction with the Tennis Canada Instructor Course information and materials.





**Its 'only' about changing lives!**

# COURSE OVERVIEW

- Introduction/ Try Out/ Video
- Wheelchair Tennis 101
- Development Pathway (Game Based Approach)
- **Developing Mobility**
- Tactical Development
- Sample Beginners Lesson
- Serves>Returns/Match play
- Summary & Reflections



# QUICK INTRODUCTIONS



Who Are You?

Why Are You Here?



# Who Am I?

- National Coach Wheelchair Tennis
- Scope: Development and High Performance
- Former player
  - 3 time Paralympian for Germany (Barcelona 92, Sydney 2000, Athens 2004)
  - Ranked #1 in the world 1993/1994
  - World Champion 1993
- Coaching experience with German Tennis Federation, ITF (Development Fund) and BC Wheelchair Sports
- My “story”







# Coaches' quotes

*“Coaching wheelchair tennis goes beyond just teaching tennis. The experience of seeing how the players are able to connect to the ball is amazing. The smiles and sense of accomplishment that shows on their faces are priceless. But there is another dimension; wheelchair tennis is such a good vehicle to connect so called “able bodied” coaches/volunteers with disabled persons - it opens a new doorway for the human spirit.”*

**- Albert Fong, Little Aces Mississauga  
Community Champion -**





Ok, let start with something simple...

# Go Out and Play!





# History and Organization

- 1976 Brad Parks establishes game in USA
- Late 70s & 80s: game expands to Europe, Asia and Canada
- 1988: International Wheelchair Tennis Federation is founded
- 1997: Wheelchair Tennis integrated into International Tennis Federation (ITF)

## Canada

- Beginnings late 70s
- 1988: Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association (CWSA) incorporates Tennis
- 1998: Tennis Canada integration



# International Organization



- ITF manages tournament circuit
  - +/- 160 events worldwide (6 sanctioned events in Canada)
  - Grand Slam – Super Series - ITF 1,2,3 & Future Series
  - World Team Cup (Netherlands 2018, Israel 2019)
  - Paralympics (Tokyo 2020)
  - Para Pan Am Games (Lima, Peru 2019)
- ITF Wheelchair Tennis Development Fund (WTDF) supports International Development of the Game
- Keeper of the Rules and Regulations



# Organization in Canada

- Department within Tennis Canada
  - Director (Janet Petras, BC)
  - National Coach (Kai Schrameyer, BC)+ Touring Coach (Christian Gingras, QC)
- High Performance:
  - Canadian Tournament Circuit (6 events)
  - Birmingham Nationals (Calgary 2017 & 2018)
  - National team
  - Training camps
  - High Performance Committee
- Development : Partnership with
  - Provincial Tennis Associations (PTA)
  - Provincial Wheelchair Sports Associations (PWSA)



# Participation

- Permanently mobility related disability

Congenital vs Acquired injuries

A disability can occur through:

- Spinal cord injury(chart p 3) – complete or incomplete
  - Amputation
  - Disease
- Open (Paraplegics and Amputees) and Quad (Quadriplegic) divisions
- Integration Philosophy





# Rating System

## Play Tennis Canada rating system

- Levels 1.0-7.0
- Top Open player = 4.0-4.5
- Top Quad player + 3.0-3.5
- Beginner wheelchair = .1/.5/1.0



# Equipment

- Facilities requirements:
  - all surfaces
  - accessibility (courts and washrooms)
- Rackets
- Straps (muscle replacements): chest  
waist, legs
- Tape (quad players)
- Equipment for Heat (Quads)

.....oh, and the wheelchairs!



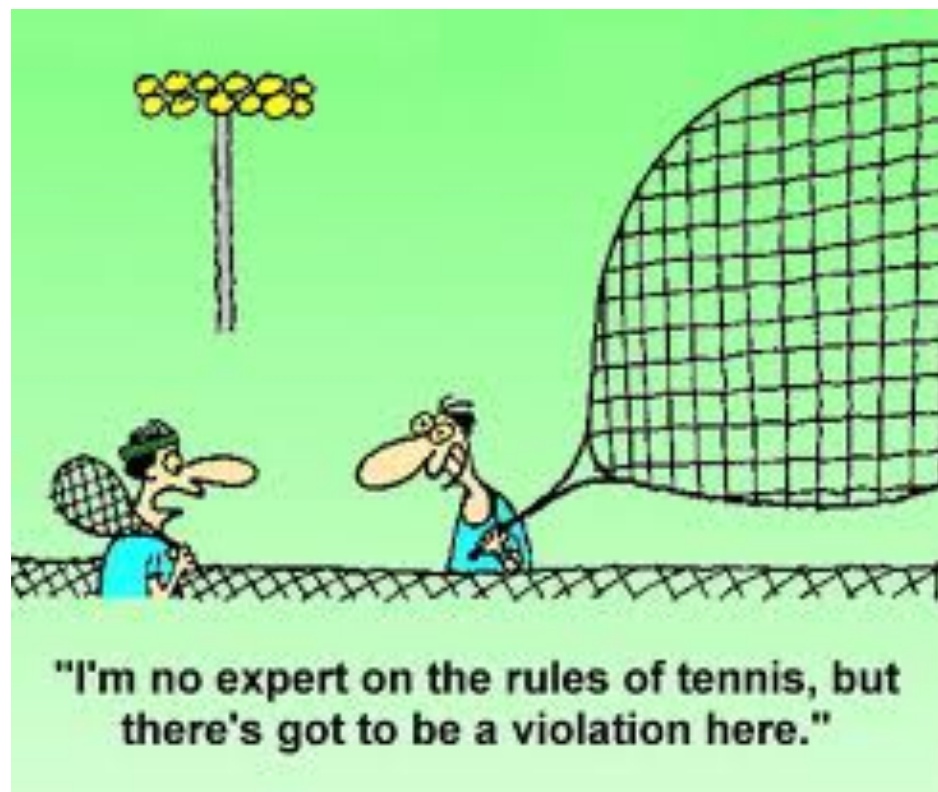
# Anatomy of Wheelchair

- Sports chairs v. everyday chairs
- Materials
- Cost
- Frame
- Seat
- Seat Cushion
- Wheels (Camber)
- Tires
- Casters
- Push rims
- Foot Plate



# Rules

- 2 bounce rule
- Wheelchair  
Considered Part of  
Body
- Service Rules
- 'Up and Down'  
Doubles
- Power Wheelchairs



# Coaches' quotes

*“Without prejudice and with all respect to the Able Bodied greats that play and have played on all the International Circuits. My Tennis Champion is Lee Carter (former Canadian Nr 1). He`s been my inspiration from the very first day I saw him hop into his sport chair. Since that day I have challenged myself to be as dedicated, persistent, patient, and understanding in acquiring knowledge of the Sport and Resources. .”*

**- Marlon Goldburn, Tennis coach Winnipeg, MB -**



# Active Break: Warm Up Games

- « Sharks »
- « Tree Tag »
- « Pac-Man »
- « Grab the leash »
- « Know your lines »
- Balloon Games
- Coordination Games





# Development Pathway



## Teaching Tennis as a Game

- 2 primary ways to teach tennis: Model v. Game Based
- Tennis is a Game and needs to be played as such
- Get them playing and then learn to play better (link strokes to mobility & play)
- Technique as a means to execute Tactics: 'what' before 'how'
- Goal is to get players to be able to play as quickly and as self sufficiently as possible
- Challenge to apply this to Wheelchair Tennis
- The Solution:
  - Scaled version of the Game (Throw Tennis, Floor Tennis , ROG Tennis)
  - Development Programs





# Developing Technique

## What the Ball Does (Effectiveness)

### Ball Controls

- Height
- Direction
- Distance
- Speed
- Spin

- The first 3 are the most relevant for starter players



## What the Player Does (Efficiency/Conformity)

### 5 Fundamentals

- Grip
- Set-up
- Impact Point
- Hitting Zone
- Recovery



# Developing Technique



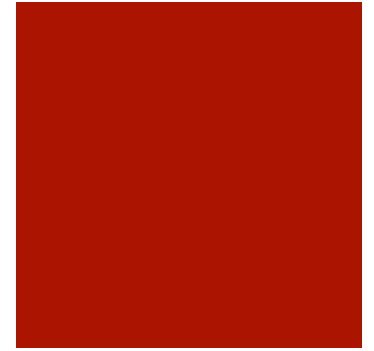
## ■ P.A.S Principles

(What the racquet does at impact controls the ball):

- Path of racquet
- Angle of racquet
- Speed of racquet



# Development Pathway



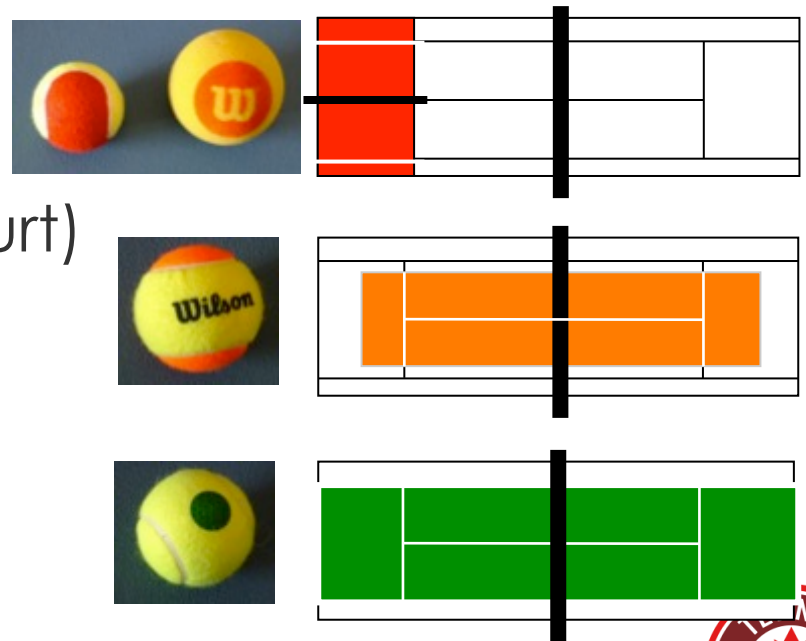
## Using a game-based Approach

- Development Programs:
  1. Rally Program: Create a Comfort Zone
  2. Reception Program: Expand the comfort zone
  3. Projection Program: Challenge the opponent's comfort zone
  4. Tactical Programs: Phases and Zones of Play



# Development Pathway

- Scale the game so it is easier to play & move
- ROG Tennis Process:
  - Red Tennis (1/2 court)  
(foam or felt balls)
  - Orange Tennis (3/4 court)  
(low-compression)
  - Green (Full Court)  
(Transition balls)



# Development Pathway

## Lesson Steps

**1. MEET & GREET**

**2. WARM-UP**

**3. PLAY & PRACTICE**

**4. WRAP-UP**

## Play & Practice Steps

**Organize Point-Play**

**Practice Activity**

Run an activity that highlights one of the 5 Fundamentals or PAS Principles

**Organize Point-Play**



# Key elements to a successful lesson

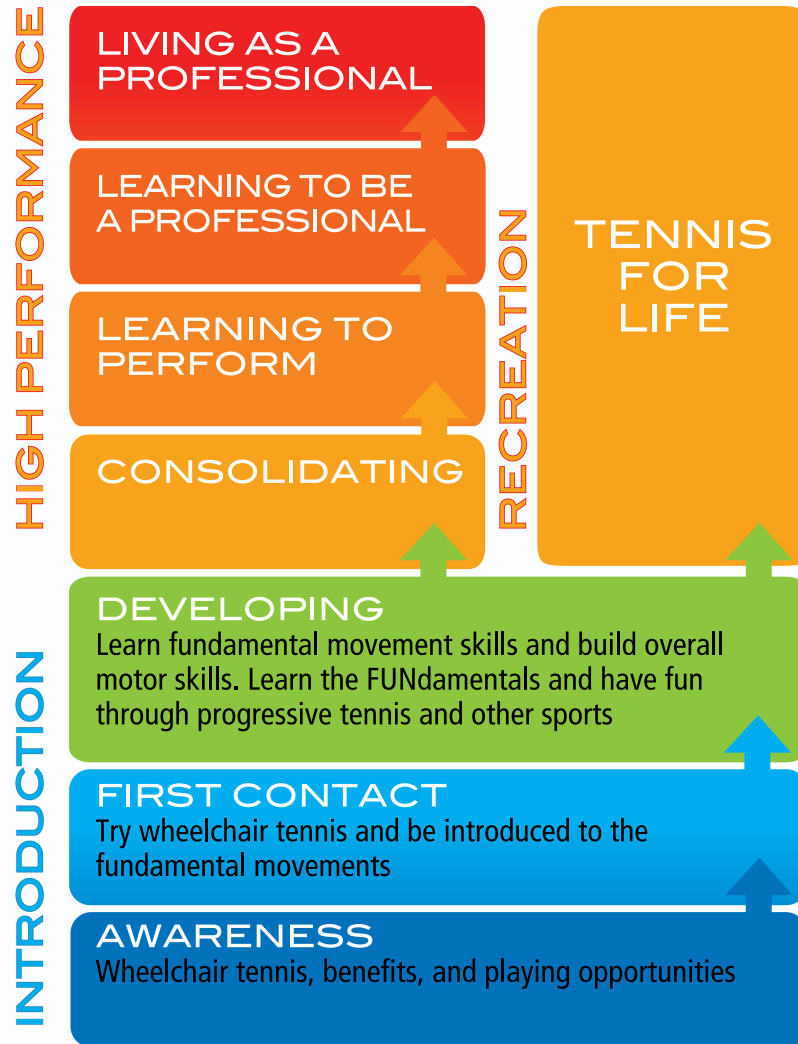
- Scale the game so it is easier to play & move
- Define an outcome (i.e. being able to maintain a baseline rally) and set a topic: ball control (effectiveness) or fundamental (conformity)
- Create an appropriate challenge
- Introduce Measurements
- Ensure sufficient volume!
- Provide Feedback

**MAKE IT FUN!**



# MODULE 1:

## LONG TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT STAGES



# Coaches' quotes

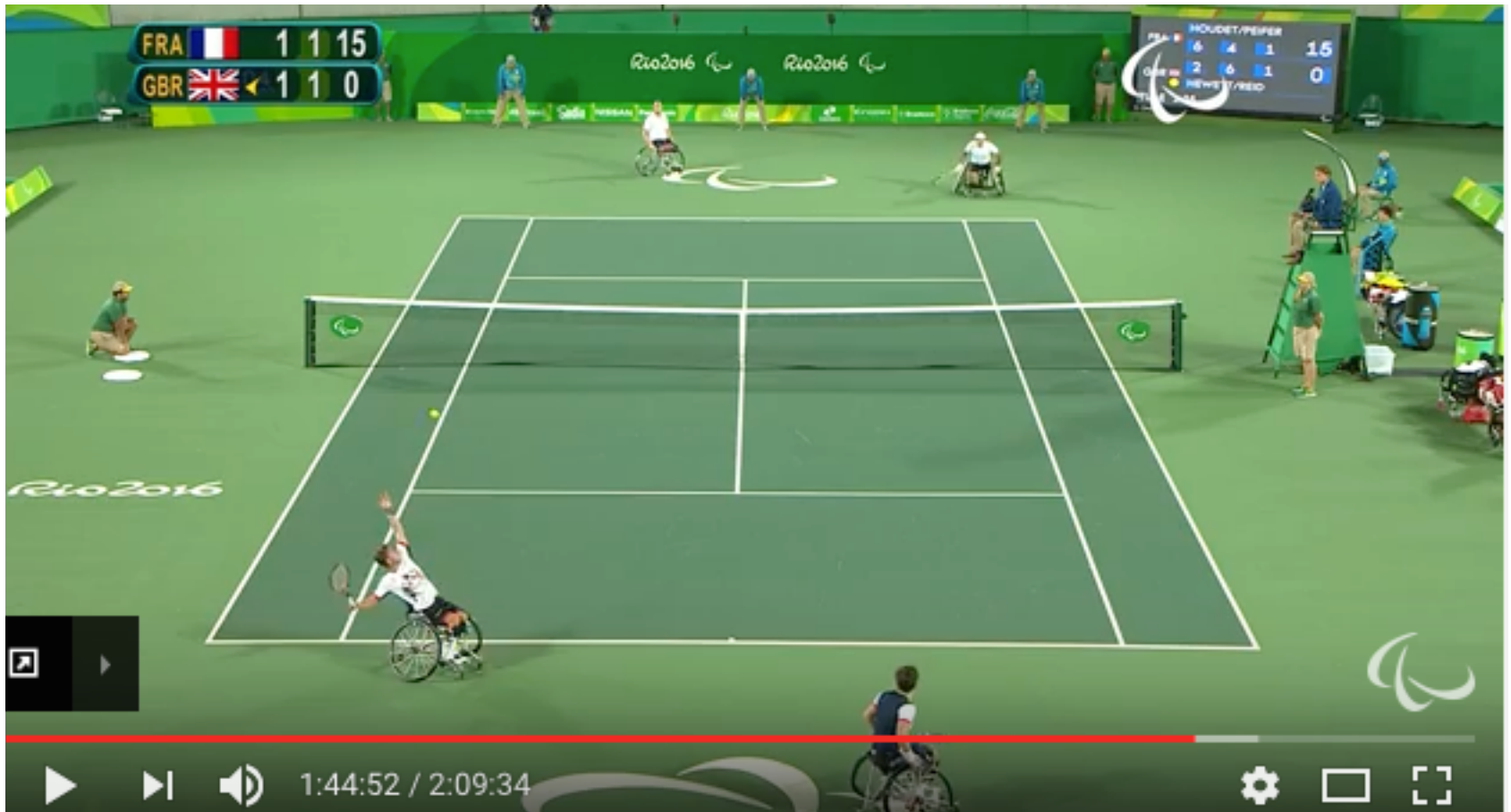
*“I was amazed at how quickly the kids in wheelchairs improved week after week, no matter what the level of their disability. Witnessing their delight in playing tennis and continued improvement is what inspired me the most. ”*

**- Brian Pound, BTC Champion of the Year 2011, Winnipeg, MB -**



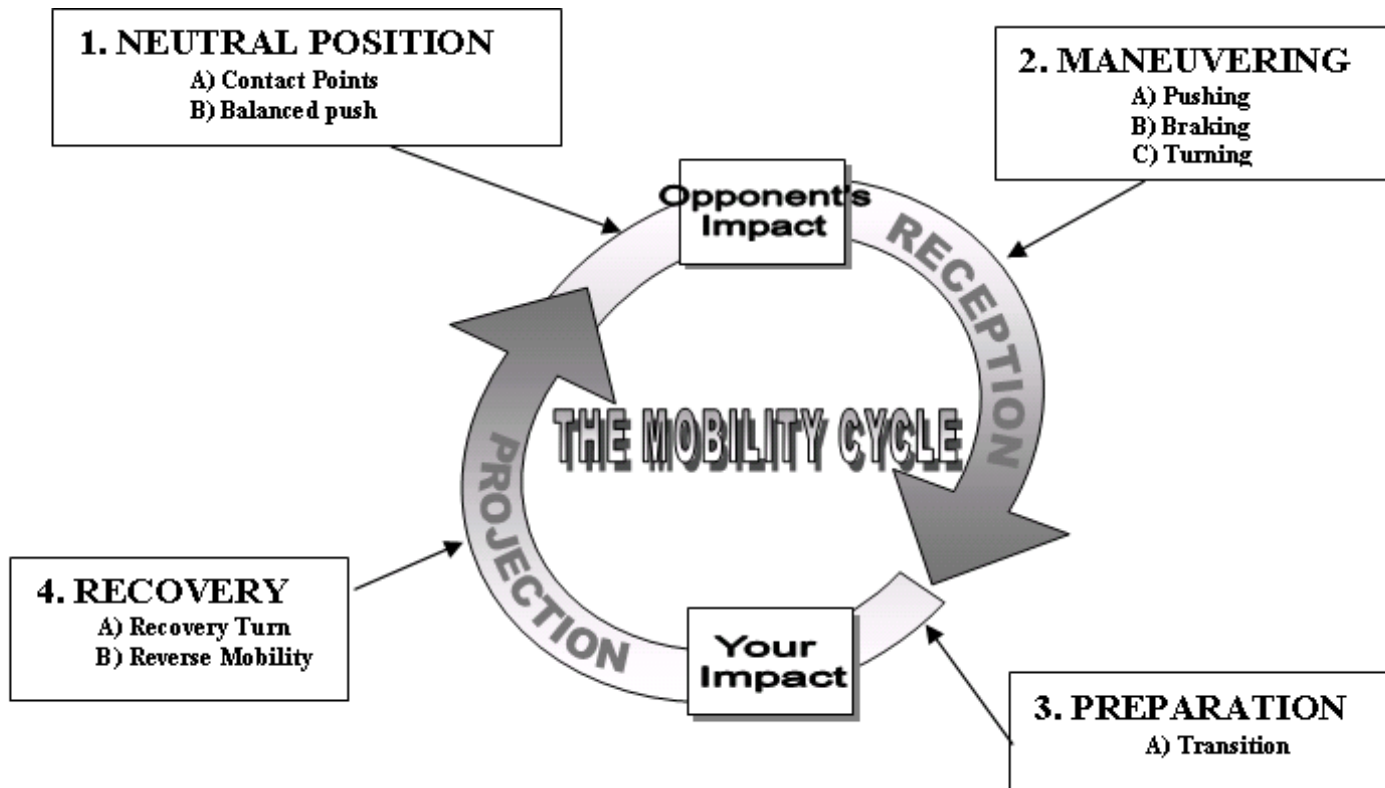


1:44:52.....1:46:33



# Movement in a Chair

- Biggest difference to able bodied tennis
- Circular (continuous) Mobility is crucial! Always in motion
- Racquet never leaves the hand!
- Reverse mobility is key



# Movement in a Chair



## ■ Neutral Position

- Contact Points:
  - Playing hand: Squeeze racket between hand and push rim
  - Racket never laid on lap!
  - Technique is secondary. Importance of solid contact points



# Movement in a Chair



## ■ Maneuvering

- Pushing
  - short thrusts to start, longer thrusts when player is in motion
  - Pushing motion from about '12 – 3'
- Breaking/Slowing down
  - Grabbing both wheels firmly
  - Leaning back
- Turning
  - Execution as Push and Pull turn



# Movement in a Chair

## ■ Preparation

- Transition from Pushing (arms as engine) to stroking
- Timing is Crucial!
  - Too early: no positional adjustments possible
  - Too late: stroke becomes uncontrollable 'slap'
- Unit Turn



# Movement in a Chair



## ■ Recovery

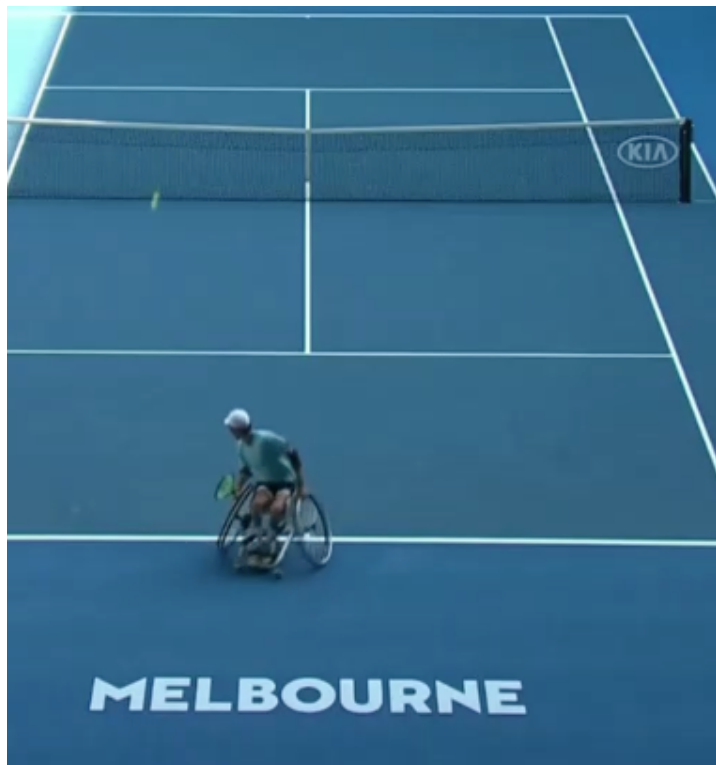
- Return to 'hub' to prepare to intercept next shot
- In Turns v. Out Turns
- Note: very rarely will pushing backwards be the best choice!
- Natural Momentum v. Tactical Considerations
- Concept of 'Reverse Mobility'



# Movement in a Chair



- **Reverse Mobility is EVERYTHING !**



# Shingo Kunieda - The Roger Federer of Wheelchair Tennis





# Pronated backhand



Marc McCarroll (GBR)

Photo: Tennis Foundation



# Tactical Development - Singles



- Keep the ball in play
- Place the ball:
  - To the opponent's weak side
  - Straight at the opponent
  - Behind the opponent
  - High bouncing balls through heavy topspin (underutilized strategy!)
  - Drop Shots
  - Finish Point at net after aggressive approach shot



# Tactical Development – Doubles

- Both Players back
- 1 Up, 1 Back
- Both players in continuous motion and communication to maximize court coverage



# Conducting a Beginner's Lesson



- warm up (time and space permitting)
- stroke progression (ball feed or cooperative) from throw tennis, floor tennis to self rally and cooperative rally (if level of participants allows it)
- Conclude with a Game of “Maniac Tennis”



# Coaches' quotes

*“This past season at UTSC I had the privilege of implemented and running a wheelchair tennis program every Thursday from 6-8pm. I would say these two hours were the most rewarding and enjoyable that I taught the entire season. The group that attended were so eager to learn and just plain have FUN, doing something completely new to them. We all felt at the end of the season that we couldn't wait for the next year to start. ”*

**- Dustin Sexton, Tennis coach UTSC , ON -**



# Coaches Quote

- *“Apart from my kids wheelchair tennis has been the best thing that has happen in my life.”*

Steve Manley, BC provincial wheelchair tennis coach



“My son Trevor loves wheelchair tennis. Every week he can't wait to go and also because he has friends to play with. He also has made some new friends because of the sport. It helps strengthen his upper body which is some thing he needs being in wheelchair all the time. He can also play this sport with friends and family who are not disabled and it doesn't matter how good one is at it. Trevor plays sledge hockey but this is only with other kids who are handicapped. He can't just play with his brother as he could with tennis. It's harder to find ice time, but with tennis one can play any time and it is great to have a summer sport. Thanks so much for starting the kids wheelchair tennis. “



Kim Schaffels, mother of participant Trevor

*“ Mississauga Little Aces Wheelchair Tennis is a place to be yourself, to discover yourself, to challenge yourself, and be comfortable with who you are because you are with a team of warm, caring, passionate staff, volunteers, parents and participants. Albert is a kind, dedicated, hardworking leader who can draw everyone together to reach a common goal... to create a wonderful, thriving environment like no other, a special place to be yourself, to discover yourself, to challenge yourself, and be comfortable with who you are and to achieve what you thought was unachievable... ”*

Jenny Lai, mother of 15 year old participant Puisand Lai





*“I've heard some parents comment on how much their child looks forward to the tennis, the interaction with the other children and how it builds their self-confidence. The children are very motivated by the volunteers and have a lot of “fun”. Some children even ask to “rally” with the adult volunteers. They get a huge kick out of it when they hit a great shot that the volunteer can't return. Some to the children are in pain from procedures, but seem to forget about it for the short while that they are on the court. “*

Suzanne Adorjan, program volunteer.



# Q & A

