**Posh Rock Tennis Foundation**

 **Special Olympics Pathway Training Program**

The Posh Rock Tennis Foundation would like to announce that we are adding an additional NJTL program that focuses exclusively on working with special needs students. The program’s focus will be to teach students how to play tennis and integrate our educational components. We will be working with our current partners (Hebni-proper nutrition & Iberia- financial education) and hopefully create a health focused program with The Orlando Health Foundation.

The main objectives of this program are to grow the game of tennis, create a “feeder program” to the Orange County Special Olympics team and foster a “healthy, active lifestyle”.

**Program Parameters**

**Residency requirements:**

Must be a resident of Orange County or a student in an Orange County school.

Age Requirements:

Minimum Age – 6 years old to train/ 8 years old to compete in Special Olympics

Maximum Age – No maximum age limitation for participation in Special Olympics Training program or competition.

The PRTF Special Olympics training program is open to every person with intellectual or physical disabilities. Participation in Special Olympics training and competition is open to all persons with intellectual disabilities who meet the age requirements, regardless of the level or degree of that person's disability, and whether that person also has other intellectual or physical disabilities.

 A person is considered to have intellectual disabilities for purposes of determining his or her eligibility to participate in Special Olympics if that person satisfies any one of the following requirements.

* The person has been identified by an agency or professional as having intellectual disabilities as determined by their localities
* The person has a cognitive delay, as determined by standardized measures such as intelligent quotient or "IQ" testing or other measures that are generally accepted within the professional community in that Accredited Program's nation as being a reliable measurement of the existence of a cognitive delay.
* The person has a closely related developmental disability. A "closely related developmental disability" means having functional limitations in both cognitive skills and practical adaptive skills (such as in conceptual skills, social skills, recreation, work, independent living, self-direction, or self-care). However, persons whose functional limitations are based solely on a physical, behavioral, or emotional disability, or a specific learning or sensory disability, are not eligible to participate as Special Olympics athletes
* Students are required to register to participate in Special Olympics Organization.

**(Stage 1) Introductory Skills and Red Ball:**

Students learn basic motor skills through a series of games and drills to foster a love of the game. We start the class with a mix of FUN and FUNDAMENTALS. 6:1 player to pro ratio. Court 36ft

As we present our new students with new learning opportunities, we don’t expect for them to learn everything at once. At the PRTF we comprehensively break down the learning task into small steps listed below:

* Presenting each learning task one step at a time. This avoids overwhelming the student.
* Once one step gets mastered, then introduce the next step. This gradual, step-by-step, learning approach is typical of many learning methodologies and directly benefits students with intellectual disabilities.
* We Constantly evaluate and modify as needed. Each of our students is unique and they all learn in different ways. The most effective way that we have found to quickly get all the necessary information to our students is to learn how they learn, thus increasing the progressive steps as students will make.

 **(Stage 2) Orange Ball Class:**

Students are starting to rally back and forth and will be taught how to develop compact and elevated swing paths on their ground strokes. They will learn how to serve and rally over elevated targets. They are learning to become actively engaged in their own development and their competitive interests are rising. The group is fundamentally sound in both movement and technique and are beginning to work on more advanced patterns of play utilizing the larger court space. Dynamic balance, experimentation with various tactics and strategies and development of "weapons" all become a part of the tennis player's game. 6:1 player to pro ratio. Court: 60ft​

**This is the class where we place an added emphasis on allowing our students to move while learning. Many of our Intellectually Disabled (ID) students learn best when they’re doing.**

Students with ID tend to tune out long verbal discussions and lectures on abstract concepts. Instead, most are kinesthetic learners and learn best by performing “hands-on” activities. Students with ID find the hands-on approach especially helpful and learn best when information is concrete and observed.

**(Stage 3) Green Ball Class:**

Students will learn to rally back and forth on a full court for the first time. Green is taught using a rally-based curriculum and focuses on developing sending and receiving skills, sound footwork, racquet mechanics and incorporating comparable athletic skills developed in other sports. Players learn how to properly position themselves to execute groundstrokes and volleys, hit with purpose, serve and ultimately sustain a rally of varying speed and duration. 6:1 player to pro ratio. Court: Full Size

**(Stage 4) High Performance:**

HP Training is for our elite students that are dedicated to becoming the next generation of Tournament Elite Players. We will be training these athletes to be able to compete in the Area/State/National and International Special Olympic Competitions. 4:1 player to pro ratio. Court: Full Size

## Teaching Strategies & Methodology

It is important to note that despite difficulties in a learning environment a student with ID can and do have the capacity to acquire and use new information. There is a wide range of inclusive teaching strategies that our instructors utilize to assist all our students with the learning process.

* Provide an outline of what will be taught - highlight key concepts and provide opportunities to practice new skills and concepts.
* Students may benefit from using assistive technology.
* Use as many verbal descriptions as possible
* Use clear, succinct, straightforward language.
* Reinforce learning by using real-life examples and environments.
* Present information in a range of formats – handouts, worksheets, overheads, videos – to meet a diversity of learning styles.
* Wherever possible, ensure that key statements and instructions are repeated or highlighted in some way.
* One-to-one tutoring in subjects may be important; this can include peer tutoring.
* It may be helpful for students with intellectual disability to have an individual private instruction

**Break Down the Content.**

**Make Learning Visual.**Students with ID do best where visual aids get used. This greatly enhances their learning experiences because students can see an example of student work.

**Make feedback immediate.** Our Instructors provide direct and immediate feedback to individuals with ID, as they require immediate feedback on how they’re performing. This feedback allows them to make a link between their behavior and the instructor’s response. An interruption in providing feedback makes it challenging for students with ID to form a connection between cause and effect.

**Use Accommodations and Modification to Get to the Learning Targets.**Like other students with disabilities, students with ID require accommodations and modifications to thrive on the tennis court. Students with ID often need support in the following areas:

1. Time (extra time to grasp concepts and complete tasks)
2. Setting (needs to work in a small group, with a partner or one on one with Instructor)
3. Materials (provide visual representations so that students can see concepts and personal progress)
4. Instruction (break into smaller parts, encourage one on one lessons, and peer partnering)
5. Student response (allow the student to respond orally or otherwise)

Teaching a student with intellectual disabilities allows us the opportunity to make a huge difference in a young person’s life. The strategies we employ will empower all people with intellectual disabilities to grow and learn.