



## Welcome Pack for Volunteers

On behalf of Enjoy Tennis we would like to take this opportunity to say a big welcome and thank you to the volunteers who have given up their time within their busy week to help all the players within our programmes.

Your time and your efforts will help the players to first and foremost feel part of a group, thus creating a sense of belonging. The feedback we have received from current players on how much their lives have been enhanced through better health and lots of fun and exercise has been life changing.

Taking on a new group can be challenging as well as rewarding and to help you get started, we have put together some information we hope you will find useful.

We have also included some guidelines for coaching with people with disabilities, and links to useful websites.

Finally, we would once again like to thank you for helping to make a difference in players' lives.

The Enjoy Tennis Team.



Below is an article written by Breedia Claffey, a long standing Enjoy Tennis coach on her experience working with Disability tennis players. It gives a great insight to the rewards of coaching with Enjoy Tennis groups.

### ***“The Best Hour of my Week”***

Every Saturday at 4pm, I am privileged to lead a coaching session of a group of very talented tennis players. But this a group with a difference: each of the pupils has an intellectual disability. But this coaching session is not about “disability” – it is all about “ability.”

There are 7 pupils in the group, and we gather on Saturdays in Elm Park Tennis Club. Elm Park have been very generous to the group – allowing us to utilise their two indoor courts for an hour each week. We cover all aspects of the game from the forehand, the backhand, and the ever-tricky serve. Whilst learning the skills of the game through enjoyment, the aim is to establish consistency through repetition.

The group varies in ability but are all extremely competitive. We have incorporated games into the sessions and winning the weekly prize has always acted as an incentive to improve. In very sportsmanlike fashion, even though each pupil wants to win, they are extremely supportive of each other’s efforts. We all believe in the Special Olympics motto – “Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt”.

As a coach, the experience has been captivating. I believe the opportunity to lead the group has improved my ability to coach generally. I have seen some of the on-court challenges all tennis players face from a different viewpoint. I have had to upskill in order to teach some of Tennis’ intricacies. In particular, court placement and also the scoring system have proved challenging to teach. However, it is an honour for me to help the pupils develop their skills and I can certainly say it is the best hour of my week.

Some helpful tips....

## **Terminology**

The purpose of this document is to give you some very basic background to the terminology used in relation to disability and also to give a guide to acceptable and respectful disability language. This language has changed over time and there are many different models of disability language, but currently in Ireland, we mostly talk about disability using people-first language (person with a disability), but you will also come across social model language also (disabled person)

### **Person with a disability v's disabled person, people-first language v social model.**

People-first language is where a person is put before the diagnosis/disability- person with a disability, it describes what a person has, not what a person is- person with a disability, person with a visual impairment/ hearing impairment, person with autism.

Disabled person is less used in Ireland, because it can be deemed that the disability is seen ahead of the person, but the reasoning behind this use of language through the Social Model of disability is that the person is disabled by the environment around them and the way society is- society is what is disabling them with the physical environment around us not being accessible, negative attitudes, lack of access to resources and other barriers created by society. The social model focusses on lifting these barriers to help **enable** the person experiencing them.

It is suggested to avoid words with negative connotations. For example:

Avoid 'confined to a wheelchair/ wheelchair bound'- preferred 'wheelchair user, uses a wheelchair'.

Also, using words like overcome and inspiring can be really patronising to a person with a disability, just treat them/ talk to them like you would any other player.

Avoid use of the word 'normal' to describe someone without a disability, it implies that the person with a disability isn't 'normal', maybe refer to them as a person without a disability, it is descriptive but not negative.

Don't worry if you use a regular phrase like 'see you later' to a person with a visual impairment, or 'did you hear about ...' to someone with a hearing impairment, most people will understand that it's just everyday language and not directed at their disability.

Just think a little about the language you use and listen to their needs, don't make assumptions. Remember, **you're coaching the person, not the label.**

### **Communication with a person with a disability**

#### **General tips**

- Use age appropriate tone and content when talking to the person, no-one appreciates being spoken to in a patronising manner, so don't talk to the player like they are a child if they are an adult.
- Always speak to the person themselves and not their parent/carer etc. If you do need to speak to the parent/carer, don't talk about the person like they're not there.
- Don't assume they want you to do something for them, they will ask if they need help, or ask them if there's any way you can help them and wait for the offer to be accepted/rejected
- Don't be afraid to ask the players themselves what they need/want/think. They might have ways you can adapt a skill/drill to suit their needs that you might not have thought of.
- No need to shout, like we often do when talking to a person from a foreign country, slow down your speech and use more basic terms if needed or try to explain something giving a visual, give a demonstration if it helps the person understand the drill etc.
- Be patient, flexible and supportive. Take time to understand the player and give them time to understand you
- If someone appears to be overwhelmed by a situation, try to keep them calm, maybe move them to a quieter place and give them time to settle themselves, ask if you can help in any way.

Below are links to some sites you may find useful to learn more about Enjoy Tennis and our achievements to date.

Enjoy Tennis information and coaching guides

<https://www.tennisireland.ie/clubs/enjoy-tennis/>

CARA Training Courses

<https://caracentre.ie/training/>

Enjoy Tennis Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/enjoytennisireland/>

## Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection

Since the National Vetting Bureau Act of 2016 it is illegal for any volunteer to work with children or vulnerable adults on a continuous basis before successfully completing the Garda Vetting process.

Please find a link [here](#) to the Tennis Ireland Garda Vetting Application form

All volunteers working for Enjoy Tennis must have completed a signed copy of the code of conduct. Please use the link below to the code of conducts and select the code relevant to volunteers.

<https://www.tennisireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Appendix-10-Codes-of-Conduct.doc>

It is also recommended to have completed the Safeguarding 1 courses. Details available [here](#).

**All certificates must be presented and expiration dates recorded by an Enjoy Tennis representative.**

Thank you for taking the time to read this information pack. We hope you will find working with Enjoy Tennis a rewarding experience.

The Enjoy Tennis Team.

