



Welcome to the second edition of the ITF Wheelchair Tennis Coaches Review and the first issue in 2001. This is a very exciting year for wheelchair tennis as it is celebrating 25 years as an organised sport. To celebrate this anniversary the ITF will be producing a book on the history of the sport which will be available later in the year.

I would like to start by thanking Marko Polic for all his hard work as Development Officer and for initiating this Review. From my recent trip to South America it is clear that coaches are very enthusiastic about the Review and appreciate greatly the articles written by the contributors. On behalf of the ITF I would like to wish Marko well in his future career.

The Wheelchair Tennis Coaches Review gives wheelchair tennis a platform through which to reach all tennis coaches. If you know of a coach who would like to receive this publication please send their contact details to me in the ITF Office.

This issue includes a variety of articles on different aspects of the game written by some of the top coaches in wheelchair tennis. The first article gives an insight to the 'pronated backhand' by Wayne Elderton. Next Randy Snow gives some advice on 'attacking the free hand'. The next article gives coaches some ideas on co-ordination and mobility exercises that can be used with top players or beginners alike. The fourth article focuses on mobility and is written by Dan James. This is followed by tips for coaches and players travelling on the NEC Wheelchair Tennis Tour. Finally, there is a coaching tip from former top 10 player, Michael Foulks.

I would like to thank all the contributors to this issue of WTCR and would like to encourage others to contribute articles for future issues. If you have any ideas on how to improve this publication please let me know. The next issue will be available in August.

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# THE “PRONATED” BACKHAND

Wayne Elderton

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The “Pronated” Backhand (as I call it) is becoming a staple shot in the advanced wheelchair game. The stroke is performed by ‘flipping’ the racket so the back of the hand is in front of your face (palm turned outwards). A forehand or continental grip is used and the ball is contacted on the backhand side of the body with topspin.



The first time I saw the shot, my reaction was, “you can’t hit a shot like that!” However, as I observed the top players, and started to understand some of the unique technical demands of wheelchair tennis, it started to make sense.

## **Tennis is an “Open Skill”**

In the science of Motor Learning, tennis is classified as an ‘Open Skill’. This means that technical skills must constantly be adapted to an ever-changing situation. For example, even in able bodied tennis, the typical forehand technique cannot be used when the ball is harder, higher, shorter, etc. It must be modified for the situation to be effective.

The goal of traditional tennis instruction was to conform students to an idealised model stroke. Since tennis is an open skill, this is a flawed process when coaching able bodied players, and even worse when applied to wheelchair players. Effective and efficient open skill technique is based on principles that need to work in all the situations a player encounters in tennis.

### **A challenging situation**

Obviously, the technique of the pronated backhand was not created by coaches. It evolved as a solution to a problem top players faced when competing. The problem could be phrased like this: "I need to be able to take a ball that is higher than ideal on the backhand side and send it back in a way that doesn't give my opponent an advantage."

One common solution was to slice the high ball on the backhand. A disadvantage of that option is the difficulty in putting pressure on the opponent. If not done well, the ball has a tendency to 'pop-up' giving the opponent the advantage. Even if it is hit well, a slice with its lower trajectory tends to stay low, bouncing at a height just right for a wheelchair opponent. In addition, the difficulty of generating good racket speed on a high slice meant the pace of the shot was not very challenging and it may land short.

A topspin backhand did not fully solve the problem either. An appropriate low-to-high racket path is very difficult when the ball is high. Another common option was to simply 'push' the ball back high and flat. All these challenges add up to a weak reply when receiving a high ball to your backhand.

### **Pronated Backhand advantages**

In contrast to a traditional topspin backhand, flipping the racket face over allows a much more low-to-high racket path because of the addition of the forearm & elbow segments. That path can be maintained in many more ranges than a topspin backhand (which can only produce an appropriate low-to-high path in a very small impact point range). In other words, if the ball is higher, closer to the body, or further away, a steep low-to-high path can still be performed with the 'Pronated Backhand' technique. This is a tremendous advantage for a wheelchair player who needs strokes that work in many 'emergency' situations.

With the racket path advantage comes the added bonus of being able to accelerate the racket through the shot. Having a fast racket speed will make the shot more challenging (because of pace, added height and spin) and allow the player the psychological advantage of remaining aggressive on the shot.

### **Learning Progressions**

Here are some suggested steps that have been used successfully to help players master the pronated backhand. These steps present the technique in

the most common situation it occurs, receiving a high backhand in a crosscourt rally.

**Step #1: Decision-making:**

The first step required is to teach to identify the right time to use the shot. By deciding quickly if it is the appropriate time, the player can prepare early. The coach can have the player call out cue words to identify the right time. When the ball is lower to the backhand, the player can call, “back” (to signal a regular backhand). When the ball is higher, the player can call, “flip” (to signal turning the racket face over).

Having the player call out the word allows the coach to observe when the decision is being made. For example, if the player cannot call the word before the ball bounces on their side, it may indicate they are not focussed on judging the ball. Progress the player from deciding before the bounce to before the ball comes over the net.

**Step #2: Motor Pattern:**

Once the player can quickly select the right time to apply the shot, the next step is to help them feel the correct movement. At first it may be very strange to hit the ball like this. A successful progression starts with the feeling of the forearm being pronated. The ability of the player to feel and control the racket path and angle in this ‘upside-down’ position is critical.

**Palm Paddle:** Players can grasp this feeling better if a ‘Palm Paddle’ is used (see photograph below). This light wooden paddle is held against the palm of the hand by an elastic strap. They are very easy to make and invaluable for understanding the technique. The coach can feed the ball to the player who needs to feel how they can project the palm of their hand low-to-high the back of the ball. Once the kinaesthetic connection is made with the palm of their hand, the shot comes easier.



**Racket:** The player can then grip high up on the racket with the palm of the hand against the throat (the index finger can be touching the strings as a checkpoint). The same low-to-high movement is used to give the ball topspin.

The player now makes a kinaesthetic connection with the palm of their hand and the strings. The grip is then gradually moved down the racket until a forehand or continental grip is adopted (progress as fast as the player can handle). The goal is to feel the impact and get used to controlling the racket angle when it is in this 'upside-down' position.

Step #3: Tactical objective:

The third step is to use the technique to challenge the opponent. The tactic is to send a high topspin shot with authority to the opponent's backhand side. The desired effect is to put the opponent in the same predicament (receiving a high ball to the backhand). This will hopefully produce a weak or short reply that can be taken advantage of. It is also very useful to teach the next shot after the pronated backhand to package it into a successful tactical pattern.

## Conclusion

The 'Pronated Backhand' was created by top wheelchair players to master a challenging situation. Coaches can 'reverse engineer' the shot and introduce it as another option for players at many levels. It is important to always teach shots in a tactical situation so they can be more easily integrated into real match play.

## Attacking the Free Hand.

Randy Snow



*Randy is a 10 times US Open champion, Paralympic Gold Medallist (1992) and NEC Masters Champion (1994). He was also the first ITF Wheelchair Tennis World Champion. He now devotes much of his time to passing on his wealth of knowledge to coaches and players alike.*

Most ( 83%) turns in wheelchair tennis are done naturally. A natural turn is a turn that moves the player in the direction of the free hand. This type of turn bridges positioning and stroke execution and places the racket hand shoulder at the path of the ball, which produces a higher chance of a successful stroke.

Attacking the free hand is an advanced strategy, which basically means hitting the ball away from the racket hand. This can be done during stationary, lateral, forward or reverse mobility. This is an excellent strategy because it asks the opponent to push with the racket hand, which is his weakest power source, to a ball that is on the side of the free hand of the opponent. For a right handed player the following locations identify this strategy:

Opponent	Player
Reverse mobility	Hit to deuce court
Lateral movement –from the deuce court	Hit to short deuce or deep ad
Lateral movement –from the ad court	Hit to short ad or deep deuce
Forward mobility	Hit to ad

When manipulating the movement of an opponent for the purpose of exploiting a mobility weakness, consideration of the power source of this mobility is prime.

The Hurricane. A wheelchair opponent is like a hurricane. If the ball is in the circular gale of their ground strokes, the opponent is strongest here and will impel their will by hitting good shots. But if the ball is directed away before the winds can get to it, or it is directed into the weakest part of this gale, which is the eye of the hurricane, although it's scary, the player will have a great opportunity of surviving and making it out okay.

## Co-ordination & Movement Exercises for Wheelchair Tennis Players

Mark Bullock - ITF Wheelchair Tennis Development Officer

Many of these drills, exercises and games are not specific to wheelchair tennis. Some have been adapted to introduce specific wheelchair tennis skills e.g. reverse mobility. Most are very simple and can be used by a coach to improve and develop particular skills for advanced player and they can also be used in a school/rehabilitation centre environment. None of the exercises require a tennis court. They are designed to be fun and to improve co-ordination, movement (chair skills) and balance.

Some of the exercises can be done alone, some can be done with a partner and some in a group/class situation.

### Alone!

- One player keeps one balloon off the ground with one hand or both hands.
- One player keeps two/three balloons off the ground with hand (s).
- As above but use playing hand only.
- As above using non-playing hand.
- As above using racket/bat to keep balloon(s) up.
- As above using racket/bat & tennis ball.
- Pushing whilst bouncing ball with playing hand or non-playing hand.
- Pushing a ball round lines or in between markers/cones 'hockey' style.



- Juggling!
- 'Get Dizzy' -Throw ball in air and turn through 360 degrees & catch after bounce – encourage players to turn in both directions.
- Bounce 2 balls (one in right hand and one in left) at same time (will depend on balance of player).
- As above but bounce a tennis ball with one hand and a transition ball with the other.

### **In pairs**

- Two players rally with a balloon with hands/rackets.
- Two players keep 3 balloons off the floor – increase number of balloons!!
- Two players throw & catch 2 balls simultaneously – use both hands/dominant hand/non dominant hand.
- Racket drop in pairs – hold racket on the floor on its head & on a signal attempt to catch partner's racket before it hits the ground.
- 'Penalty Strikes' – one player takes penalty strikes using racket as a 'hockey stick' against partner who defends a goal with racket in hand marked out by cones. This exercise teaches players to aim for gaps and alertness.
- Player has back to partner. On a command he/she turns quickly to catch a ball thrown by partner after one/two bounces.
- Player has back to partner. Partner throws 2/3 balls over player's head and he/she has to touch all the balls as quickly as possible with playing hand/racket. This exercise can be done with or without the player looking over their shoulder.

### **Group Warm Ups**

- 'Traffic lights' (rally, attack, defend) – on the command 'attack' players push as fast as they can, changing direction as they go. On the command 'defend' players must stop immediately. On the command rally players push at a gentle pace.
- The 'Grand Slam' – players push around the court & on certain commands they imitate a certain player e.g. Seles – grunt or on the command 'ready' they stop & get into a ready position. With or without rackets depending on safety factors.
- Egg & Spoon Relays – Relay races should be done in small teams to reduce queues and keep activity levels high.
- Mini basketball/handball. A hoop on the floor or a bucket can be used as the 'basket'.
- 'Snake' – not tried this one!! - A group of children form a snake chain by holding on to each other's chairs! The 'head' tries to catch the 'tail'. Safety needs to be a consideration!
- 'Basketball Push' or 'Balloon Throw' – a basketball is placed in the middle of the 'court'. Players are split into 2 teams in each of the tramlines. On

the command go the teams throw the ball underarm towards the basketball in an attempt to make the basketball roll into the other team's tramline. No over arm throws are allowed. Players should also be encouraged to throw with the non-dominant hand.

Variation: sponge balls could be used with a balloon in which case over arm throws could then be used.

- 'Stuck in the mud'.  
When a player is tagged they sit with their arms out and are released when an untagged player pushes under their arms.
- 'Cat & Mouse'  
One player is the cat and the other is the mouse. The cat pushes after the mouse and tries to tag them. Once tagged the roles are reversed. Also the roles can be reversed on a command from the coach/teacher.
- 'Shark.'  
Players line up outside the doubles sidelines, which are the safety areas (dry land). A shark is located within the doubles court (the ocean) and attempts to tag players as they move from one doubles sideline to the other. All players tagged become sharks until all the players are tagged. This can be played with or without rackets.
- Coach/teacher calls out a number. The command 'no. 1' means the players should take a push, play a 'shadow' forehand & recover; 'no. 2' the player pushes to play a shadow backhand; 'no. 3' the player plays a shadow overhead.  
Variation: instead of verbal cues the coach/teacher controls the direction of movement using a visual cue by standing in front of the group with the players following a ball.
- The coach/teacher calls out a number. No. 1 indicates a very quick turn to the right (90 degrees) and recover to face the coach, no.2 indicates a very quick turn to the 'left' and on no. 3 the players throw their arms in the air and shout 'geronimo!!' or similar.
- The coach has a ball in his or her hand and the players have to follow the ball. If the coach runs/pushes to the left the players follow. If coach moves towards the players they turn and push away (reverse mobility) looking over their shoulders at the ball in the coaches hand.
- The players push in a circle around the coach. The coach throws balls to the players as they push and the players catch the ball and return to the coach.  
Variation: players catch ball with non-dominant hand/non-dominant hand.

### **Rally Games that do not require a court**

- Players aim at a 'mountain' constructed from a pyramid built with 4 tennis balls. Pairs are given 1000 points for knocking down the 'mountain'.



Progression: 2 'mountains' are constructed. Each player aims to destroy opponents 'mountain' of balls. Other targets can be used if not enough tennis balls are available.

- 'Fish' – players rally over tramlines (river) or similar in a co-operative manner. On the command of one player shouting 'fish' then his/her partner aims to make the ball land in the 'water'.
- Players rally without a net defending a goal.
- Players rally over a rope with streamers on.
- Players play a 'match' over a barrier without rackets. Under arm throws only. This allows an early introduction of tactics & understanding of the game.

### **Facilities Required**

None of the above exercises require a tennis court. They can be done in a gymnasium or on a flat surface outside. For any exercises that do require a net, a rope with streamers on it can be used, or a bench.

### **Equipment**

Different types of balls and rackets can be used depending on what is most appropriate to the standard of the player and what is available. Foam balls, transition balls and regular tennis balls can all be used. Ideally rackets of an appropriate size and weight should be used but if they are not available wooden bats can be used.

### **Wheelchairs**

Specialist wheelchairs are not required although it is best to use chairs that do not have high arm rests. In some cases the arm rests can be removed.

Players may feel more comfortable doing these exercises if they are strapped into the chair. Velcro straps, belts, bungee cords or elastic bands can be used. Straps can be used around the ankles, knees and waist to make the player feel more stable in the chair when taking part in these activities. The actual straps used depend on the personal preference of the player.

### **Pushing**

When pushing with a racket in the above exercises players should be encouraged to push with the racket in their playing hand at all times. When pushing a wheelchair player uses the grip of the racket and the thumb and fingers to propel the chair.

### **Useful publications:**

- ITF Schools Tennis Initiative: Teacher's Manual
- ITF Mini Tennis – Developing the Base
- ITF Wheelchair Tennis Coaches Manual
- USTA 102 Wheelchair Tennis Drills

Most drills, exercises in existing tennis publications can be used for wheelchair tennis players. Some may have to be adapted slightly. Be creative and use your imagination. Challenge yourself to invent new exercises or adapt existing ones.

## Always Start With Mobility

Dan James



*Dan graduated in 1992 with a major in Speech/Communications. He was introduced to wheelchair tennis in 1992 and began travelling to clinics, camps and tournaments in 1993. In 1998 he was appointed assistant coach to the US World Team Cup team and the following year he was made head coach. Dan was the men's coach for the US team at the 2000 Paralympic Games in Sydney. He works as the Head Tennis Professional at the Lakeshore Foundation in Birmingham, Alabama.*

Tennis is a game of position and the only way to get into position is to be able to move. It always seems that this is the greatest challenge in wheelchair tennis so it should always be the beginning point of learning the game. There are three simple steps to basic wheelchair mobility:

1. Learning how to hold the racket and push the chair.
2. Learning the patterns of wheelchair mobility.
3. Combining contact with a live ball and moving the chair.

### **Step 1 Holding The Racket**

The racket is held in the dominant hand with four fingers leaving the thumb free. This leaves the pad of the hand free giving you a nice contact point with the push rim or the wheel. You can also use the forearm on your racket side as an additional contact point with the wheel. It will take time to develop the hand strength to hold the racket and push the chair so when you first begin you should spend a great deal of time just pushing the chair around the court. Remember, anytime you are on the court you should be pushing with the racket in your hand. This is great practice and even better conditioning to strengthen the racket hand.

Once the contact points are established you will discover that your racket hand is weaker than the free one. This means that your free hand and arm will be doing most of the work when playing while the racket side will get all the glory. The free hand will be responsible for pushing, turning, and adjusting at the last minute. You should practice pushing and turning with a racket in your hand trying not to skid and slow the chair down. Developing a turning style that allows fluid movement with the racket hand will be essential to your mobility. You may even want to practice some cross-handed turns where you take your free hand and bring it to your racket side turning the chair. This is an advanced move and requires decent balance, but will come

in very handy when quick movement and turns are needed. Once you are comfortable having the racket in your hand and moving the chair you are ready to examine patterns of movement in wheelchair tennis.

## **Step 2 Mobility Patterns**

Knowing what the letter V looks like is the key to wheelchair mobility. This is the most basic pattern and the basis for advanced patterns of mobility. There is a place five feet behind the baseline called the hub. It is the origin of movement and the point to which you recover at all times. It is the point at the bottom of the letter V. When addressing the ball you should attack it at a forty-five degree angle moving forward. The movement of the chair gives you additional power as well as the ability to rotate into the ball for even more power and control. If you are right handed and you are moving to the right you will hit what is called a forehand. We will look at the stroke later, but it is important to note that the free hand is essential in turning the chair to the inside of the court continuing the turn until the front caster of the wheelchair is pointing back to the hub. The turn should not be so drastic that with a turn of your head you cannot see the ball and your opponent on the other side of the court. Maintain the approximate angle at which you addressed the ball in your recovery.

If you are right handed and moving to your left you will be hitting what is known as a backhand with your hitting arm going across your body to make contact. You will attack the ball at the same forty-five degree angle, but this time using your non-hitting you will turn to the outside until the front caster of your wheelchair is again facing the hub.

You can practice this mobility pattern with proper turns without the ball by pushing the V over and over again; out to the right, back to the hub; out to the left; and then back to the hub. You should repeat this over and over again until it is second nature to make the proper turns and maintain your speed throughout the drill. You should never go in a line exactly parallel to the baseline because this breaks the pattern of the V. A simple key to remember if you are doing it right: you start the drill with a first push, but should never have to take another one throughout the drill. This is called constant movement and will be very important in more advanced movement patterns.

## **Step 3 Adding The Ball**

The last step is to add a tennis ball to our V mobility drill, or what is known as the "Hub Drill", and begin hitting. Start slow at first remembering that the mobility is more important than the quality of the shot you hit. Get used to having to time the speed of your approach. You may need to slow your speed down if you are going to run into the ball or speed up if it looks to be out of reach. Use your free hand to adjust the angle of the chair so you don't run into the ball keeping it away from the body and the chair. The more you do this drill the easier it will be to get into the correct hitting position every time. This will make it easier to perfect stroke production, which we will look at in our next issue.

## 'Don't forget your toothbrush' - Travelling on the NEC Tour

Mark Bullock, ITF Wheelchair Tennis Development Officer

As wheelchair tennis becomes more 'professional' in terms of the organisation of events and the introduction of prize money, and many players are semi-professional or professional are you preparing your players for the rigours of the Tour or do you simply coach techniques and tactics and feel that the lifestyle management of your players is not your concern?

As a coach you appreciate professionalism is not an option. It is not something you can choose to do one day and not the next. Do you educate your players to be well organised and take responsibility for their own development both on and off the court? Do you instil in them a work ethic and positive attitude to practice that you know will be re-produced when they are travelling. Do you encourage them to understand the impact of their diet on their performance? Do you explain the importance of regular and sufficient sleep?

Do your players understand the importance of drinking fluids not just when on court but at all times? Do your players follow a fitness programme?

As the sport of wheelchair tennis grows the expectations of players will rise in terms of tournament organisation and prize money but to succeed in the sport will become tougher. As countries take up the sport and more players are attracted to what the sport has to offer what is required to be a top 100 player may change. A professional approach may be the difference that gets your player into the Paralympics, or into the Invacare World Team Cup Squad or to win the National Championships.

This article cannot cover every aspect of a player's approach to their sport, which for some players is their profession but it attempts to outline some key areas that players require on the NEC Tour.

### **Travelling**

Players should drink lots of fluids whilst flying to avoid becoming dehydrated and avoid alcohol. They should ensure that they arrive early enough at an event to get over the jet lag and acclimatise. It is also vital to become familiar with the surroundings so that a player is not panicking on the first day of an event because they cannot find something they need.

Encourage your young players to book their own flights and make enquiries about visa requirements as this will prepare them for the hazards of travel and increase their understanding. Also, encourage tour players to make their own enquiries over any injections they may require.

## Equipment

Educate your player to always travel with rackets and wheelchair in good repair. It may not be as easy to get repairs done at the destination as you think. Does your player carry a pump and a tool kit so they can undertake minor repairs themselves? Ensure your player travels with plenty of grips.



Their favourite grip may not be available where they are going. Players should take several sets of strings with them as they may not be available at the destination. Also, players need to know their string tension in both pounds and kilograms. Do your players pack their tennis wheelchairs to minimise the chances of damage in transit? Can your players change a tyre? Do they travel with spare tyres and inner tubes? It is not a requirement that tournaments provide a repair station. Many tournaments will provide such facilities but ultimately it is the player's own responsibility to ensure that their chair is 'fit for play'.

## Clothing

Make sure your players travel with clothing appropriate to the country they are travelling to including clothes to wear at the player party/official dinner. Are they used to playing in a cap or with sun glasses?

## The Sun

Are your players aware of the potential hazards of the sun? Do they appreciate the impact that dehydration has on their performance? Ensure your players travel with a cap, sun glasses and plenty of sunscreen.

## **Practice**

Do you insist that your players come prepared to play in practice sessions at home with new grips on their rackets, tyres pumped up and a full water bottle? If you insist on good practice at home these habits will mean your players are well prepared when they travel.

## **Entering Tournaments**

Involve your players in planning their tournament schedules. Educate juniors to send in their own entry forms and make enquiries about events. Do you understand how the points are allocated for the world ranking? Do you know the difference between a CS1 and a CS3? Do your players understand the Main draw and Second draw? Do you know how a feed up card works? For information on the NEC Tour refer to the Wheelchair Tennis Tournament Guide.

## **The Hotel**

The quality of hotels on the Tour varies. Getting washing done, making telephone calls etc are all things your player will need to do and they can be expensive. Internet access is not always possible. At most tournaments players share rooms. You should encourage your players to find someone they get on with to room with in advance of the event so that they are not woken in the middle of the night by a stranger before an important match.

## **'Hanging around'**

Travelling to international tournaments involves a lot of waiting around, in airports, in hotels and at the event itself. Talk to your players about how they will best use this time to avoid getting bored and to have constructive things to do to avoid the distractions that might prevent a player from focussing on the job in hand. Rain delays can frustrate players if they are not prepared with a strategy of what to do while they are waiting. Some of the top wheelchair players are pretty good at chess!

## **Doubles Partner**

Encourage your players to find out who is travelling to the same tournaments and arrange a partner in advance. This helps reduce uncertainty and increases a player's chance of playing with a preferred partner. It also gives your player a better opportunity to develop an established partnership.

## **Languages**

Encourage your young players to learn and use languages. It will make life on the NEC Wheelchair Tennis Tour that bit smoother. It may encourage them at school if they see a real use for their languages.

## The coach

If you get the chance to travel with one of your players it is a great experience and will increase your understanding of standards and the NEC Tour in general. It is a great chance to learn from other players and coaches. You can start by attending an event in your own country. It also improves your understanding of some of the problems that can be encountered when travelling – delayed flights, lost passports, lost or damaged wheelchairs!

## Expect the unexpected

Things will always go wrong but the best prepared players will be better equipped to deal with such situations. Encourage your players to have ‘what if’ discussions. What if my luggage is lost? What if my rackets are stolen? What if my chair is damaged by an airline? Such discussions will prepare your players to deal with such situations when they arise. Also, encourage your players to discuss the Tour with more experienced players who have played international tournaments.

This article does not cover everything a player needs to consider when travelling but it will hopefully help you to prepare your players for life on tour. There is much more involved to competing on the NEC Wheelchair Tennis Tour than simply playing tennis. Top players need a wide range of skills and attributes to enable them to be successful. The morale of the story is ‘be prepared’ – don’t forget your toothbrush!

## COACHES CORNER, SAN DIEGO

Michael Foulks



*Michael Foulks is a former top 10 player with more than a dozen titles on the NEC Wheelchair Tennis Tour who is now coaching in the United States. Today Michael mixes coaching and playing wheelchair tennis. He now hopes to pass on what he has learned to other players. He will be the coach for the USA junior team at the 2001 Invacare World Team Cup in Switzerland.*

If you play wheelchair tennis long enough, you'll be able to tell which players are relative newcomers to the game. Even if their strokes remind you of Gustavo Kuerten. An obvious give away is the "drifter". You will see this when the player stops driving the wheelchair too soon and instead waves the racket toward the ball while leaning out of the wheelchair. This is not only a rookie move, it is also a great way to make you feel extra disabled on the tennis court. Please refrain from this activity.

Remember to take those final pushes that will get you into prime position to hit the ball. Here's an exercise: Take a practice swing and notice exactly where your racket would make contact with the imaginary tennis ball. From this day forward, you should work hard to gain optimal position on EVERY SHOT! Go ahead and get obsessive about it. Especially on windy days when the ball drifts to and fro, you need to take command and refuse to allow the ball to play you. It is you who must play the ball.

## **Rehabilitation Centre/School for the Disabled Programme**

As part of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations the ITF has launched a Rehabilitation Centre/School for the Disabled Programme. International Wheelchair Tennis Association Member Nations (IWTA) have been offered support to put on introductory programmes in Rehabilitation Centres and Schools for the Disabled. A poster has been produced to promote this Initiative. If any coaches would like to display a poster at their place of work please contact me in the ITF Office. Also, if you are interested in initiating a programme in a Rehabilitation Centre please contact the organisation affiliated to the IWTA in your country. If you are not sure who to approach please contact me at the ITF.

**Mark Bullock**

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## More Information

### *ITF Wheelchair Tennis Coaches Manual*

Written by former ITF Wheelchair Tennis Development Officer, Marko Polic  
To order telephone +44 20 8392 4788 or print off an order form from  
itftennis.com

### *Issue 1 ITF Wheelchair Tennis Coaches Review*

### *Wheelchair Tennis – Myth to Reality*

Written by Randy Snow & Dr Bal Moore  
To order telephone + 44 20 8392 4788 or print off an order form from  
itftennis.com (limited availability)

### *102 Wheelchair Tennis Drills - **NEW***

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return, strategy & doubles.  
Ordering details: the item number for ordering is INS21. Cost is \$15 +  
shipping & handling. The phone number to call for ordering is ++1-888-832-  
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