



## Special Populations Unified Doubles (SPUD) Tennis League Coach, Captain, Spectator, and Unified Partner Code of Sportsmanship

- A. The unified partner has the responsibility of providing a safe and fun environment for all participating athletes.
- B. The unified partner needs to recognize when the opposing athlete has hit an exceptional return shot, sustained a rally, or made a serve to the best of his/her ability. At that time, the athlete has then earned that point, unless the opposing athlete returns the shot.
- C. The unified partner should ALWAYS play at the level of the athletes on the court. This includes when they are hitting to the other unified partner. If you play to the unified partner as if you were playing your own ALTA or USTA match, that partner will have to work harder at adjusting the ball they hit back to the athlete at the athlete's level.
- D. In the event that the unified partner wins a point by playing above the opposing athlete's skill level, the unified partner shall award an equally meaningful point as soon as play permits.
- E. Each unified partner shares the responsibility to bring out the best tennis and sportsmanship of both athletes before, during, and after match play.
- F. The athlete is the "star" of the match. The athlete should serve first, unless there is an overriding condition i.e. sun. The majority of points played should feature the skills and effort of the athlete. The unified partner's time to "shine" is when they are playing their own USTA or ALTA men's, women's or mixed doubles league.
- G. When at the net, the athlete should be at least one full step from the net (similar position as required by Individual Skills Competition). This will allow the unified partner the opportunity to rally with the opposing athlete in a meaningful manner.
- H. The unified partner should not lob the opposing athlete. Shot selection by the unified partner to the opposing athlete, i.e. challenging volley or short lob should always be based on the opposing athlete's skill level to handle such shot.



## Special Populations Unified Doubles (SPUD) Tennis League Coach, Captain, Spectator, and Unified Partner Code of Sportsmanship

- I. Unified partners should never poach. However, the unified partner may encourage and coach his/her athlete to perform such. If the unified partner continuously cuts in front of the athlete or takes shots that were the athlete's shot the athlete will never learn to move to make that shot. Unified partners should never play a ball that is the athlete's ball. If the athlete misses the ball the partner should not run behind the athlete to hit the shot.
- J. Spectators are encouraged to cheer the performance of all athletes and unified partners. Coaches/Captains should discourage any off-court chatter or cheering that may influence the performance of the athlete and/or unified partner in a negative manner.
- K. Aggressive play is discouraged and should be reported to the Program Director. It will be the full responsibility of the Program Director to observe and handle these charges based on a fair and equitable basis using his/her best judgment with the best interest of the athletes being the top priority.
- L. Unified Partners are encouraged to coach his/her athlete during match play regarding shot selection, court position, court movement, etc. They should always follow the rules of tennis and should redirect and coach athletes to do the same.
- M. Coaches/Captains are encouraged to be located inside the fence and at courtside during match play. Coaches/Captains will only be allowed to coach the players during changeovers. Exceptions may be deemed appropriate and approved by the Program Director. When multiple matches are being played simultaneously, the Coach/Captain may identify a designee to perform such duties.
- N. The Program Director has full authority to handle all deviations from this code of sportsmanship.

***The success of Special Pops to fulfill its mission to provide a meaningful tennis experience for every athlete depends greatly on the judgment of the Unified Partner.***