



## THE PARALYMPIC WHEELCHAIR TENNIS PODIUM PATHWAY

Starting in 2017 Tennis Canada - in partnership with Sports-Canada/Own The Podium, the International Tennis Federation as well as coaches, sports physiologists and psychologists, administrators and other key stakeholders - has undertaken a comprehensive data research and video analysis project that led to the creation of the first wheelchair tennis **PODIUM PATHWAY**.

The Podium Pathway describes the sport-defined excellence stages of athlete development and specifically applies to athletes on a trajectory toward podium results at the highest level of their sport. The Podium Pathway encompasses:

**1 The Podium Results Track:** The progression of performance benchmarks (derived from competition results) required to move through the excellence stages of athlete development and successfully reach the Paralympic podium.

**2. Winning Style of Play:** A tactical, evidence-based conceptualization - including measurable tactical outcomes in all areas of competitive play - of what it takes to be the best in the world.

**3. Gold Medal Profile:** The collection of skills and attributes that underpin the performances of athletes capable of stepping onto the Paralympic Podium and the metrics by which those skills and attribute are tracked over time

All 3 components of the Podium Pathway will allow Tennis Canada as well as its provincial partners to:

- Identify talent with medal potential based on a set of standardized characteristics
- Conduct a data supported analysis of their potential and track their development towards the podium.
- Make funding decisions based on objective criteria, such as the athlete's progression on the Podium Results Track.
- Provide coaching tools that are aligned with the 'Winning Style of Play' and that can be implemented consistently throughout all high performance wheelchair tennis programs in Canada to create ONE Canadian Winning Style of Play.



## PODIUM PATHWAY CHECKLIST

In order to support its provincial partners Tennis Canada has created a checklist of characteristics to help coaches and administrators working with new recruits and developing wheelchair tennis players. These characteristics represent ideal case scenarios that will increase the athlete's chances to develop towards a podium position.

Note: These characteristics do not have to be cumulatively present, however the more of these can be found in an athlete, the higher the chances for success.

### A. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

#### 1. DISABILITY

##### 1. Men's and Women's Divisions:

	Full use of hands & arms
	Full use of core
	Full use of both legs
	Partial use of both legs
	Minimal Disability athlete <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Athlete does not use a wheelchair for everyday life activities (i.e.- amputee)</li></ul>



## 2. Quad Division:

	Full use of core
	Partial use of core & at what height
	Full use of arms & hands
	Partial use of arms & hands
	Tapes racquet to hand
	Partial use of legs
	Able to walk

Note: These characteristics do not have to be cumulatively present, however the more of these can be found in an athlete, the higher the chances for success.

## 2. GENERAL PHYSICAL & MOVEMENT SKILLS

	Good physical literacy (throwing, catching, wheeling)
	Body composition: Tall upper body, long arms, basic body strength
	Good hand-eye coordination when hitting a tennis ball
	Good wheelchair movement skills (either natural or from past wheelchair experience)

## 3. TENNIS/SPORTS EXPERIENCE

	Past exposure - competitive or recreational - to tennis prior to disability
	Past exposure - competitive or recreational - to another racquet sport prior to disability
	Past exposure – competitive or recreational - to another sport that requires hand eye coordination and movement (hockey, basketball, etc.) prior to



	disability
	Past exposure -competitive or recreational - to another wheelchair sport that requires hand eye coordination and movement

#### 4. PSYCHO- SOCIAL FACTORS

	Athlete has a competitive mindset
	Athlete has goals and the work ethic to reach them
	Athlete shows resilience when faced with setbacks
	Athlete shows a curiosity to learn and improve (i.e. coachable)

#### 5. ENVIRONMENT

	<p>Athlete lives in an urban population setting providing easy access to existing resources including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• year-round tennis courts &amp; programming</li> <li>• wheelchair tennis certified coaches</li> <li>• other wheelchair tennis athletes</li> <li>• local competition opportunities</li> </ul> <p>And financial support to pursue the sport</p>
	Athlete lives in an urban population setting providing easy access to existing resources (as outlined above) but limited or no financial support
	Athlete lives in a rural population setting without easy access to existing resources (as outlined above) and financial support to pursue the sport
	Athlete lives in a rural population setting without easy access to existing resources (as outlined above) and limited or no financial support
	Athlete has a supportive network of family and friends



## **B. GOLD MEDAL PROFILE CHARACTERISTICS**

For each of the pillars of performance (tactical, technical, physiological, psychological) Tennis Canada has identified a series of skills and attributes required for podium performance based on the research conducted.

For any questions in regards to the Podium Pathway please contact us at [Kschrameyer@tenniscanada.com](mailto:Kschrameyer@tenniscanada.com)