

# WHAT IS SAFE SPORT?



Safe Sport means that every athlete, official, coach, and administrator is safe, supported, and strengthened through tennis. This happens when an equitable, safe, and inclusive environment is provided in which participants can train and compete without the fear of bullying, harassment, or abuse.

Tennis Canada is committed to protecting the security, safety, and health of all participants, so that tennis is always a fun and positive place to be.

Creating this environment from the moment someone is involved in our sport ensures a positive tennis experience from the instant they pick up a racquet. As a First Serve Coach there are many things you can do to keep yourself, and your First Serve participants, safe in tennis.

## ***SAFE SPORT MEANS:***

- Coaches are Active TPA Certified
- Volunteers are safe sport screened and trained
- Safe Sport policies and procedures are in place
- Ongoing education and trainings are available
- Environments are open and observable
- Participants are free from all forms of maltreatment
- Knowing where and how to report a concern or complaint

## ***SAFE SPORT ENVIRONMENT:***

- Is equitable, safe and inclusive
- Promotes strength, resilience and self-confidence
- Is positive and fun
- Follows the rule of two
- Ensures respect for opponents, officials, and organizers
- Allows for growth and development
- Encourages fair and meaningful competition

## ***A SAFE SPORT ENVIRONMENT IS FREE FROM THE FOLLOWING PROHIBITED BEHAVIOURS:***

- Psychological Maltreatment
- Neglect
- Grooming
- Discrimination
- Aiding and Abetting
- Failure to Report
- Retaliation
- Physical Maltreatment
- Sexual Maltreatment
- Boundary Transgressions
- Interference with or Manipulation of Process
- Intentionally Reporting a False Allegation
- Subjecting a Participant to the Risk of Maltreatment

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Below are brief explanations for the 15 Safe Sport Tips for First Serve Coaches following the quick reference chart for each one showing what is 'Okay' and 'Not Okay'. (Please keep in mind with more awareness around Safe Sport and Maltreatment, as a coach you will be viewed through a Safe Sport lens. Please ensure that your actions are not putting you or your participants in a situation that is, or could be viewed, as compromising or vulnerable.) Be sure to follow these Safe Sport Tips in your First Serve Program to create a fun and positive tennis experience for everyone!

## 15 FIRST SERVE SAFE SPORT TIPS

- 1** While waiting for participants to arrive to your program, and while waiting for them to be picked up after, always ensure you have another trained and certified coach and/or administrator with you. You never want to be alone with a participant and this includes during drop-off and/or pick up times. So make sure to plan ahead!
- 2** During the First Serve program you will often be providing feedback to participants, and when this happens you want to make sure that you are in an open area, where others can observe these interactions. What you don't want is to be providing feedback or having a meeting alone with a participant in a closed office or room. If you must have a meeting privately, make sure another coach or administrator is present with you.
- 3** During sessions it is inevitable that participants will need to use the washroom and take water breaks. If a participant needs to go to the washroom, make sure they use the buddy system and go with another participant. As the coach, you do not want to go to the bathroom with a participant, nor do you want them going off anywhere alone.
- 4** Part of being a coach or instructor is helping our participants demonstrate proper technique by moving their body or arm/wrist into the correct position. Make sure that you have the participant's permission before you help physically guide them, and don't unexpectedly touch a participant.
- 5** Working with large or young groups, sometimes a coach will need to manage participant behaviour. When this happens make sure to follow the club's policy on rules and discipline, and refrain from yelling, swearing, or isolating a participant.
- 6** During sessions it is inevitable that participants will need to use the washroom and take water breaks. If a participant needs to go to the washroom, make sure they use the buddy system and go with another participant. As the coach, you do not want to go to the bathroom with a participant, nor do you want them going off anywhere alone.
- 7** Exercise and fitness are important when it comes to the training and development of tennis participants, both in strength and agility. When doing exercises ensure that it is for participant development, and that it is not being used for when participants aren't listening or achieving the results you intended. We don't want exercise to become a punishment!

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**9** With young participants, it is bound to happen that they will want to hug you when they are happy or excited, or even when they are sad. When this occurs, try reciprocating the hug from the side, and make sure it doesn't last too long or become uncomfortable for the participant.

**10** In the case of an emergency, if you need to enter a changeroom to check on a participant, simply announce your entrance before going in. Unless there is an emergency, you should never have to be in a changeroom while participants are changing. If you wish to speak to the group or any participant, do so before they go into the changeroom or after they come out.

**11** Whether you are speaking to participants, other coaches, club administration, or officials, it is important to be respectful at all times. Even if you are frustrated or in disagreement, you want to make certain you are not being intimidating or insulting with your words or actions.

**12** Working with large or young groups, sometimes a coach will need to manage participant behaviour. When this happens make sure to follow the club's policy on rules and discipline, and refrain from yelling, swearing, or isolating a participant.

**13** Team or group events can be a fun part of tennis and are important for culture and comradery. When planning activities make sure they are always in a group setting, and that you as a coach are not hanging out with a participant alone, or having them come over to your home.

**14** If at any point you suspect (or know) that maltreatment is taking place, you need to report it. There is a duty to report maltreatment of a minor, and you could be held responsible for not acting. It is also important to stop any bullying, harassment, or abuse right away if you see it taking place in your program.

**15** And lastly, we want ensure our participants are having fun while participating in tennis. We can do this by creating a positive, safe, and inclusive environment. We want First Serve participants to leave with a smile on their face everyday, and be excited to come back for their next lesson!

The goal of the First Serve Program is to instill the love of tennis into each participant that comes out to experience it for the first time. By following these 15 tips you can create an environment that is positive, safe, and most of all, fun. If you want to learn more about creating an equitable, safe and inclusive environment, visit Tennis Canada's website at [tenniscanada.com/safe-sport](http://tenniscanada.com/safe-sport).