

## Corpus Christi's Javier Molinar on U.S. Deaflympic team

**Javier Molinar** from Corpus Christi, Texas competed in the Deaflympics in Sofia, Bulgaria this summer and was part of the U.S. team that consisted of three men and three women. Javier lost to a player from Ecuador in three sets in singles and also lost in the first round in doubles and mixed.



Javier Molinar

Javier began playing tennis at 3 years old when his parents gave him a racquet and ball for Christmas and he began hitting on his garage door. He started taking tennis lessons at six and became serious about the game during his teens. Javier was a former Sul Ross University tennis player and won the conference doubles championship and also was the first deaf player to get the "Fighting Heart

Award."

The Deaflympics is recognized by the International Olympic Committee and modeled after the Olympic Games. Unlike the Paralympics and Special Olympics, there are no rule modifications or special classifications in the Deaflympics. Visual cues, such as flashing lights, are the only adaptations made. Athletes with a hearing loss of 55 decibels or greater in their better ear are eligible to participate in international competition for the deaf.

Javier plays in tournaments and leagues throughout the Texas section and his hope is to motivate young kids who are deaf to learn the game of tennis. "We need more deaf and hard-of-hearing kids to get involved and see new faces in the future of Tennis," Molinar said.

## Texas Adaptive Tennis updates and 2014 rule changes

BY CINDY BENZON

### SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Beginning in 2014, Adaptive Tennis will consist of five levels:

Level 1 – Skills with the **Red Ball** inside the service box, which will introduce athletes to the sport of tennis by developing the seven skills. The game-based approach will be used for learning the strokes, including placement and control drills. Point of emphasis is balance, eye-hand coordination, racquet control, best effort and fun.

Level 2 – Match play with the **Red Ball** inside the service boxes which will introduce the rules of the game, movement before and after each shot, learn positioning and game tactics. This court will help the athletes have meaningful match play competition for athletes with limited mobility and ball tracking. Points of emphasis are movement, ball tracking, racquet control, rules and etiquette of the sport, best effort and fun.

Level 3 – Match play with the **Orange Ball** on 60-foot courts, which will have meaningful match play competition for athletes with limited mobility and eye-hand coordination. Points of emphasis are movement, ball tracking, court positioning, sending and receiving, racquet control with a smaller ball, game and match scoring rules, best effort and fun.

Level 4 – Match play with the **Green Ball** which will introduce athletes to full court using a slower paced ball. Points of emphasis are post-shot court positioning, shot selection—such as overhead, drop shot, lob, approach shot, play at the net, doubles communication with partner, best effort, and fun.

Level 5 – Match play with **Yellow Ball** which challenges athletes in full-court tennis through higher-skilled drills and the highest level of competition. Points of emphasis is post-shot court positioning, physical conditioning pace, service placement, best effort and as always fun.

For more information on Special Olympics tennis, go to [www.sotx.org](http://www.sotx.org)

## Athletes Without Limits selects Texan to represent U.S.

Athletes Without Limits has been invited to bring eligible U.S. tennis players with intellectual disability to compete in the 2014 Australian Championships. The championships are being sanctioned by INAS, the International Federation for Para Athletes with Intellectual Disability. They will feature many of the highest ranked players in the world and this is the first opportunity for U.S. players to compete at this level and will enter them into international rankings and the U.S. has chosen **Katherine Richards** from Houston to compete.



Katherine Richards

Athletes Without Limits is a national organization that supports

athletes with intellectual disabilities to integrate into mainstream sports. It also recruits, supports and develops high performance athletes to represent the U.S. at international competitions, including the London 2012 Paralympics and the Global Games World Championships. Athletes Without Limits is the U.S. organization responsible for classifying elite athletes with intellectual disability as eligible for Paralympic and other international competition. For more information, check out [www.athleteswithoutlimits.com](http://www.athleteswithoutlimits.com)