



RCS Rising Star Tennis 2026

STRUCTURE OF THE EVENT:

There are 3 phases, and they apply equally to the respective boys' and girls' events.

Note the introduction of Orange Ball category:

Phase	Theme	Timeline*	Activities*
One	<u>ACTIVATION</u> : Mobilising players for year 6 and marketing campaign rollout.	Two Months: February 2026 – March 2026	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Paper launch and social media campaign. 2. Content features on some of the best stories from the past five years of the Programme. 3. Strong focus on marketing to schools for phase 2 in order to grow participation numbers.
Two	<u>PLAY</u> : District and provincial events across all 9 provinces in South Africa.	Six Months: April 2026 – September 2026	<p>Primary Schools (note in 2026 there will be two categories Orange ball and Green Ball categories) and wheelchair tennis to compete in order to determine national finalists.</p> <p>Only the winning team for each category at the district level will advance to the provincial finals, and the same rule will apply for the provincial finals to the national final.</p> <p>Note that Orange Ball competition will only be played at district level and winners will not progress to the provincial level.</p>

Three	<u>WIN:</u> National Final (Sun City Resort)	One Month: 30 October - 1 November 2026	Primary schools and wheelchair tennis finals held at the same time to determine the champions.
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TOURNAMENT RULES:

- Entry to the event will be free for participating schools, furthermore key tournament expenses (tennis balls and officials) will be provided at no cost by TSA.
- Travel and accommodation support will be provided to participating schools travelling more than 200km one way for the provincial finals (phase 2), and final (phase 3). All travel claims and accommodation invoices must be submitted to TSA no later than 7 days following the respective provincial and national events.
- A venue hosting fee will also be paid to each host of a district event or a provincial final.
- Trophies will be awarded to phase 2 and 3 winners for Green Ball and Wheelchair categories. Medals will be awarded to the Orange Ball winners at the district level.

Transformation

- Schools from historically disadvantaged areas (quintiles 1 to 3) will be allowed to combine to enter teams.
- One team per gender belonging to quintile 1-3 schools that perform well in the district events will receive a wildcard into the provincial finals. Additionally, a fixed number of wildcards will be awarded to the best-performing quintile 1-3 school teams from provincial events into the national finals. The wildcards will be decided by the tournament organizing committee (TSA), with input from the relevant provincial or district structures.

Wheelchair Tennis

- All special schools that offer wheelchair tennis in South Africa have been identified and formally introduced to the sport under Tennis South Africa.
- Schools will participate in regional / provincial tournaments with winning teams advancing to the national finals.

Tournament rules

Below is a high-level overview of the rules and structure of the event. Some elements may be subject to change:

- The event will consist of a boy's competition and a separate girl's competition. Coed schools can enter appropriate teams in both competitions. Schools will be allowed and encouraged to enter more than one team.
- Every participating player requires a TSA member registration number. Registration is FREE for school players and can be done online via: <http://tsa.sportyhq.com>
- This is a team tennis event and the players, and a coach OR manager will be allowed to sit on the court only during change overs.
- A team will comprise of four players.

- Players born between 2015 and 2013 will be eligible to enter the Green Ball Primary School category.
- Players born in 2015 and younger will be eligible to enter the Orange Ball Primary School category.
- Wheelchair tennis under-19 (born in or before 2007).
- Each player must be a full time "bona fide" learner at the school and must be on the attendance roll at the school on the 1st April 2026 to represent a school. This is because the national final will be played in October / November 2026. For players attending homeschooling, only players ranked outside the top 50 combined TSA rankings will be allowed to combine to form a team to enter.
- A tie (i.e. school A versus school B) will consist of three matches i.e. one doubles match, and two singles matches. Two of the players will play doubles and the other two will play singles.
- Doubles players are not allowed to play singles and singles players not allowed to play doubles. In other words, all four players must compete in the tie. The team must be confirmed 15 minutes before a tie. No substitutions are allowed. Any illness or injury during a match will result in the opponent getting the match point. The players playing doubles or singles may be changed from tie to tie.
- The order of merit will apply to the singles matches (if No.1 and 2 play doubles then No.3 single player must play No.1 single).
- A match will be best of 3 sets, first 2 sets will be short sets, starting at 2-2 with a 7-point tie breaker at 6-6 and 3rd set will be a match tie or super tie i.e. first to 10 points with a lead of 2 points.
- The coach / manager must be a registered coach in good standing with TSA or a full-time teacher on monthly salary with a valid SACE registration.
- The TSA Code of Conduct will be enforced, and no unsportsmanlike behavior will be tolerated.
- The same four players who competed in the district competition must represent the school in the provincial and national final stages. Should a player be injured, ill, have left the school, or be unavailable due to other reasons, a request for a substitute may be made to the organizing committee (TSA), who shall have the final say. The player replaced will still be allowed to represent the school at the next stage of the competition.

Contact details:

For all queries, please contact the event organizers at rst@tennissa.co.za / 011 442 0500.