



Travelling to tournaments: Guidelines for coaches and players.

Babette Pluim, Claudia Smit, Dorian Driessen, Sandy Oskam & Charlotte van der Heijden.

Koninklijke, Nederlandse, Bond Lawn Tennis, Netherlands.

ABSTRACT

This article provides practical guidelines to coaches and young players travelling around the world playing international tournaments. The preparation phase asks for several administrative actions and measurements as to accommodation, vaccination and medication. On arrival players and coaches have to deal with acclimatization, different habits and safety.

Key words: Travelling, Juniors, International tournaments.

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Corresponding author:
Babette Pluim, Koninklijke,
Nederlandse, Lawn Tennis
Bond, The Netherlands.

Email: bpluim@euronet.nl

INTRODUCTION

A high level tennis player has to go abroad on a regular basis. He will travel to many countries, in various parts of the world, and often travel through different time zones. Different tournaments can be played, depending on age and level (see table 1 for an overview of the different tournaments).

PREPARATION

In order to be able to enter a country one needs valid identification papers (e.g. passport). In addition, several countries require a visa. The website (www.cibt.nl) mentions countries for which one needs a visa. In general, visa requests require the following: passport, passport photo, and insurance papers. A visa can oftentimes be arranged through a travel agency, or directly at the embassy of the country. For several countries one can even request a visa online. Due to the processing time of visa requests it might be convenient to request an extra passport. This allows the player to leave one of the passports at the embassy while the other is used for travelling to a tournament abroad.

Furthermore, it is wise to have a good insurance coverage. A continuing travelling insurance with world coverage is advisable - in that way one is always covered and it is often cheaper. A health insurance with extra physiotherapy is recommended for tennis players.

HEALTH

It is not always possible to continue the same eating and drinking patterns that are held at home while abroad. That is not a problem by itself, but it is wise to aim for healthy and responsible nutrition similar to what one is used to at home. This means: nutrition that is relatively rich with carbohydrates; contains enough protein and liquids, and is not too fatty.

When using medication, it is wise to consider one's needs and options before the start of the trip. Take enough medication along to cover the whole trip. Keep essential medication in the hand luggage and do not put them in the luggage that will be checked-in. With respect to medication, one is bound to a limit. This limit of hundred millilitres of liquids when travelling by plane does not apply to medication needed while travelling, but does apply to medication that will be used at the place of destination.

The availability of medication abroad differs between countries. For some medications one might need a prescription in the home country, while in other countries medication can be purchased at the local drug store and vice versa.

ITF TOURNAMENTS	TENNIS EUROPE TOURNAMENTS	ATP/WTA TOURNAMENTS
ITF Juniors. All ITF junior tournaments that are being played, you can find on www.itftennis.com/juniors .	Tennis Europe Under 12, 14, and 16.	Men: ATP tournament, challengers, and futures.
ITF men. All ITF men's tournament that are being played can be found on www.itftennis.com/mens . Factsheets, results, and players' information can be found here.	Summer Cups / Winter Cups	Women: \$ tournaments, WTA tournaments, challengers, and futures.
ITF women. Factsheets, results, and players' information about women's tournaments can be found on www.itftennis.com/womens	Summer Cups Under 12 (Tennis Europe Nations Challenge by HEAD)	
Junior Davis and Fed Cup	European (Individual) Championships	
World Junior Tennis Competition 14 & Under		
To be able to subscribe for these tournaments the one needs a Tennis Europe login and IPIN.	To be able to subscribe for these tournaments one needs a Tennis Europe login and IPIN.	To be able to subscribe for these tournaments one needs a login for the ATP player zone.

Table 1. Types of tournaments.

Moreover, it might happen that medication available under the same name has a different composition in different countries (or even contains illegal substances). Therefore, the purchase of medication while abroad should be done with extreme caution and after consulting a tournament doctor.

Another point of preparation is checking whether any vaccinations are required for the country one is travelling to. The player should check at least six weeks in advance whether it is advised to get vaccinations and whether previous vaccinations are still active.

TRAVELLING

Whatever way of transportation used – airplane, bus or train – it often entails long periods of waiting, no proper sleep, and no familiar food. As eating habits and patterns will be

interrupted, different products will be consumed at different times. It is wise to try hold on, when possible, to regular times for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Snacks should be brought along and low fat meals should be ordered at the airline company to intake enough carbohydrates while travelling. During a flight people lose relatively a lot of water. Therefore, players need to drink more than they would normally do (water, juice, lemonade or sport drinks). A long trip often also implies sitting for a long time. Stiff limbs, cramp, accumulation of fluids in the feet, and constipation are the result. Regularly getting up or parking the car for a moment can prevent or reduce these symptoms. Take a stroll, stretch the legs, and do some simple stretching exercises.

On destination

When one arrives after a long trip it is not automatically wise to immediately grab a bite to eat and head to bed. Whether it concerns when you eat and go to bed, or what you eat, it is important to make conscious choices. Moreover, heading to bed right upon arrival might lengthen the time it takes to recover from the trip.



It is highly recommended to regain one's own rhythm as soon as possible and adjust to the time of the country. For example, choose fixed times to eat from the first day onwards and try to hold on to those. That prevents one's metabolism from getting upset and unnecessary weight gain or loss. Besides the right (timed) nutrition, especially in countries with high temperatures, it is important to drink enough fluids. The hotter it is the more fluids the body loses and the more should be drunk.

Jetlag

When several time zones are covered in a short period of time, there is a risk of getting jetlagged. A jetlag is a disturbance of the sleep- awake rhythm, which is being regulated by a biological clock in the brain (adjusted according to daylight). The times at which one eats are of importance. In addition, the sleep hormone melatonin plays an important role. This hormone is produced in the brain whenever it is dark and

disappears when it is light. Jetlag has a negative impact on mood and ability to perform.

Symptoms of jetlag:

- Feeling tired, which might be the case to up to five days.
- Less energy and concentration.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Headaches.
- Loss of appetite.
- Stomach and bowel problems.

Muscle power, flexibility, and coordination are often negatively affected by a jetlag. In addition, the absorption of glucose is less efficient, negatively affecting endurance.

Preventive measures for jetlag:

- Go on the trip well rested.
- When travelling to the east start a couple of days in advance by getting up and going to bed earlier. When travelling to the west start a couple of days in advance by getting up and going to bed later (jetlag is more common when travelling east rather than west).
- Set your watch before departure to the time of destination.
- When on destination get into the local rhythm as soon as possible.

Traveller's diarrhoea

When travelling to South-America, Africa, the Middle East or Asia, there is a risk of contracting travellers' diarrhoea. About a third of the travellers to these parts of the world contract this disease. It is caused by consuming products which are contaminated with a bacteria or virus. Unfortunately contaminated food cannot be recognised: they look normal, smell normal, and taste fine. Hot tea and coffee, boiled water, soup, bread, butter, soda in bottles, fruits you can peel, all food that has been cooked and served right away, can products, and fresh bread, are considered safe.

Contracting traveller's diarrhoea oftentimes occurs in the first week of one's stay. The most common symptoms are diarrhoea, cramps, bloating, fever, nausea and an "ill feeling".

Important is to take plenty of rest and take in enough fluids. Mineral water, weak tea, soup, bouillon and Oral Rehydration

Therapy (ORT) are suitable. A doctor should be consulted when running a high fever, if the diarrhoea continues after a week, or continued dehydration.

Prevent travellers' diarrhoea:

- Wash hands thoroughly after using the toilet or before eating.
- Do not drink tap water in the mentioned continents. Watch out with ice cubes.
- Do not drink milk.
- Do not buy food on the street.
- Do not consume raw vegetables (only if washed with mineral water).
- Do not consume fruit that cannot be peeled.
- Do not consume raw meat, bird, raw fish and raw egg (egg yolk).
- Do not consume non-packaged ice cream.
- Do not consume cold food (salads, cold meat, and chopped steak).

Mosquitos

Mosquitos can transfer malaria or other diseases, such as Japanese meningitis (encephalitis), break bone fever (dengue), yellow fever, and chikungunya. Mosquitos, who transfer the last three diseases, bite during the day and the night. Hence, a '24 hour per day' protection is needed. Players need to wear body-covering clothing (long sleeves and jeans, socks, and shoes), protect uncovered parts of the body (face, hands, ankles) with anti-insect substances and use a mosquito net.



SAFETY

It is important to take good care of one's belongings. In addition, players should be careful with personal data. When these end up in wrong hands it could not only cost money, but also reputation.

The following tips might be of assistance:

- When travelling by car, make sure to always lock it.
- Keep important possessions with you (passport, wallet, credit card), or use vaults/lockers.
- Be careful with reservations through internet; inquire whether the website is safe. Use a second credit card with a lower limit to make reservations.
- Electronic hotel keys contain personal details. Hence, keep them safe at all times.
- Never walk outside in an unfamiliar neighbourhood or in the dark. It is best if someone of the tournament picks the player up at the airport or train station.
- If the player observes suspicious behaviour, the tournament organization should be informed.
- Do not talk about personal information when calling in a public area.

CONCLUSION

It is vital for players to have an extensive and good preparation. Administrative points of interest are the possession of a passport, the correct visas, and a good insurance coverage.

With respect to health, one should check beforehand about vaccinations needed and be cautious with the purchase of medication while abroad. Consuming contaminated products

can cause travellers' diarrhoea. Hence, nutrition requires careful attention. Additionally, measures could and should be taken to prevent mosquito related deceases. Finally, players and coaches should keep their belongings and personal data safe.

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Note

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RECOMMENDED ITF TENNIS ACADEMY CONTENT (CLICK BELOW)



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