



## TOPIC: **TOURNAMENT NUTRITION**

### **WHY IS NUTRITION IMPORTANT DURING TOURNAMENTS/MATCHES?**

There are many variables that play a role in helping athletes achieve optimal performance when participating in both competitive and recreational play. Perhaps the most important of these variables derives from nutrition. For tennis players in particular, match/tournament nutrition is crucial to help achieve optimal performance. Without providing the body with the appropriate nutrients it needs, the potential to underperform can be amplified. When it comes to tournament/match nutrition, it is important to consider water and calorie intake along with electrolyte replenishment.



### **WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF HYDRATION? AND WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF DEHYDRATION?**

Maintaining adequate hydration through water intake is a must when playing an outdoor sport such as tennis. Water has many crucial functions within the body, two of which include circulating nutrients and maintaining body temperature. The amount of water that needs to be consumed varies from one athlete to the next depending on factors such as match duration, amount of sweat lost and environmental temperature. One helpful tip to consume enough water to help avoid dehydration is to begin consuming increased

amounts of water the day before a tournament begins. Signs of dehydration that players can experience include fatigue, headache, lethargy, muscle cramping and dizziness/lightheadedness.

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## **WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF APPROPRIATE CALORIC INTAKE I NEED TO HELP FUEL MY BODY BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER A MATCH?**

When it comes to caloric intake, think of calories as a measurement of the amount of energy in a drink or item of food. Tennis players competing in tournament/match play can be on court for upwards of 6-8 hours each day. With this in mind, the number of calories expended can reach upwards of 2000-3000 calories a day from match play alone. Achieving proper caloric intake must be carried out through a well-balanced diet consisting of the proper proportions of proteins, fats and carbohydrates.

- Carbohydrates are the primary fuel the body uses to help power through matches. It can be estimated that tennis players need to get over half of their caloric intake from carbohydrates. Examples of carbohydrates that provide sustained energy during tournaments include rice, potatoes, fruits, vegetables, granola/energy bars and sports drinks such as Gatorade and Powerade.
- Fats can also provide a great energy source after energy from carbohydrates have been burned. A diet consisting of roughly 25% of total calories from fat has been considered optimal. Sources of fats include oils, nuts, meats and dairy.
- Protein is essential for the body's ability to repair muscles during and after tournament/match play. Consuming roughly 20% of your caloric intake from proteins can improve recovery and help maintain muscular strength. Proteins can be found in meat/poultry, fish and eggs.

Lastly, replenishment of electrolytes is crucial for tournament or match play. Two of the most important electrolytes include sodium and potassium.

- Sodium is the main electrolyte that is depleted through sweat. It is essential to replenish sodium to help prevent muscle cramps, heat illness and fatigue. Foods that have been known to have high amounts of sodium include sports drinks, pickles, salted nuts, chips and soups.
- Potassium is also essential to help prevent muscle cramps and heat illness. It can be found in foods such as bananas, potatoes, avocado and tomatoes.