

Full Interview with Nick McCarvel, a sports journalist, live commentator, and host, with extensive experience traveling and reporting on the WTA Tour:

- (1) How do the WTA players talk about travel in general? Do they like it? Do they hate it? Do they bring it up often in interviews?

I think tennis professionals are pros - too - at travel. They have to be: the tour moves from Australia to the Middle East to the US to Europe, and that's just in the first few months of the season. WTA players talk about travel just the way the men do: They accept it as part of their jobs and do their best to be professional about it, staying hydrated, sleeping the hours they should in whatever time zone they have arrived in and the like. They don't bring it up in interviews, no, unless asked about it in particular. In small talk around interviews at the beginning or end of an event you might discuss travel, however.

- (2) How do they deal with any travel-related fatigue?

The basic understanding I know on tour is to "power through" whatever time zone you have arrived in. If you've landed in the morning in Australia from the U.S., you are best to stay up until "bedtime" in Australia to try and adjust as quickly as possible. I have heard players trying to exercise some way -- having a hit, going for a run or to the gym - when they arrive in a new place.

- (3) Do they correlate their performance (e.g. losses) to long and exhausting travel (when asked to explain why they have lost)?

I don't have a specific example, but the only time this would ever come up for a player is if they have gone long, long distances in the previous few days (ie more than their opponents). After a Fed or Davis Cup week (say, currently, some of the players went from Australia to Stuttgart this week) this might be pertinent, or when the tour is transitioning from one part of the world to the next. Only then would you hear a player bring it up... and/or if they had had travel issues while doing so.

- (4) How do they feel about playing in consecutive tournaments which require travel from one place to another without a break?

It can be hard for the players, but mostly I think the tours have tried to build in safeguards so that it doesn't impact them. I think when this does come into play it's about conditions: The time change might not be massive from LA to Miami (three hours), but add that to the elevation difference and dry air vs. humidity and it's quite the switch when they come from Indian Wells to play Miami. The same could be said about Rome, when they have just come from the high elevation in Madrid, though the travel - time-zone-wise - isn't very taxing.

- (5) How early do they arrive for a given tournament?

That really depends. But most of the top players will arrive 4, 5, 6 days before a Grand Slam's first day's play. At a Masters 1000/Mandatory event, it's usually 2, 3 or 4 days. Rarely do you see a player arrive only one day before they are set to play. I would imagine they would tell you they like to be on the ground at least 48 hours before they play.

- (6) How do you think travel affects them overall?

You know that's a good question. I'm always impressed by the athletes: They rarely talk about travel or fatigue or jet lag. They are consummate professionals. When you do hear about it, it's because of outstanding circumstances: Delayed flights, missed connections, lost baggage or falling ill due to... well, being human. But they are always very attentive to their schedules, their bodies and how they can best perform on the court itself.