

2013 SEASON PREVIEW

INSIDE...

ATP: CAN RAFA REGAIN HIS CHAMPIONSHIP FORM?
WTA: WILL ANYONE DERAIL THE SERENA EXPRESS?

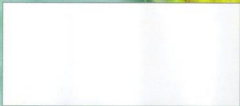
TENNIS

WINNING NUTRITION!

EAT SMART, GET FIT
& PLAY GREAT

Plus:

Improve Your
Backhand Return
Handle Volleys
With Ease
Tracy Austin's
Parenting Tips
The Ultimate
Drop Shot



Nutrition: FUEL RULES

A dietician to the pros gives advice on the right ways to eat

Photography by Gormanstudio.com

Put two pro tennis players in a match and the winner will almost always be the one with better skills, because they're both in superb physical condition. Put two amateurs on a court and there's a good chance one will be in much better shape than the other, and that difference often decides who wins and loses.

Sports dietician Page Love is in the rare position of working closely with pros as well as amateurs. "I'm aligned with the USTA, WTA and ATP tours, helping the pros get themselves in shape nutritionally, and I can do the same for you," says the Atlanta-based Love, a leading expert on sports nutrition and eating disorders who founded Nutrifit Sport Therapy Inc. in 1992. "Even the pros seek nutritional guidance, and sometimes need to drop a few pounds. Skill level has nothing to do with getting in shape and eating right, so most of the advice I give the stars is the same as I give to everyday clients."

Regardless of the state of your backhand or overhead, chances are that eating better and getting

fitter will make the biggest differences for you on the court in 2013.

"When I talk to pros, I'm often surprised at how little some of them eat," Love says. "They are under-fueling for the amount of energy they expend. For regular clients, this is not

usually the case. Most people eat too much, or too much of the wrong foods. That's what I try to change.

"When I work with 'civilians,' I stress some basics, like making sure they eat a healthy breakfast, because it provides energy throughout the day. I never



Page Love, MS, RD, CSSD, LD, is a sports nutrition expert and former NCAA tennis player at Baylor University. She served as on-site dietician last summer for WTA events in Birmingham, England, and Cincinnati.

totally rework someone's diet. Instead, I build on the good foods they eat and eliminate some of the bad choices."

Here are the key "Goals and Solutions" Love provides for both pro and amateur clients.

Rule

1

Goal:

BURN FAT & SHED POUNDS

Solution:

CONCENTRATE ON CARBS

"Both the world's best players and regular consumers have fallen prey to the low-carb diet fads," Love says, "especially with the popularity of the gluten-free diet Novak Djokovic follows." Gluten-free means avoidance of wheat protein sources, thus the elimination of most pastas, cereals, breads and wheat-based snack foods. "Many pros have chosen this route for improving energy and aiding in fat loss. Even at

this level, I have to remind them about the importance of carbohydrates to maximize muscle energy they burn on the court."

Love says it's fine to cut back on unnecessary simple sugars and refined carbohydrates such as candy, soda and bakery items, but most competitive players cannot afford to cut out important di-

etary complex carbs such as legumes, potatoes, corn and whole grains. In fact, every meal should contain a choice from this category in order to meet your nutritional needs.

"Carbs also help you burn fat. Excess body fat is only burned in the flame of adequate carbs. So, don't cut these out. As you build up carbohydrates in your

diet, you will recharge your metabolism and train your muscles to store more energy to burn on the court.

Ideally, 50 to 60 percent of daily calories should come from healthy fibrous carbs such as whole grains, vegetables, fruits and beans. Eating small amounts of these foods at each meal increases your fat-burning capacity."

Rule

2

Goal:

BE STRONGER & MORE FIT

Solution:

GET BACK TO FOOD BASICS

"What you eat daily will determine how strong and fit you can become," Love says. "For grains and vegetables, start with healthy high-fiber carbs. Half your plate should be whole-grain breads, rice, pasta and cereals, plus various raw or cooked vegetables."

Regarding fruit, Love says athletes often make the mistake of eating too much of it by itself. "It's better to combine fruit with carbs and protein rather than eating a lot of it with nothing else," she notes. Why? "Too much fruit can cause a hypoglycemic reaction, meaning you'll be fatigued and crave simple carbs like sugar and soda."

"Consume two to four servings of fresh fruit daily. As a natural sugar source, fruit is an excellent dessert or snack option to satisfy sugar cravings, especially in the evening."

For recovery and muscle building, Love recommends a serving of protein such as lean meat, poultry, seafood, beans, nuts, seeds and soy products. The average person needs five to six ounces of protein daily, while athletes may require eight to 10 ounces. When trying to lose weight, choose the leanest options. "And be aware of portion sizes," she warns. "The equivalent of a serving is one small chicken breast or one fillet the size of a deck of cards."

On the dairy front, adults need two to three cups of low-fat products per day to meet calcium needs. This can be a cup of milk on your whole-grain cereal, yogurt as a dessert, or a slice of low-fat cheese on your sandwich.

Rule

4

Goal:

STAY HEALTHY DAY IN & DAY OUT

Solution:

HYDRATE, HYDRATE, HYDRATE

"Competitive tennis players often encounter a high heat index and hot surfaces, a recipe for dehydration and heat illness," Love says. "We've all heard, 'Drink lots of water!' Adequate hydration is key as preparation for court-time sweat losses and to keep the body at full capacity. Remarkably, even at the top levels of the game, one of the most common nutritional mistakes I see is not drinking enough off court. This requires constant attention in pro tennis, with heat illness being one of the most common maladies in the sport. Players also are tempted to consume energy drinks off court to get quick jolts on court, or to take caffeine gels before and during play. This is discouraged by sports medicine professionals.

"So, what is adequate hydration? Target 10 to 12 cups of water or equivalent hydrating beverages daily as a training diet base. Additional fluids are needed during tennis play; a good rule is to hydrate until your urine is a pale yellow or lemonade color. Most players will need several additional cups before and after play, as well as half to one cup at each changeover during match play."

Rule

3

Goal:

HAVE MORE ENERGY ON THE COURT

Solution:

SNACK BEFORE AND AFTER

"Eating smaller portions at short intervals throughout the day helps you continue to burn fat and maintain higher overall energy," Love says. "Many pros carry energy bars, gels and sports drinks, all of which contain various compositions of carbs, proteins and electrolytes. As a tennis player, you need snacks before and after play to keep energy levels high on the court, and particularly during strenuous training sessions, so take advantage of some of these portable food choices. Choose snacks from grains and fruits, combined with protein sources like nuts and low-fat cheese."