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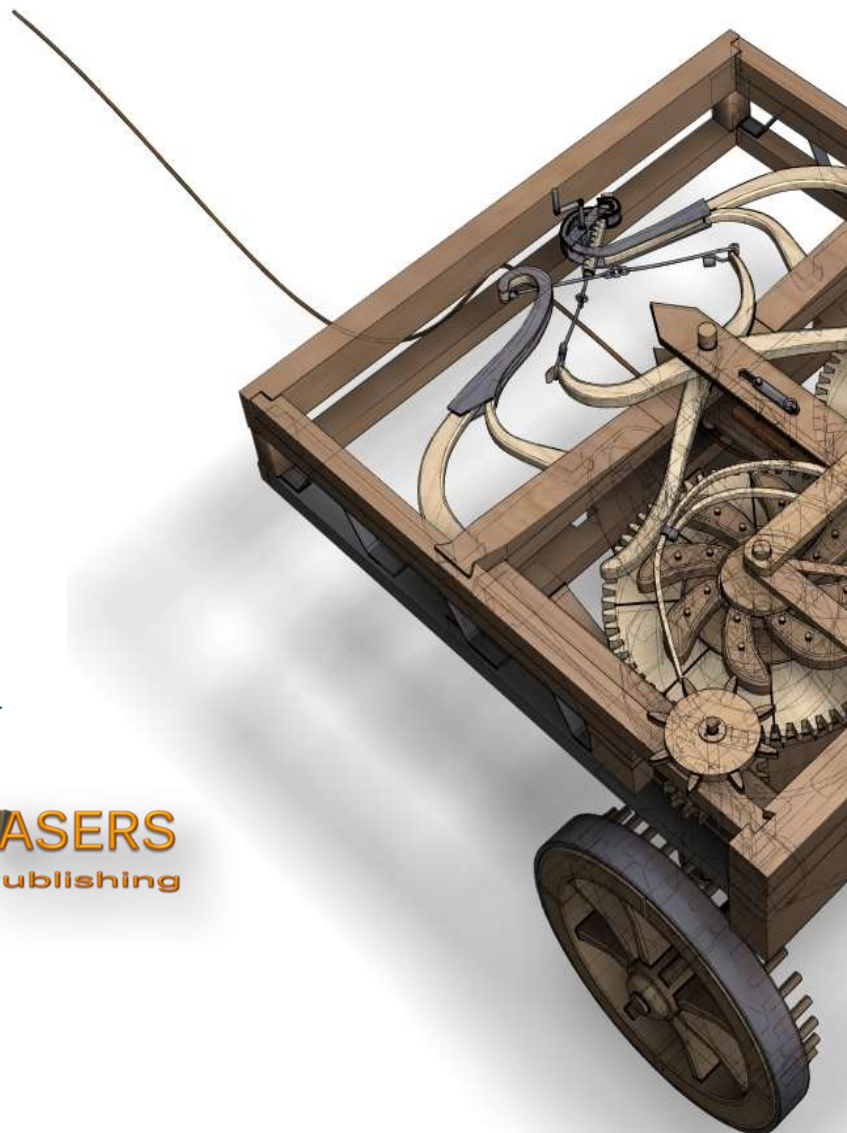
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Managing ITF Juniors Tennis Tournaments in the Context of Tourism

Alexandru-Nicolae BANCIU
Faculty of Physical Education and Sport
University of Craiova, Romania
alexandru.banciu@edu.ucv.ro

Claudiu-Ionut POPIRLAN
Faculty of Sciences
University of Craiova, Romania
claudiu.popirlan@edu.ucv.ro

Germina COSMA
Faculty of Physical Education and Sport
University of Craiova, Romania
germina.cosma@edu.ucv.ro

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Abstract:

Participation in ITF junior's tennis tournaments combined with unique sports resources can provide extraordinary experiences. The aim of this paper is to analyze how ITF junior's tennis tournaments experiences could be planned and managed for the tourism purposes from the aspect of tennis academies managers. Results of the analysis conducted in the research indicate that a facility can provide the full spectrum of experiences when it meets the standards of professional tennis. Recommendations suggested by the paper provide new insight on organizing the ITF junior's tennis tournaments offer in the destination and can be used by players, trainers, parents and tennis academy managers in order to better serve tennis and sports tourism needs.

Keywords: tennis; junior tennis player; tennis tournaments; tourism; management.

JEL Classification: L83.

Introduction

Modern junior's tennis players are more experienced and more demanding while searching experiences that are paid by their parents (Pralhad and Ramaswamy 2004; Knutson and Beck 2004; Bille 2012). When it comes to tennis experiences and tourism, active (junior players and trainers) or passive (parents) participation in tennis tournaments can provide tourists with extraordinary adventures and experiences. Tennis in general and tennis tourism in particular develop new challenges for all levels of management in touristic destinations. Tennis academies managers and tourism managers are faced with the need to create new tennis tournament's products, typical for their destination, transforming them into an inspiring travel experience.

The aim of this paper is to analyze how tennis tournaments experiences for ITF juniors' players could be planned and managed for the tourism purposes from the aspect of parents and tennis academies managers. The experiences are analyzed and supported by examples.

1. Literature Review

Starting with the 70's, the tourist experience has become a popular academic topics and it was widely studied (Andersson 2007; Binkhorst and Den Dekker 2009; Cohen 1979; Kim, Ritchie, and McCormick 2012; Knutson and Beck 2004; Lee and Crompton 1992; Leighton 2007; McCabe 2002; Morgan, Elbe, and Curiel 2009; Oh, Fiore, and Jeong 2007; Pearce and Moscardo 1986; Ryan 1997; Sheng and Chen 2013; Wang 1999; Williams 2006; Xu and Chan 2010). Innovation become an important component concerning touristic experiences. The hospitality sector suffered fundamental changes due to marketing orientation.

Looking from the side of the economic offer, Pine and Gilmore (1998) noted that, in order to create memorable events that satisfy each individual consumer, the tourism provider uses services to create experiences. The main principles to design experiences are the theme of experience, harmonization of impressions with positive cues, elimination of negative cues, mix in memorabilia and senses engagement. Five components were considered mandatory in order to create experiences: stages, actual experience, needs to be satisfied, roles of participants and relationships with experience providers.

If we consider the manager's perspective, we can consider that an attractive and memorable experience is a product. This product requires a lot of effort to create, develop and eventually sell. Designing and creating an experience conduct to a touristic product that also has economic implications. From the economic aspect and the consumer, experience is defined as the result of encountering, undergoing or living through situations that provide sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, relational and functional values (Schmitt 1999).

Andersson (2007) considered that meeting point between tourism consumption and tourism production represents the decisive moment for the economics of tourism experiences. The consumer plays an important role in the touristic experience. Binkhorst and Den Dekker (2009), considering that human has the main role in touristic experience, describe an innovative perspective on tourism in the experience economy.

The relation between tourism and sport is not new and it was analyzed by many authors (Bartoluci 1995, 2003; De Knop and Van Hoecke 2003; Glyptis 1982; Hinch and Higham 2001; Radicchi 2013; Sobry 2011; Standeven and De Knop 1999; Turco, Riley, and Swart 2002; Weed 2001; Weed and Bull 2004, 2009). All the previous research conduct to the idea that tourism and sport, in general, and tennis, in particular, are connected because, in all considered cases, tennis sports events provide. This relation between sport and tourism was analyzed in various context: golf tourism (Petrick and Backman 2002), ice snow tourism (Chi and Sun 2006), drifting sports tourism (Fu and Wen 2007), marine sports tourism (Su 2008).

Sport experiences are considered a particular type of tourism experiences (Kurtzman 2005). Bouchet, Lebrun and Auvergne (2004) discussed about the social dimension of sport tourism. They considered that sport tourism dimension depends on vacation destinations and sport events. The tourism consumer seek vacation in relation with particular sport events, this way they go from watching sports on TV to create their own experiences in vacations.

Shipway and Kirkup (2011) noticed that events and tourism experiences are central for both active and passive sports tourists. Their research conclude that sport tourists prefer to do their usual activities during vacations, so they tend to combine sport with tourism. All sports experiences, in general, and tennis experiences, in particular, are developed from the people interactions, activities and places where one can find sport facilities, natural or artificial, indoor or outdoor (Greenweel, Fink and Pastore 2002; Hill and Chalip 2005; Kaplanidou and Vogt 2010). Beside physical facility, we can observe that the infrastructure quality and environmental aspects plays an important role in sport tourism experience creation. We can conclude that sports tourism experience can be controlled and managed.

2. Methodology

A theoretical framework for the study of management of tennis tourism experiences is made up of Pine and Gilmour's (1998, 1999) four realms of an experience. The proposed model was based on two dimensions: customer participation (active/passive) and the environmental relationship (connection that unites customers with the event or performance (absorption/immersion)). From their model four categories can be observed:

- C1) Entertainment experiences are those in which participants are mostly passive, their connection with the event is more likely the one of absorption than of immersion.
- C2) Educational experiences involve more active participation, but participants are still more outside the event than immersed in the action.
- C3) Escapist experiences can teach just as well as educational events can, or amuse just as well as entertainment ones, but they involve greater participant immersion.

C4) Aesthetic experiences tend to minimize the active participation while participants are immersed in an activity or environment, but they themselves have little or no effect on it.

Starting from these four categories, a theoretical analysis on the management of tennis tourism experiences can be developed. Considering the tourism demand as a constant, we can compute the implication of tennis in tourism. The tennis tourism is made by competitors, in our case ITF juniors (representing the active part of the tourists), and by spectators, in our case parents and coaches (representing the passive part of the tourists).

Tennis tourism can be divided in sport tourism on holidays (consisting in activity holiday, tennis training, tennis events participation) and sport holidays (holiday special for tennis event). In our days, usually the holiday is referred as tourism because it also includes the short visits and day trips (Weed and Bull 2009). Bartoluci's (1995) classification is too narrow because it considers only sports as the primary motif for travel, hence neglecting the situations when it is not. Similarly, Gammon and Robinson's (1997) classification is just based on motivation (whether or not sport is the main motif for travel or not).

So, the immediate effect was to replace the word holidays with tourism in categories where this was necessary. In consequence, the sports spectators were referred as event sports tourism. Weed and Bull's (2009) updated types of sports tourism conducting to a new classification:

- supplementary sports tourism;
- sports participation tourism;
- sports training tourism;
- event sports tourism;
- luxury sports tourism.

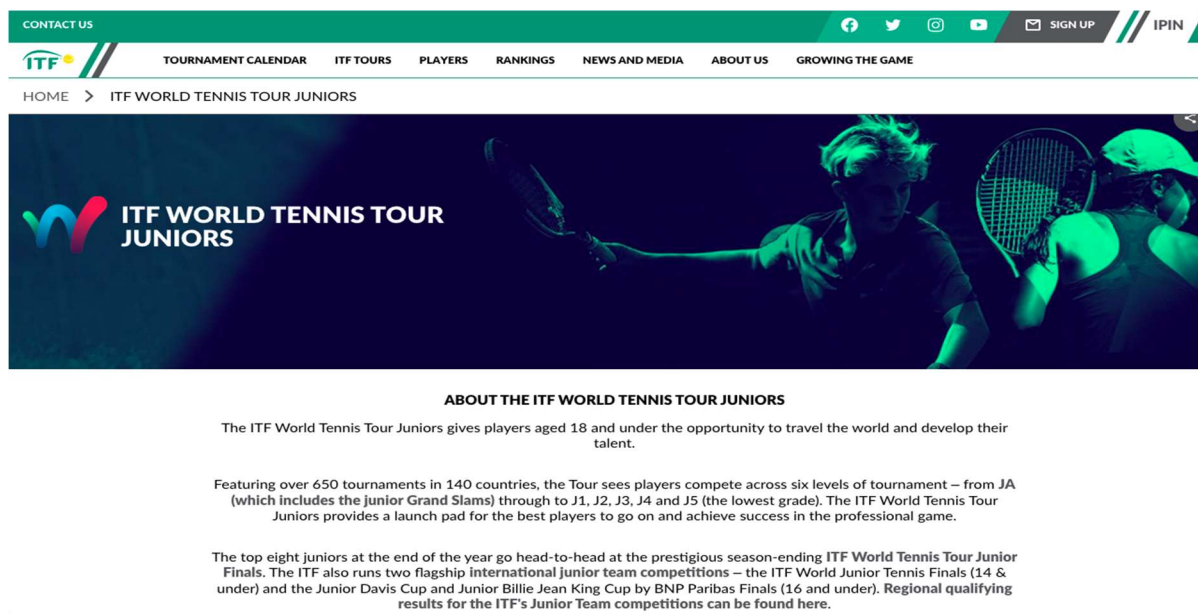
Dissections can go further arguing whether spectators are passive or active participants. The role of spectators is very important because they go to a tennis event, they cheer of one part, so we can say that they are not completely passive participants (Pine and Gilmore 1998). For this reason, they can be considered as active participants to a tennis tournament. However, due to the fact that they do not directly participate in the game, Harrison Hill and Chalip's (2005) classifications are accepted, and spectators are considered as being passive.

All tennis tournaments are included in event sport tourism, but if there is a good management, they can also attract incidental tennis tourists and this way it can generate more tourism.

3. Case Studies

In this section we consider the management models that derives from the previous categories.

Figure 1. ITF tennis tour



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ITF WORLD TENNIS TOUR JUNIORS

ABOUT THE ITF WORLD TENNIS TOUR JUNIORS

The ITF World Tennis Tour Juniors gives players aged 18 and under the opportunity to travel the world and develop their talent.

Featuring over 650 tournaments in 140 countries, the Tour sees players compete across six levels of tournament – from JA (which includes the junior Grand Slams) through to J1, J2, J3, J4 and J5 (the lowest grade). The ITF World Tennis Tour Juniors provides a launch pad for the best players to go on and achieve success in the professional game.

The top eight juniors at the end of the year go head-to-head at the prestigious season-ending ITF World Tennis Tour Junior Finals. The ITF also runs two flagship international junior team competitions – the ITF World Junior Tennis Finals (14 & under) and the Junior Davis Cup and Junior Billie Jean King Cup by BNP Paribas Finals (16 and under). Regional qualifying results for the ITF's Junior Team competitions can be found here.

1) The first management model starts from C1. A proper example for this model could be an ITF tennis tournament. An ITF junior tennis tournament provides entertainment for spectators (local and visiting) which are

passive and they cannot significantly affect the event itself. The event also provides players, as extremely active, with escapism experiences (C3).

This type of tennis tourism is called event tennis tourism. The tournament manager can organize other activities in order to attract younger players for entertainment or skills development and so he is increasing interest for the event. He is adding another component to the tennis tourism, more precisely tennis training tourism. If to the tournament some well classified players are participating, then we can say that for them the tournament manager is creating a luxury tourism in order to increase the tournament visibility. This way the ITF tennis tournament tourism provides aesthetic experiences to spectators and escapist experience to players.

We can conclude that this management model includes event sports tourism, sports training tourism, luxury sports tourism and supplementary sports tourism.

2) The second management model starts from Education (C2). A good example could be a tennis academy where instructors and trainers teach beginners how to play tennis and they help the advanced players to improve their skills.

This type of tennis tourism product is tennis training tourism. The training usually does not attract spectators, but if the academy manager organizes some weekend tournaments where attendants will compete against each other then spectators will be attracted.

If the academy offers some facilities, then it is possible that some professional tournaments can be organized in order to attract the best players and many more spectators. If a good management is done then a luxury tennis tourism can be developed around a tennis academy. This can be obtained by including in the academy some training programs for well classified players.

These programs also include good services. If known players are coming to an academy then, also, tennis spectators are expected to watch them. We can conclude that a tennis academy creates experiences and we observe that this type of management model includes sports training tourism, event sports tourism and luxury sports tourism.

3) The third management model starts from Escapism (C3). Junior ITF tennis tournaments are categorized from J5 to J1 and championships. An example for this management model is ITF junior tennis tournament that is well categorized (J2 and J1). These tournaments include active touristic opportunities. The management model is called sports participation tourism. The managers easily can attract sponsors to help organize these events, which is the next step in tourism management. They can organize training sessions, trips or visits. The ITF tennis event will include players and spectators, becoming a major event and it will cover even aesthetic experiences.

This type of management model includes sports participation tourism, sports training tourism, luxury sports tourism and event sports tourism.

4) Starting from Escapism (C3) we can also create a different management model that covers the recreational part of the tennis tourism. If we consider the opportunities to organize trips or visits during an ITF junior tennis tournament, we can focus on the transportation methods and entertainment instead of the tennis event itself.

The ITF tournament manager can provide entertainment and aesthetic experiences. These trips may also include other sport activity, creating connections between tennis players and other sports. All these external activities must be organized by the tournament manager, and they must be planned in advance so that the tennis event will take place in optimal conditions. If these external activities are well integrated in the tournament program then the number of participants will increase, and this will raise the quality of the event. Besides the activities for the tennis players, tournament manager can also organize entertainment for the spectators.

The most difficult part of a major tournament organization is to provide aesthetic experiences, because sites and facilities providing multi activity sports tourism trips usually do not meet the criteria to organize professional events.

This type of management model includes sports participation tourism, event sports tourism and sports training tourism.

5) Starting from Aestheticism (C4) we can obtain a new management model. For ITF Junior tennis tournament this model refers to championships. Being a major sport event, spectators perceive aesthetic experiences. Also, the tournament provides players with escapism experiences. The entire process is well-known as event tennis tourism. For these tournaments, the players have hospitality as minimum requirements, including this event in the luxury category. Tournament manager can use some facilities to organize other events for entertainment or educational manifestations for spectators or visitors.

This type of management model includes event sports tourism, sports training tourism and luxury sports tourism.

Conclusion

The models presented in the article conduct to certain conclusions.

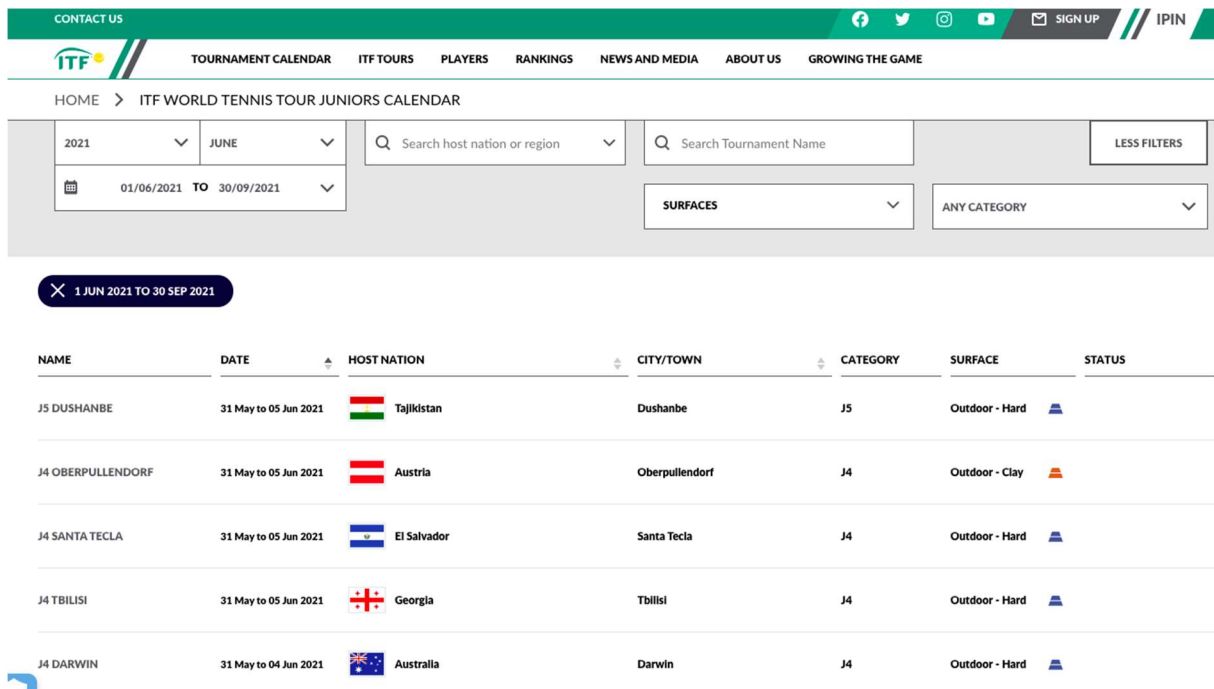
A relatively small tennis tournament, ITF tennis tourism, can be upgraded by a tournament manager. A good tourism manager will always know to increase experiences in order to grow the tennis event from one year to the next one. The basic experiences at a tennis tournament will always depend on the sport facilities. The tennis tourism connected to a tennis tournament is based on the organizer facilities. In practice, if outdoor or indoor tennis facility meets the criteria for professional tennis (dimensions of the court, number of the courts, capacity, security issues) then it will meet the criteria for amateur or recreational sports. If the facility does not meet the criteria for the organization of major sporting events than it will be difficult to reach the aesthetic experience.

The proposed models covered all types of tennis tourism considered in other publications. Because the tennis tourism types are very different, they cannot be covered simultaneous.

The paper gives a perspective for the tournament managers in order to maximize their benefits and to satisfy tennis players of all levels. Tennis tourism implies economic expertise connected to tennis tournament organization, in the idea that resources and experiences are connected with the sport management. This way tennis managers are always connected with tourism providers.

The connection between tennis tournament organizers and sport facilities is used in planning a tournament that is benefic for managers, preferred by sponsors, pleased by spectators and optimum for tennis players. If all requirements are accomplished then the tournament meet all criteria to increase its value (this mean to grow from year to year, from J5 to J4 to J3 to J2 and to J1).

Figure 2. ITF tennis junior calendar



These models can be especially applicable in the private sector who could have an incremental effect on the distinctiveness and competitiveness of the destination.

Future studies should focus its research scope on other selective types of tourism and/or industries in order to compare the overall conclusions. A better analyze should be made considering the tournaments from a specific geographical area or a specific continent. Traveling from a tournament to another represent an important part of the tennis tourism. Going to a specific tournament implies accommodation and meals, beside all other things connected directly with tennis (sport equipment, tennis rackets, tennis string, etc.). A lot of people are implicated in a tennis tournament organization, so the tournament manager should use a management model in order to optimize all activities.

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