

# Tennis Coaches Education: Comparison of Tutor-contact Hours Worldwide

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## INTRODUCTION

In 2003 the ITF Coaches' Commission asked the ITF Development Department to conduct research, by means of a survey, into the characteristics of the different Coaches Education Programmes (CEP's) worldwide (ITF, 2003). In issue 35 of the ITF Coaching and Sport Science Review, the preliminary findings of this study were presented (Crespo, Reid & Miley, 2005).

In the first part of this study, as per the top 23 tennis nations, it was found that most of them have their own CEP's, they exhibit control over and run the CEP by themselves, and that only a handful have outsourced coach education to a private or independent company (coaches' association, etc.). Data also revealed a diversity in the courses structure and the types of names, that there was a mean of 3-4 levels, and that most CEP's

have fewer hours in the introductory levels than the higher levels. A significant variation in the number of hours per subject was also found, even though almost all courses include information on the majority of sport sciences applied to tennis. Finally, it was also found that most CEP's include diverse theoretical and practical assessment procedures, as well as pre-requisites such as age, playing level, education, and minimum time between courses / levels.

One issue that was noted from the data obtained was the considerable difference in the number of formal hours spent with a tutor present (tutor contact hours) in the different CEP's, with lower levels ranging from 6 tutor-coach contact hours to 270, and higher levels of certification ranging from 30 to 1300 hours or even a University degree (four years).

When adding all tennis nations, it was found that of the 199 nations surveyed, 82.9% (165) have a CEP in place, 27.2% (45) of them have developed their own CEP, 65.4% (108) use the ITF syllabi, and 8.4% (12) combine their own CEP with that of the ITF, with Europe being the region in the world that possesses the highest number of nations with their own CEP.

We concluded this first phase of study with the statement that due to the diversity in the number of formal hours of the CEP's of the top 25 tennis nations, it seems advisable to establish some sort of equivalence between existing CEP's, which would lead to the establishment of more uniform guidelines, criteria, contents, entry standards, competencies and assessment procedures.

## SECOND PHASE OF THE STUDY: COMPARISON OF TUTOR CONTACT HOURS

### Goal

In this second phase of the study, it was decided to investigate in more depth the considerable difference of tutor-contact hours shown by the aforementioned data, in order to see the characteristics of these differences. The tutor-contact hours were taken as the main criteria due to the objective data it can provide. No pre-course hours, homework tasks, individual learning, supervised practice, or prior-learning were taken into account for the purpose of this study.

### Methodology

A comparison of tutor-contact hours was completed using the ITF Level 1-2-3 tutor-contact hours approved and recommended by the ITF Coaches Commission (ITF, 1997) as the minimum criteria, which are the following:

- Level 1: 61 hours
- Level 2: 74 hours
- Level 3: 84 hours

The total number of tutor-contact hours for the 3 levels is 219 hours.

### Results

Table 1 shows the results of the comparison among the top nations in the study. In brackets the number of tutor contact hours each nation should:

- add (+ in red means that they do less than the minimum requirements) or
- detract (- in black means that they do more than the minimum requirements for the 3 levels)

to have the same number of contact hours in each level as per the proposal.

The symbol (\*) indicates nations that have more than 3 levels. For the purpose of this study, only tutor-contact hours in the first 3 levels have been taken into account when the country had more than the minimum hours. However, tutor-contact hours in all levels have been taken into account when the minimum hours were not reached in the first 3 levels.

### COMMENTS

#### Level 1:

- 11 nations do not reach 61 hours: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Czech Rep., Italy, Japan, Portugal, Slovak Rep., Sweden, Switzerland, and the USA.

Hours	Level 1 (61 hours)		Level 2 (74 hours)		Level 3 (84 hours)		Reaches 219 hrs in 3 levels?
	Course	±	Course	±	Course	±	
ITF	61		74		84		219
Australia	26	+35	70	+4	100	-16	+23
Austria	160	-99	212	-138	317	-233	√(-470)
Belgium (*)	66	-5	80	-6	180	-96	√(-107)
Brazil (*)	23	+38	28	+46	62	+22	+106
Canada (*)	16	+84	50	+24	160	-76	√(-13)
China (*)	70	-9	72	+2	80	+4	√(-3)
Croatia	240	-179	540	-466	-	-	√(-561)
Czech Rep.	60	+1	180	-106	450	-366	√(-471)
France (*)	105	-44	45	+29	770	-686	√(-701)
Germany (*)	150	-89	150	-76	150	-66	√(-231)
Great Britain (*)	91	-30	96	-22	144	-60	√(-112)
Israel	220	-120	440	-366	-	-	√(-441)
Italy (*)	30	+31	50	+24	240	-156	√(-320)
Japan	60	+1	40	+34	40	+44	+79
Netherlands	270	-209	200	-126	180	-96	√(-431)
Poland	140	-79	310	-236	-	-	√(-231)
Portugal	60	+1	90	-16	120	-36	√(-51)
Romania	225	-164	120	-46	80	+4	√(-206)
Slovak Rep.	60	+1	150	-78	300	-216	√(-291)
Spain	120	-20	310	-236	400	-316	√(-611)
Sweden	36	+25	81	-7	108	-24	√(-6)
Switzerland	35	+26	84	-10	105	-21	√(-5)
USA	6	+55	30	+44	50	+34	+133

Table 1. Comparison of tutor-contact hours among the top tennis nations.

- Note: 4 of them (Czech Rep., Japan, Portugal and Slovak Rep., have just 1 hour less). We can conclude that there are actually 7 nations that do not meet the minimum hours of the ITF level one syllabus.

#### Level 2:

- 8 nations do not reach 74 hours: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Italy, Japan, and the USA.
- Note: 2 of them (Australia and China, have just 4 or less hours less). We can conclude that there are actually 6 nations that do not meet the minimum hours of the ITF level Two syllabus.

#### Level 3:

- 5 nations do not reach 84 hours: Brazil, China, Japan, Romania, and the USA.
- Note: 2 of them (China and Romania have just 4 hours less). We can conclude that there are actually 3 nations that do

not meet the minimum hours established by the ITF level 3 Syllabus.

#### All levels:

- 4 nations do not reach 219 hours: Australia, Brazil, Japan, and the USA.

### CONCLUSION

Data from the study show that out of the top 23 nations in the world, just 4 of them do not reach the minimum tutor-contact hours established by the ITF syllabus.

### REFERENCES

- Crespo, M., Reid, M. & Miley. (2005). Tennis Coaches Education: A Worldwide Perspective. *ITF CSSR*, 35, 11-13.
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