

My Tennis:Europe Experience by Kayleigh Yun-Thayer

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Earlier this year, I brought you information on [Tennis:Europe](#), a summer tennis and travel experience offered to high school junior players. While at the US Open last week, I had the opportunity to meet Martin Vinokur, the creator of the program, and hear what they have planned for summer 2019. Believe me; it's going to be amazing!

The article below was written by one of the 2018 participants who is a high school sophomore from Johns Creek, Georgia. Martin and I thought it would be helpful for y'all to hear a first-hand account of how [Tennis:Europe](#) impacted her life.

To contact [Tennis:Europe](#) for more information, email Info@tenniseurope.com, call 800-253-7486, or visit their website at www.tenniseurope.com.

First, I would like to extend the dearest of thank you to the whole Tennis: Europe team for turning this trip into something unforgettable and one of the best experiences of my life! I am also grateful to my parents for always finding ways to help educate me beyond the immediate horizons. I have been playing tennis for 5 years now and have aspirations to continue well into the future. As you can imagine, being given an opportunity to travel to Europe for the first time to improve in a sport I have loved most of my life is unreal to say the least.

It was at Kennedy/New York airport where the immediate bonding with all of my teammates would begin and eventually lead to some of my most cherished friendships. We shared a common interest, common goals, and did everything together from day one. We flew out of New York to Amsterdam and then eventually onward to Barcelona where adventures awaited. From our first time stepping foot onto European clay (which is now my favorite surface to play on), to experiencing new cuisine, to taking part in the customs and cultures of another country.

The people in Amsterdam were extremely welcoming. It wasn't until after winning my first match I learned it was tradition for the winner to always offer their opponent a drink. What a brilliant show of sportsmanship and a perfect way to develop new relationships. Off the courts, we were able to explore the Van Gogh Museum, Anne Frank House, and take a scenic boat ride where I spotted floating houses and bikes lining the streets. A sad farewell to Amsterdam, but arms wide open for our next adventure in Barcelona.

Barcelona was a dazzling display of architecture, mountains, and beaches! Our hotel was only five minutes away from the beach. We played soccer by the beach because that's one thing you should definitely do when you're in Spain and WOW what a site the Sagrada Familia is in person. We visited a mall that was once a bull fighting arena and I tried seafood paella for the first time. Delicious! It was much warmer in Barcelona but still felt outstanding. The tennis courts were nestled into the mountains. When you looked out from your court, the world was yours! The team was always such a support to one another. We would watch each other's matches and the coaches always provided valuable feedback.

Everything about my experience with Tennis:Europe makes me want to go back. From my parents' standpoint, they were impressed at how smoothly the entire process from registration to landing back in the States ended up being. In just those two weeks I learned so much and returned with a greater confidence in what I am capable of. Tennis is universal. Hard work is universal. We do not struggle alone and success is never void of teamwork. What a refreshing outlook on what can sometimes be a lonely journey.