

ITF U14 World Tennis Competition
Bahrain Feb 17-22, 2025



The 2025 ITF World Junior Teams pre-qualifiers were held in Isa Town, Bahrain from February 17-22. There were 18 teams that participated in this event. The Pacific Oceania team was composed of 2 players from American Samoa, Joelei Ioane and Alexandria "Ula" Amoa, and Alexandria Chand from Fiji.

Joelei, Ula and I flew to Fiji via Apia to meet Alex and we traveled together to Australia, Dubai, and then Bahrain. We had a long layover in Australia and as it was Valentine's Day, I took the girls to the city for lunch at the Opera House.

We arrived on the morning of the 15th and the girls had a little rest before we had an afternoon hitting session. Joelei's bag did not arrive but eventually showed up 2 days later. Both the airlines and hotel staff were really helpful in trying to locate the lost luggage and accommodate our team. The next day was also a free day for us and we had yoga and stretching in the morning then explored the Al Fateh Mosque in Manama. The girls had a great cultural experience and some much needed down time after 3 days of travel.



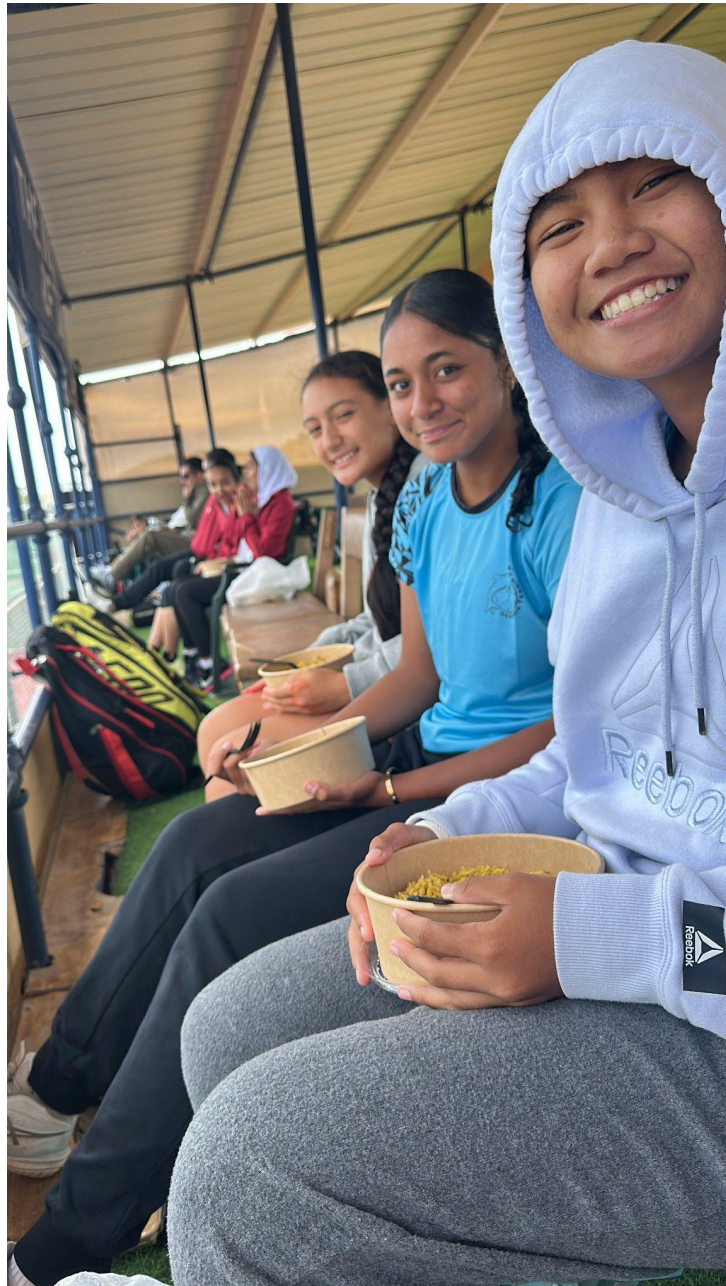
All teams stayed at the Ramada Hotel and breakfast and dinners were provided on site. There were plenty of food options and players were happy with the variety available. Lunch was provided at the tennis courts each day and were always delivered at the same time (before anyone got too hungry!). The hotel provided 4 free pieces of laundry per day, per player, so we didn't have to pay for laundry. There was internet in the hotel and the girls were able to complete their homework assignments for school after match days. Phones were taken before bedtime and they were not allowed to take their phones to the tennis courts so as to minimize distractions. There was a whatsapp group with all parents created before we travelled and they were kept updated with scores and photos daily.

Pacific Oceania was in Group C with Turkmenistan and Bangladesh. Seeded countries were each put in a group (6 total) with the remaining countries grouped by drawing names. Coaches were told at the beginning of the tournament that top 2 teams from each group advanced.

Day 1 of the tournament had the opening ceremony with matches kicking off at 10am. The weather was a bit windy and rainy so it was pretty cold if you weren't playing. There was one short rain delay but that was the only one throughout the tournament. Joelei played the #2 singles first and easily defeated her opponent 6-1, 6-1. Alex played well in her singles and won 6-0, 6-3. Ula and Joelei played the doubles and it went to a deciding super tiebreak for the third set: 4-6, 6-4, 10-6. Great win for them on the first day and confidence builder going into their

next tie. The next day was a bye for the girls so we had our breakfast and then went for our practice session later in the day. Next up, Turkmenistan.

Second day of matches started off a bit slow during the warm-ups with low energy and a little bit of attitude from the girls. Had a quick pep talk before warmups were over and it picked up from there. Joelei lost her #2 singles 2-6, 1-6. Alex also lost her singles 3-6, 3-6. Ula and Alex fought hard in the doubles and won in another super tiebreak for the third set: 6-4, 3-6, 10-5.



The draw for the next stage of matches was done with the other coaches while our matches were on court so I did not attend this meeting. I was a bit disappointed to learn that rather than taking the best record team and giving them a bye the following day, they just had coaches draw

names to see who they played. Pacific Oceania and Guam had the best records for matches so ideally, we would have been on opposite ends of the draw and had byes the following day. However, Guam ended up drawing PO out of a hat and we played the next tie.

Joelei won her match easily at #2 6-0, 6-0. Alex had a tougher match against Faith Pereira (GUM) and ended up losing 6-0, 6-7 (9-11), 7-10. The doubles team of Ula and Joelei won the deciding double 6-0, 6-1.



Next match was against a strong Singapore team. Joelei performed very well and beat her opponent 6-1, 6-2. Alex struggled after winning her first set and ended up losing 6-4, 2-6, 0-10. After a little bit of on-court drama and tears, Joelei and Alex dominated the deciding doubles and won 6-4, 6-2.

The last match of the tournament to determine 7th/8th place was against Kyrgyzstan. Joelei once again played cool and collected under pressure and came out on top to beat their #2 player 6-4, 6-0. Alex played well against a tough #1 and came up short 3-6, 1-6. Deciding doubles came down to Ula and Joelei and they lost to a strong and steady team, 2-6, 3-6.

That wrapped up our matches for the tournament and overall the team performed very well and came out 8th out of 18 countries. The rest of our day consisted of packing, laundry, shopping and I treated the girls to some bowling - stick to tennis, girls.



We began our long journey home on Sunday at 3am Bahrain time and our first stop was Dubai. After a few hours layover, we continued to Sydney where we had another long layover of 7 hours. The girls spent 6 and a half of these hours sleeping awkwardly in chairs at the airport.



We continued on to Fiji where we said our goodbyes to Alex and spent the night while we waited for our flight to Samoa the following night. We stayed nearby the airport and the accommodation was fine for the evening we were there. Richard dropped off some food for us and the girls ate just about all of it. We spent a few hours on Denarau just to hang out and try to walk off some of the jet lag. Our next flight to Apia was at 10pm and we arrived at 1am so we got another hotel to rest a bit before our flight to Pago the next morning at 10am. We arrived home on Wednesday afternoon. The travel hours were extremely long and I think the girls really felt that more on the second day. I tried to have them rest as much as we could and do a lot of stretching and mobility exercises.

In total, we spent 23 hours and 50 minutes in the air on the way to Bahrain, and 27 hours and 15 minutes in transit. On the way back, we logged 22 hours and 10 minutes in the air, and 36 hours and 10 minutes in transit. Jet lag was not our friend.

The tournament overall was a great success as reflected in the results. I feel like we could have definitely beat the teams we played the deciding doubles in. Full reports on player performance have been provided to their federations and hopefully these could be of help and provide insight on the matches for each player.

Thank you ITF/OTF for the opportunity to accompany this team and it is always my greatest pleasure to (hopefully) be a role model for future players. Thank you!