



PORSCHE

Press Release

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41st Porsche Tennis Grand Prix – Summary Day 5

Dream start for Angelique Kerber

Stuttgart. Angelique Kerber has started her Porsche Tennis Grand Prix campaign in impressive style. The Porsche Brand Ambassador won her opening match 6-3, 6-2 against the Czech Petra Kvitova in front of a 4,400 crowd in the Porsche Arena on Wednesday. It was sweet revenge for her bitter Fed Cup defeat on Sunday. Another player to progress to the next round was the top-seeded Romanian Simona Halep. The world No. 1 and winner of the 2017 Porsche Race to Singapore came through at the expense of the Slovakian Magdalena Rybarikova 4-6, 6-2, 6-3.

Today's Angelique Kerber was the Kerber tennis fans had been looking forward to – confident, determined, tenacious right from her very first return against Petra Kvitova. The two-time Wimbledon champion was not allowed to get into the match and the German had the perfect answer in every situation. Much to the delight of the audience she closed out a relatively untroubled win on her third match point. In this kind of form, she can certainly dream of a third Stuttgart title. "It wasn't an easy match for me even though it didn't look that way from the outside," she said, "but I learnt from my match on Sunday and was fully focussed on playing better today. I tried right from the outset to dominate the match and was quite successful. Things won't get any easier but the first rounds are always the most difficult for me. So I'm really happy to have won today. I'm up-and-running."

The spectators were however forced to wait a while for Angelique Kerber to appear for her opening match – but it was an entertaining wait. Before the two-time Stuttgart

winner could get to work on Centre Court, Kristina Mladenovic and Anett Kontaveit went head-to-head in a thrilling marathon match lasting three hours nine minutes, the longest of the tournament so far. Last year's runner-up from France and the favourite for the win, took the first set 7-5 and was twice one point away from sewing up the match in straight sets. But it was not to be as Anett Kontaveit battled hard to claw her way back. The Estonian, who lost to Maria Sharapova in the Stuttgart quarterfinals in 2017, then won both the second and third sets on a tiebreak and could hardly believe her luck. "It was a very intensive match," she said. "It's so nice being back in Stuttgart. You automatically play your best tennis in such an atmosphere."

The day's first singles encounter was not much shorter as Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova (Russia) needed three sets – 7-6, 5-7, 6-4 – to down the American Madison Keys who was making her debut in Stuttgart. The US Open champion Sloane Stephens however exited the tournament relatively unspectacularly. Not showing anything like the qualities that landed her a first Grand Slam title in New York last summer, she lost 6-1, 6-0 against her countrywoman Coco Vandeweghe. Everything was over in only 56 minutes and the world No. 16, who was given a Top 20 wild card, was comfortably through to the next round.

Impressive qualifiers

Marta Kostyuk, the highly-talented 15-year old from Ukraine, was joined in the second round by two other qualifiers. The world No. 193 Veronika Kudermetova (Russia) knocked-out the Spaniard Carla Suarez Navarro, who is ranked 168 positions higher, 7-6(5), 6-2. And the Kazakh Zarina Diyas was an easy 6-2,6-3 winner against lucky loser Carina Witthöft (Germany).

In the doubles, Porsche Team Germany's Anna-Lena Grönefeld has progressed to the second round. Together with her American partner and title-holder Raquel Atawo, she beat the Australian-Ukrainian duo of Monique Adamczak/Lyudmyla Kichenok 7-6, 3-6, 1-0 (1). No longer in the tournament is the Porsche Talent Team Germany pairing of Lena Ruffer und Antonia Lottner. They lost 7-6 (2), 2-6, 1-0 (2) to title-holder Jelena

Ostapenko (Latvia) and the Ukrainian Olga Savchuk an.

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