



PORSCHE

Press Release

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Porsche Team Germany starts Billie Jean King Cup Finals campaign with a narrow loss

Angelique Kerber wins match between the top stars

Stuttgart/Prague. After putting up stiff resistance, Porsche Team Germany was eventually defeated 2-1 by the Czech Republic in the opening match of its Billie Jean King Cup Finals campaign in Prague. The German team's only point against the hot favourites came in the match between the top stars when Angelique Kerber performed brilliantly in the O2 Arena to beat the French Open winner Barbora Krejickova 6-7 (5), 6-0, 6-4. It levelled the scores up at 1-1 after her teammate Andrea Petkovic had previously been defeated 6-1 6-3 by Marketa Vondrousova. In the decisive doubles, Anna-Lena Friedsam/Jule Niemeier only just missed out on causing a major upset when losing 6-4, 6-7 (2), 10-8 against the experienced Katerina Siniakova/Lucie Hradecka.

In the encounter between the top two players at the finals – Barbora Krejickova is the world No. 3 and Angelique Kerber the No. 9 – the Porsche Brand Ambassador impressed with her classy tennis and fighting spirit. 3-0 down in the first set, she came back to first square up the match at 4-4 and then take a 5-4 lead. Also 3-0 behind in the tie-break, she battled her way back to go 5-4 up but, after failing earlier to convert three set points, she however eventually lost the set on a double fault.

“I was so close to winning the first set and was naturally disappointed that I didn't succeed. Losing it on a double fault was really annoying,” said Angelique Kerber after the high-class match. “I tried to forget the first set and concentrate on finding my rhythm as quickly as possible in the second. And it worked a treat.”

In the second set, she gave her opponent, who won doubles gold at the Tokyo Olympics, a tennis lesson. She did not lose a single game and, even though the third set was a close affair, Angelique Kerber ran out a highly deserved winner. After two hours 18 minutes, she wrapped up the rubber on her first match point to hand Porsche Team Germany its first point. “The atmosphere in the arena was fantastic event though they were basically all for the Czechs,” said the three-time grand slam winner after making her 16th appearance for Germany. “I hope we’ll get more than just the one more chance to enjoy the atmosphere this week.”

In the finals containing the world’s 12 best teams, only the four group winners will progress. Only by winning their second group match on Tuesday against Switzerland will Porsche Team Germany have at least a theoretical chance of advancing to the semifinals. “Switzerland has lots of good players. We’ll watch matches of the highest class” says Andrea Petkovic. “The biggest challenge for us players will be to get back into the groove tomorrow. We’re obviously not used to playing again so quickly after suffering defeat. Normally a whole week goes by.”

In her opening match, Andrea Petkovic faced Marketa Vondrousova. The 34-year-old German, who has now turned out 18 times for her country in the most important women’s team competition making her Porsche Team Germany’s most experienced player, battled hard against the Tokyo Olympics runner-up, especially in the second set. She however succumbed 6-1, 6-3 after 74 minutes. “Everything went against me today. I didn’t play well, and Marketa played exceptionally well,” she said when summing up her display. “What irked me most of all was the fact that I was unable make the match tougher for her when I had a few chances at the start. She hardly made any mistakes and didn’t give anything away. I had to win all my points myself.”

In the all-decisive doubles that only ended after midnight, Jule Niemeier enjoyed an impressive Porsche Team Germany debut. Together with Anna-Lena Friedsam, the Porsche Talent Team player took on the experienced Czech duo of Katerina Siniakova/Lucie Hradecka. They lost the first set 6-4 but came back to win the second

7-6. They also gave the favourites a run for their money in the Champions Tiebreak but eventually went down 10-8.

The matches at the Billie Jean King Cup Finals are being televised live in Germany by the Tennis Channel International streaming service.

The Billie Jean King Cup by BNP Paribas Finals

The former Fed Cup has been renamed the Billie Jean King Cup this year. The International Tennis Federation (ITF) thus recognises the efforts of the former American world class player to promote professional women's tennis and players' equal rights. The inaugural finals will be played in a new format with 12 top teams divided up into four groups in Prague from 1 to 4 November. Group A: France, Russia (Russian Tennis Federation), Canada, Group B: Australia, Belarus, Belgium, Group C: USA, Spain, Slovakia, Group D. Porsche Team Germany, Czech Republic, Switzerland. Each tie will comprise of two singles and one doubles. The group winners will qualify for the semifinals on 5 November where Group A and C's top teams will face each other as will the Group B and Group D winners. The final will be played on 6 November.

Porsche in tennis

Porsche has been sponsoring the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix ever since 1978 and has also been the organiser since 2002. In the last vote to take place, the tournament in Stuttgart's Porsche Arena was chosen by the players as their favourite event in its category. Within the scope of its global partnership with the Women's Tennis Association (WTA), Porsche is also the title partner of the "Porsche Race to the WTA Finals", the official qualifying ranking for the WTA Finals. The Stuttgart-based sports car manufacturer is also the exclusive automotive partner of the WTA, the season-ending WTA Finals and of this year's WTA tournaments in Lyon (France), St. Petersburg (Russia), Berlin and Bad Homburg (Germany), Cincinnati (USA), Linz (Austria) and the two events in Cluj (Romania). As a premium partner of the "Deutsche Tennis Bund" (DTB – German Tennis Association), the company supports Porsche

Team Germany in the Billie Jean King Cup (formerly the Fed Cup) and fosters up-and-coming players in the Porsche Talent Team and the Porsche Junior Team. Angelique Kerber, Julia Görge and Maria Sharapova give Porsche a face in tennis as Brand Ambassadors.

Further information, film and photo material in the Porsche Newsroom: newsroom.porsche.com