


# “We’ve got a great team spirit and a team that can achieve great things”

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31/10/2023 Rainer Schüttler has captained Porsche Team Germany for a second time to the Billie Jean King Cup Finals which will take place in Seville from 7 to 12 November. In an interview with Porsche Newsroom, the former world class player reveals what makes his job as team captain so interesting and what he thinks his players are capable of when facing the best tennis nations.

**Mr Schüttler, after all these years, why do you still find tennis so much fun?**

**Rainer Schüttler:** “I’ve been involved in tennis for an eternity. The passion just never lets go. When I'm on the road on a tennis mission then it's like a holiday for me.”

**Which experiences as a former world class player can you make use of when working with Porsche Team Germany?**

**Rainer Schüttler:**"I can get over quite well what it means to play for Germany. The kind of pressure you are under and how you should try to deal with it. Also how to prepare optimally for vital matches is a part of everything. The players obviously know about the situation from their day-to-day life on tour. However, representing a country in a team is a totally different responsibility. Then they are also open for new ideas and are grateful for a tip or two."

**What makes coaching a team in tennis so interesting?**
**Rainer Schüttler:**"When working together with players, then you get used to one another very quickly. A lot becomes routine. The work with a team is totally different, especially when you're dealing with five girls."

**What's the difference?**

**Rainer Schüttler:** "Women are more sensitive, at least in my experience. Whilst you can talk about things in a tougher and a more direct way with men, women think about things more and take a lot more personally. Obviously, it's basically a good idea to reflect on criticism and take it to heart. But with women, as a coach one has to take far more care about how you speak about certain things and also brace yourself for the way they take criticism."

**When it comes to Porsche Team Germany, you seem to have struck the right note.**

**Rainer Schüttler:**"For me, it's incredibly exciting because every player is different. It gives the team a very special atmosphere which, in our case, also has a positive effect on the way we perform. Our ties against Croatia and Brazil when qualifying for Seville were great team performances, just like in the final two years ago in Prague. I think it's fantastic the way the girls stick together, the way they gee each other up and cheer each other on. I have to pay them a big compliment."

**How do you keep in touch with the players all through the year?**

**Rainer Schüttler:**"I meet the players at the tournaments I visit all through the year. In addition to these personal get-togethers, I obviously follow all their results. I also follow them in social media and am therefore always well informed about where they are, even when they're on holiday."

**How do you manage to create a powerful team out of athletes that compete as individuals?**

**Rainer Schüttler:** "In our case it's relatively easy. The players know each other well, are also friends. They practice together at tournaments and go out to eat together. Nevertheless, on tour, they compete as individuals. It's why it's important that we spend the few days we have together as intensively as a team as possible. It's how the team spirit that makes us strong develops. It's also down to trust. I trust the players. We won sensationally against Croatia, and against Brazil, and have therefore deserved our place in the finals. We've got a fantastic team spirit and a team that can achieve great things, also even though we are not the favourites in our group containing Italy and France."

**How big is the desire to be a part of Porsche Team Germany?**

**Rainer Schüttler:**"Very big. No player has ever told me that they have to sleep on it when I invited them. Everyone agreed immediately. Also, when we talk about things, I can feel that each and every one of them has a burning desire to play for Germany."

**How big is the chance that the Porsche Brand Ambassador Angelique Kerber will return to the team after taking time off to have a baby?**

**Rainer Schüttler:**"Angie has done an incredible job for the team and Germany. The fact that she is working so hard and seriously on her comeback after the birth of her child speaks for her unbroken fighting spirit. The whole team wishes her a successful return to the Tour and will naturally welcome her with open arms at all times."

**You're travelling with the team to Seville on Monday – with which hopes and expectations?**

**Rainer Schüttler:** "Looking purely at the rankings, then we're the outsiders. But in Croatia and against Brazil, we saw that we don't have to hide from any nation. And on a good day, we can also beat Italy and France."

## A short bio

Rainer Schüttler was born in Korbach, Germany on 25 April 1976 and today lives with his family on Lake Zürich in Switzerland. He enjoyed his biggest achievements as a player at the 2003 Australian Open and in 2004 at the Olympic Games in Athens when winning the silver medal in doubles together with Nicolas Kiefer. In 2008, he reached the Wimbledon semi-finals. He achieved his best world ranking in the middle of 2004 when he listed as No. 5. He retired from his playing career on 8 October 2012. From November 2018 to July 2019, he trained the Porsche Brand Ambassador Angelique Kerber. He has captained Porsche Team Germany in the Billie Jean King Cup since 2020 and has picked Tatjana Maria, Anna-Lena Friedsam, Laura Siegemund, Eva Lys and Jule Niemeier for the finals in Seville.

# MEDIA ENQUIRIES



**Markus Rothermel**

Spokesperson Sports Communications
+49 (0) 170 / 911 0779
markus.rothermel@porsche.de

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