

The Tournament Directors

This article reflects the status at the time of its publication. The content may since have become outdated.

05/04/2023 Behind the success of the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix is a strong team.

Leadership duo

Behind the success of the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix is a strong team. Markus Günthardt as the Tournament Director and Anke Huber as the Operating Tournament Director have formed a successful leadership duo ever since 2005.

Markus Günthardt, himself a professional on the ATP Tour from 1978 to 1985 and a Davis Cup player for Switzerland, has been the tournament director since 2005. He remained in the game after the end of a playing career that took him to No. 40 in the world doubles rankings. First as the tournament director of the Eurocard Open and ATP Tour World Championships, later as the tournament director of the WTA Finals in Istanbul as well as the WTA Finals in Singapore and Shenzhen. His experience is also

in demand on the WTA Tournament Council. He lives with his wife and two children in Madrid and Switzerland.

Anke Huber has been the Operating Tournament Director of the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix since 2002. The German, who reached a career high of No. 4 in the WTA world rankings, played her stand-out match when she and compatriot Steffi Graf contested the 1995 Masters final. One year later, she reached her only Grand Slam final at the Australian Open. During the course of her career, she won a total of 12 WTA tournaments. At the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix, she won the tournament in 1991 (against Martina Navratilova) and again in 1994 (against Mary Pierce). She retired after the 2001 WTA Masters. Of the 632 matches she played, she managed to win 418. Anke Huber has two children and lives with her family in Frankenthal, Germany.

Anke Huber, Operating Tournament Director

A tradition at the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix is to give up-and-coming German players the chance to compete by handing them wildcards. For Anker Huber, the Operating Tournament Director of the world class event in the Porsche Arena, it is a given: "As a tournament, we also have a responsibility for young talents."

Anke Huber talks...

...about how she, as the Operating Tournament Director, manages to keep enticing the top stars to the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix:

"We don't have to convince the players that have already been here about the quality of our tournament. They know exactly what they can expect. They know their way around and whenever they need something, they know who they can turn to. For them it's like coming back home. They simply have a feel-good feeling here, something they say to us over and over again. For us, it's naturally the nicest compliment going."

...about the popularity of the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix amongst the players:

"The feel-good factor plays a big part. For many players, Stuttgart is a fixture when planning the season. It gives us a certain amount of pride. It's also so nice seeing them feeling at home here and keep coming back. And we try to anticipate the players' every wish."

...about the quality of the main draw field in 2023:

"From a sporting point of view, all the signs indicate that we will get to watch tennis of the highest class in the Porsche Arena. With Iga Swiatek in the line-up, we have the title holder and world No. 1. I'm also delighted that Coco Gauff is coming back. And then there's naturally Aryna Sabalenka. She is in the form

of her life and fully deserved her win at the Australian Open. I'm eager to see how she gets on here after twice finishing a runner-up."

...about supporting German talents with wildcards:

"It's always nice having so many top stars here. But as a tournament in Germany, we also have a responsibility towards German juniors. It's a responsibility we're very pleased to meet. To get to the top, talented youngsters also have to play the big tournaments. By giving them qualifying wildcards, or even main draw ones, we give them the chance to gain important experience for their later careers against the world's best players."

...about the experiences that the tournament has made with this method of fostering talent:

"In the past years, our young players have always done quite well in the Porsche Arena and have taken their chances. Last year for instance, Eva Lys and Nastasja Schunk, were both given a qualifying wildcard and then played their way into the main draw. It was an impressive performance as qualifying is also always extremely strong here. We'll therefore continue down the same path and continue giving the young players in the Porsche Talent Team and the Porsche Junior Team a platform where they can show themselves in the future too."

...about the strength in depth in women's tennis and what it means for the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix:

"Things are so unbelievably exciting at the top. There's an enormous strength in depth. Though Iga Swiatek heads the world rankings by a mile, there is a lot of to and froing behind her. There has almost always been a different winner at this year's important tournaments. It's nice that, after a slow start to the season, Iga found her form again when winning in Doha. Before triumphing at the Australian Open, Aryna Sabalenka also won in Adelaide. And Coco Gauff also got off to a winning start to the season at the Auckland tournament. I'm eager to see them playing in the Porsche Arena."

...her job as Operating Tournament Director and how it has changed over the years:

"I've got a wonderful job as the Operating Tournament Director, one that is still giving me so much fun after all these years. I'm a kind of interface between the tournament, players and the WTA. Much has changed over the course of time in women's tennis, something that also applies to my job. Everything has become even more professional and new communication channels have been added. The players have far more on their plates and have to do numerous additional off-court duties, like media work or being available for fans and sponsors. And social media has also become important. It means it's become more challenging for me. It's still a dream job, not least because it keeps producing new challenges."

...her good contact with the players:

"For us, all the players are important, and we look forward to everybody that comes here – no matter

whether it's the number one or the number 50. I've been able to build up a good relationship with most of the players over the years, especially with those that are regulars here in Stuttgart. Every player has a different personality and it's what makes it all the more interesting. During the year, I try to stay in contact with the players. It often takes up a lot of time, but it's all well worthwhile which one can once again see this year when looking at the excellent starting line-up."

Markus Günthardt, Tournament Director

The 46th Porsche Tennis Grand Prix has attracted numerous top stars to Stuttgart's Porsche Arena. Losing no time, the world No. 1 and last year's winner Iga Swiatek confirmed her intention to defend her title in the Porsche Arena right before Christmas. Aryna Sabalenka, her opponent in the final and the Australian Open champion, is set to appear again in Stuttgart. Tournament Director Markus Günthardt: "For me, it's proof we offer the players an attractive total package."

Markus Günthardt talks...

...about the fantastic starting line-up and the stars that visitors to the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix can particularly look forward to:

"We're once again offering our audiences the world's top players. It's what we aim to do. As for the starting line-up, we've always set high standards. We're so glad we've been able to keep meeting those standards. The fact that top stars like Iga Swiatek, Aryna Sabalenka, Caroline Garcia and Coco Gauff announced their coming early on is a big compliment for us."

...about the interest so many top stars have in the tournament in the Porsche Arena, and what it says about the tournament's status:

"For me, it's proof that the total package we offer the players is spot on. We're not one of the really big tournaments, we don't have the biggest prize money and not the most world ranking points, and nevertheless the world's best players come to us. It's a fantastic statement telling us that they feel at home in Stuttgart and they like being here."

...about question as to whether Iga Swiatek will successfully defend her title, like Maria Sharapova and Angelique Kerber in the recent past:

"We're delighted to be able to present our crowd with a superstar like Iga. She was 2022's outstanding player and deservedly tops the world rankings. As the defending champion, she's definitely one of the big favourites, especially after showing at the Qatar Open in Doha that she is back in top form after getting off to a slow start to the season."

...about the strengths of last year's runner-up Aryna Sabalenka who is back in Stuttgart:

"Having both last year's finalists is great for every tournament director. Aryna is a two-time runner-up and she told me she wants to win the tournament this time around at all costs. I think it's definitely possible. She played brilliantly at the Australian Open and totally deserved to win her first Grand Slam. It's just the right mo**tivation for her to also fulfil her dream of winning the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix, and the Porsche."**

...about Caroline Garcia, who, as the winner of the 2022 WTA Finals, he views as being one of the favourites:

"I'm so pleased for her that she's now found her way back into the Top 10 after so many setbacks. She's an excellent player, a fantastic athlete and, as a person, very pleasant. As the winner of the 2022 WTA Finals, she'll be in the running here in Stuttgart, no question."

...about Coco Gauff who he sees as being a potential No. 1, and the strengths of the Porsche Brand Ambassador Emma Raducanu:

"We delighted that Coco and Emma are coming. They are two very promising players and unquestionably an enrichment for our tournament. Without doubt, Coco has the potential to become the world No. 1 at some stage. She has just turned 18 and has a lot of time ahead of her. The question is whether she will actually manage it as she is up against strong competition. In my view, she's a top player that is improving all the time, very athletic and a fighter and somebody that has everything it takes to establish herself at the top. She's definitely capable of going all the way to the final here, and to winning. The same basically goes for Emma. She's after all a Grand Slam winner which is not something many players can say. She's not considered to be a clay court specialist, but if things go her way, she can go for the title despite the tough competition."

...about the attraction of the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix for the players:

"To be honest, we offer them the best conditions for them to go about their profession successfully. It begins with the excellent practice facilities and ends with the full arena with a fantastic atmosphere. I have to pay the Stuttgart crowd a big compliment as the atmosphere in the Porsche Arena is fabulous not matter whether a qualifier or a Top 10 player is on court. It's something the players really appreciate. And then there's also a fantastic car to win. It's a part of the tradition here. Tracy Austin, the first ever winner of the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix in Filderstadt in 1978, received a sports car from Zuffenhausen as the main prize. Awaiting the winner this year is a fully electric Porsche Taycan Turbo S Sport Turismo."

...about the attractive programme of side events with interesting new activities:

"The Racket Sports World is new this year. Visitors to the tournament's public village in the Hanns-Martin-Schleyer-Halle are offered a wide range of interesting activities focussing on tennis, padel, table tennis, badminton and touch tennis. People buying a ticket for the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix also have free admission to the Racket Sports World. For the first time, there are however also separate tickets

for the pubilc village with the Racket Sports World."

...about the importance of such side events for the success of the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix:

"They're very important from my point of view as we'd like our spectators to spend the whole day in the arena. But we can't expect them to stay seated for ten hours in the stands. We have to create the conditions in which they are perfectly happy to spend such a long time in the arena. And another important point, we want to cater specifically for families, and they don't always have the same interests. By offering a variety of activities, we hope there is something for everybody. The Porsche Tennis Grand Prix should continue to be an event for the whole family."

Consumption data

Taycan Turbo S Sport Turismo (Predecessor model)

*Further information on the official fuel consumption and the official specific CO_2 emissions of new passenger cars can be found in the "Leitfaden über den Kraftstoffverbrauch, die CO_2-Emissionen und den Stromverbrauch neuer Personenkraftwagen" (Fuel Consumption, CO_2Emissions and Electricity Consumption Guide for New Passenger Cars), which is available free of charge at all sales outlets and from DAT (Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH, Helmuth-Hirth-Str. 1, 73760 Ostfildern-Scharnhausen, www.dat.de).

Link Collection

Link to this article
https://newsroom.porsche.com/en/press-kits/46th-porsche-tennis-grand-prix/The-Tournament-Directors.html

Media Package
https://pmdb.porsche.de/newsroomzips/1c274b85-b52b-4ec0-882f-cbdc935d1ac8.zip

Dr. Ing. h.c. F. Porsche Aktiengesellschaft
Porscheplatz 1
70435 Stuttgart