

“The love for the sport is my biggest motivation”

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03/11/2023 Angelique Kerber has often come back in her successful career. Going virtually straight into the Australian Open after taking a break from the game to have a baby is a huge challenge, even for Germany's top tennis player. “I definitely missed the competition. Facing the top players and playing the big matches is the reason why I want to come back to the tour”, she says in an interview with Porsche Newsroom.

The Porsche Brand Ambassador's preparations are going to plan. “My goal is to be ready for the first match when we fly to Australia right after Christmas.”

Angelique, how are you and little Liana?

Angelique Kerber: “Thanks for asking, we're doing fine. It's an exciting time again and one that brings

new challenges. With family, practicing and preparations for the new season."

You became a mother in February. Did you miss tennis in all that time?

Angelique Kerber:"For sure. I definitely missed the competition. Facing the top players and playing the big matches is the reason why I want to come back to the tour. I love the sport. I was still on court hitting balls at my academy three, four days before giving birth."

Is there anything you've learnt in the last months?

Angelique Kerber:"You can get away with having less sleep than you think (laughs). I've also learnt to be more patient, and to plan my daily life more efficiently to best combine career and family."

Have you followed the Tour during your time off and which players have impressed you?

Angelique Kerber:"Of course, I've always kept up to date. Alongside players at the very top like Iga Swiatek and Aryna Sabalenka, Coco Gauff has particularly impressed me. She's played great tournaments time and time again for a while now, but the fact she's now already won the US Open at the age of only 19 is however a little bit of a surprise."

You've gathered your tried and trusted team headed by Torben Beltz around you for your comeback. How much does it help you?

Angelique Kerber: "It gives me a big feeling of security and a certain inner peace of mind when I know there are people at my side that I can trust. It's very important for me personally. For what is an extremely long preparation. I wanted a team around me that I've known for a long time and that I know will understand the new challenges that I'm facing. It's not only the practicing. The whole daily routine has to be planned a little differently. I need people's understanding and the full support of people I can count on all the time."

How are the preparations going?

Angelique Kerber:"Everything is going to plan. My preparation for the Australian Open is obviously totally different, simply because it's three times as long as normal. It's all going well. I still actually have a bit of time to go. My goal is to be ready for the first match when we fly to Australia right after Christmas."

Your tournament schedule up to the Australian Open has been finalised?

Angelique Kerber:"Yes. I'll play the United Cup in Sydney and I'm looking forward to kicking off my comeback by playing for Team Germany in my first match back. My schedule before the Australian Open also takes in the tournament in Adelaide."

Back to the preparations. As you don't have to learn how to play the game, was it more of a case of getting fit?

Angelique Kerber: "Of course. Fitness was the main focus up until a short time ago. Now we're concentrating more and more on tennis again. But fitness is the thing you lose most in the one and a half years. Getting back to trusting one's body and listening to it, that was the biggest challenge at the start. I think so far, I've managed it quite well."

In your career, you've come back several times already. Is this comeback the biggest challenge?

Angelique Kerber:"This time it's definitely a different kind of comeback. If you don't play well, lose matches and as a consequence fall into a big hole, then you continue to practice and know how to get out of the low. These days it's a completely different and much more difficult task. Kicking off again at the United Cup after a one-and-a-half-year break and then having your first Grand Slam two weeks later is a huge challenge."

What motivates you to work so hard on your comeback?

Angelique Kerber:"The love for the sport is my biggest motivation. It'll never go away. Added to that is the challenge of returning to the big tennis stage and giving it my all once again. I will face the world's top players and show the fans my best tennis. However, I'm also realistic. It's a long way back and I'm just at the beginning."

Did you ever have any doubts about your return?

Angelique Kerber:"No. If I set my mind on something then I want to do it properly, and for as long as it takes to master it. Obviously, it's an extremely long path and one I've never been down before. There were, and there still are, ups and downs, but you have to be spontaneous. At times, you have to start practicing an hour later. I've got a good team around me. It's one that's flexible and knows how things like that go. But I've never really doubted anything. As I said, if I start something then I want to finish it."

Do you exchange thoughts with other tennis mothers, like for example your good friend Caroline Wozniacki?

Angelique Kerber:"I chat from time to time with Caro, also in respect of the similar stage in life that we both find ourselves in. We exchange thoughts but in the end all of us has to go his or her own way and find out what functions best for them, and how to find a balance."

Does the scheduling of your season stretch up to the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix in Stuttgart on April?

Angelique Kerber:"Well, that's the goal, definitely. I'd love to play in the Porsche Arena once again and am very optimistic. I missed playing the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix last year and hope I'll be competing there again this time."

Porsche Team Germany is playing the Billie Jean King Cup Finals next week. What do you think your former teammates are capable of and will there be a comeback there too?

Angelique Kerber:"I'd love to play for Porsche Team Germany in the Billie Jean King Cup next year, also with the Olympics in Paris coming up. The fact that the girls have managed to get to the Finals is a fantastic achievement. I think they're capable of doing well in Sevilla and am keeping my fingers crossed for them. Though they'll be up against tough opponents, they can pull off a surprise. Everything is possible at the end of such a long season."

Angelique Kerber

was born in Bremen on 18.1.1988 and is one of the world's most successful tennis players. In 2016, the Porsche Brand Ambassador took over at the top of the world rankings with Grand Slam wins in Melbourne and New York – the first German to do so since Steffi Graf in 1997. In 2018, she fulfilled her big tennis dream by winning Wimbledon. She won the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix in 2015 and 2016 and claimed her last WTA title to date in Strasbourg in 2022. She gave birth to her daughter Liana in February 2023.

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Subline: Porsche Brand Ambassador Angelique Kerber (3rd from right) with the Porsche Team Germany: Team captain Rainer Schüttler, Jule Niemeier, Nastasja Schunk, Andrea Petkovic und Anna-Lena Friedsam (l-r)

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