

Coco Vandeweghe and Karolina Pliskova in the final

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28/04/2018 Premiere for Coco Vandeweghe and Karolina Pliskova: the American and Czech will on Sunday contest the final of the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix for the first time.

In front a 4,500 crowd in the once again sold-out Porsche Arena, Coco Vandeweghe was a comfortable 6-4, 6-2 winner against the Frenchwoman Caroline Garcia. Karolina Pliskova also ended the sensational winning streak of the Estonian Anett Kontaveit at the 41st edition of the long-established Stuttgart tournament by exactly the same score.

Clay is by no means Coco Vandeweghe's preferred surface which makes it all the more surprising that she has progressed such a long way at the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix. In posting wins against the US Open winner Sloane Stephens, the world No. 1 Simona Halep and now Caroline Garcia in the semifinals on Saturday, she has been the nemesis of three Top 10 players in the Porsche Arena, but not only as

she also ended Laura Siegemund's hopes of a successful title defence. Such a winning streak is a real confidence booster. Against Caroline Garcia, the world No. 7 from Lyon, who knocked superstar Maria Sharapova out of her favourite tournament in the first round, Coco Vandeweghe went on the attack right from the moment play started – and clinched victory with her first match point after only 74 minutes.

Vandeweghe won her first semifinal

The ease with which she won her first semifinal at the long-established Stuttgart tournament led immediately afterwards to the question as to whether it really had been so easy as it had looked. "No, no, Caroline was a very tough opponent," said Coco Vandeweghe, "I'm so surprised to have reached a final on clay." The world No. 16 however does not feel the unexpected premiere will put her any undue pressure, "I'm not really thinking about things too much. Here it's a bit like California back home on the beach. I just want to enjoy my time on court and drive off in the great car tomorrow." Should she succeed, she will be the first ever American winner in the Porsche Arena. Her countrywoman Lindsay Davenport, the winner of the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix in 2001, 2004 and 2005, celebrated her victories in Filderstadt.

Like the New Yorker Coco Vandeweghe, Karolina Pliskova encountered few difficulties in keeping her chances of a maiden title in Stuttgart alive. The current world No. 6, who last weekend dashed Porsche Team Germany's dreams of a Fed Cup final place when playing for the Czech Republic in the Porsche Arena, ended Anett Kontaveit's impressive streak of wins. The surprise package of the tournament, the outsider from Estonian thrilled the Stuttgart audience throughout the week with her resolute game and performances. Ranked No. 31 in the world, she had shown little respect to top players like last year's runner-up Kristina Mladenovic, but she was no match for Karolina Pliskova who did not drop a single point on her serve in the second set.

"It's going to be a close match"

The strong-serving Czech, who was on court until past midnight in her quarterfinal match against Jelena Ostapenko, was happy at reaching the final – but she wasn't satisfied with her game. "I was still tired and made too many errors at the start," she said. "It was only at the end of the first set that I dug deep and found my game. For me, I was a bit out of sorts but It's important that I can win such matches." A preview of the final? "It's going to be a close match. Coco has played many good matches and appears to be very self-confident. A good serve will be the key."

The prospects should not cause her to lose any sleep before the final. This season she has already hit 160 aces, more than any other player. Additionally, she played and beat Coco Vandeweghe 7-6(2), 6-4 last year at the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix – but that was in the second round. Finals are normally completely different affairs.

Doubles final includes Anna-Lena Grönefeld

The doubles final at the 41st Porsche Tennis Grand Prix will include Porsche Team Germany's Anna-Lena Gröenefeld. She and her partner Raquel Atawo (USA) will play Nicole Melichar (USA) and Kveta Peschke (Czech Republic).

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