

“We should see the crisis as a chance”

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16/04/2020 For Julia Görges, positive thinking is an important prerequisite to get through the corona crisis. The Porsche Brand Ambassador and winner of the 2011 Porsche Tennis Grand Prix is at home in Regensburg, Germany waiting to return to playing tennis again. In our interview, she speaks about what she misses most of all in the situation, about what she finally has time for again, how she keeps herself fit, which players she has kept in contact with and what we can learn from the crisis.

Julia, where are you at the moment and how are you?
“I’m sitting peacefully in my garden in Regensburg enjoying the Easter holiday in the sun. Everything is fine.”

How are you coping with the current situation?
“I always think positively and am trying to do the best I can in this situation. I’m enjoying the time I

never had in the past 13 years as a professional tennis player – even if it was naturally somewhat strange at the start. However, I can do my workout routine and have everything I need at home. If everything goes to plan and a special authorisation is issued, I can return to hitting balls again this week at the TennisBase centre in Munich. I've heard coaches are not allowed and taking a shower is also not possible. But it'll definitely be nice to get back to swinging a racket again."

How difficult is it to be disciplined and committed when practicing, without being focussed on the next match?
"It's not at all difficult for me. I'm naturally missing competitive tennis, it's my passion – it's the reason why it's my chosen career. But for me, it's also about me myself, my physical well-being. As I've had to stop practising, I've had more time in the past few weeks to concentrate intensively on my fitness. I hope it'll be noticeable when I get back on court."

What are you missing – except for tennis – in these times?
"An uncomplicated life, meaning meeting friends whenever I want and moving around freely. It just isn't possible at the moment, at least not in groups. But I can still go out into the fresh air. I'm basically coping quite well with the situation."

In a video, you and other Porsche Brand Ambassadors appealed to your fans to also think positively in these times, to stand together and adhere to the authorities' regulations. How important is it?
"Positive thinking is always important. There are highs and lows in life. As an athlete, I've had to deal with wins and defeats all through the years and the experiences can be transferred nicely into one's private life. When we look around these days, we can see many things that are not so positive. Our freedom of movement is limited, shops are shut, many people are really worried about their futures. But only those that still succeed in staying positive are able to help others and give them the feeling that they are not alone in this difficult situation. Being there for our fellow human beings, staying at home and sticking to the rules are important prerequisites for getting through the crisis."

What do you finally now have time for as a result of corona?
"I find it pleasant that I can occupy myself with things for which I never really had the time or willingness in all the years gone by. It for sure includes clearing out and tidying up the house. If you live the whole year out of a suitcase, then you always basically pack the same things. Now I'm peering into the back corners of my wardrobe and it's amazing what's now finding the light of day."

The Porsche Tennis Grand Prix scheduled for next week also cannot take place due to the corona crisis. How hard does it hit you?
"The Porsche Tennis Grand Prix will always have a very special place in my heart. It is the first big tournament I won in my career. Not playing this year in the Porsche Arena in front of the fantastic crowd makes me very sad. I, and many of my fellow players, associate wonderful emotions and positive experiences with the tournament."

Your win in 2011 is still present in your mind?
"Obviously. My climb to the top began with the win. The memories of the fantastic week in Stuttgart are

always present, not only when I'm playing in the Porsche Arena. At the time, I never dreamt of reaching the final and then driving off Centre Court in a Porsche. At the start of the week, I stood with my mother in front of the car. I can remember it clearly and we were joking what a lovely Easter present it would be. Such memories will remain with me forever."

What do you think will be different for you after corona?
"For me, the time at the moment is something akin to delving into life after retirement. I'm naturally restricted as a result of the crisis, but at the same time I have the freedom to do things for which I never really had the time in my 13 years as a pro. It's why I also see everything positively. I'm currently getting a first impression as to what my life could look like when I'm no longer travelling the world as a tennis player."

Can one therefore learn something from such a crisis?
"For sure. It is also pretty important because if you bury your head in the sand then you can never extricate yourself from a depression. A new door always opens after every terrible situation. Awaiting afterwards are many new and beautiful experiences. We should see the crisis as a chance and consider how things will continue afterwards for us, what we can do differently and better in life – even if it certainly isn't easy for us at the moment."

Which players have you kept in regular touch with, and how are they experiencing the current situation?
"I write every now and again to good friends on the tour, like Ash Barty, Kiki Bertens and Simona Halep. I've also been in contact a couple of times with Angie Kerber and Karolina Pliskova. We told each other about how things were in our own countries and what we're all doing in these weeks without tennis. I have the impression that they, in spite of everything, are all somehow enjoying the time – each in their own different ways."

When do you think tournament tennis will start up again?
"We're the biggest global sport for women. It's why I believe things will only start up again when all the travel restrictions are over, meaning every player can travel all over the world without having to first go into quarantine. I very much hope that it'll be the case this year. The most important condition for the Tour continuing is however that the health of everybody involved is guaranteed at all times. If I have to wait one or two months longer then it's fine with me."

A wish to finish off with?
"From the bottom of my heart, I wish the crisis is over soon and we can continue pursuing our careers with passion again – on the court and in normal life."

Porsche in tennis

Porsche has been sponsoring the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix ever since 1978 and has also been the organiser since 2002. The tournament in Stuttgart's Porsche Arena was voted by the players as their

favourite event in its category once again in 2019. 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 Shenzhen", the official qualifying ranking for the Shiseido WTA Finals. The Stuttgart-based sports car manufacturer is also the exclusive automotive partner of the WTA as well as the WTA Finals. As a premium partner of the "Deutsche Tennis Bund" (DTB – German Tennis Association), the company supports Porsche Team Germany in the Fed Cup and fosters up-and-coming players in the Porsche Talent Team and the Porsche Junior Team. Angelique Kerber, Julia Görges and Maria Sharapova give Porsche a face in tennis as Brand Ambassadors.

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