

“The players like coming back to us”

14/04/2024 Year for year the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix presents its audience with a world class field. This year eight Top 10 players will be competing in the Porsche Arena. “The players like coming to Stuttgart,” says the Operating Tournament Director Anke Huber in an interview. “We also go to great lengths to make sure they feel at home here and can display their best tennis.”

Anke Huber talks…

…about the exclusive field of players at the 47th Porsche Tennis Grand Prix:
“We’re naturally again very satisfied. With title holder Iga Swiatek, the reigning Australian Open champion Aryna Sabalenka and Coco Gauff, who last year won her first Grand Slam in New York, in the line-up, the world’s top players will all be here. All-in-all, we will be presenting eight Top 10 players and nine Grand Slam champions in the Porsche Arena. That’s pretty respectable.”

…about Angelique Kerber’s comeback in the Porsche Arena after giving birth:
“We’re very grateful that Angie was one of the first players to decide to enter our tournament. The pure fact that she will be appearing in the Porsche Arena ups the standing of the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix enormously. Our spectators couldn’t wish for anything more than watching the Porsche Brand

Ambassador and the two-time Stuttgart winner live again after a one-year break."

...about the Porsche Brand Ambassador's winning run at Indian Wells and her new confidence:
"The wins will definitely give her new confidence after the long break. She after all also beat the Top 10 player Jelena Ostapenko and therefore knows she has improved considerably since the start of the season in Australia. Emma Raducanu, our second Brand Ambassador in the field, was also in good form in Indian Wells. Hopefully she'll continue in the same vein in Stuttgart."

...about the world's best player's liking for the Stuttgart tournament and why one cannot take everything for granted:
"Having fields of players like the ones we have year in, year out are not a given. It's not quite so simple as that. We no longer have to convince the players that have already been here and who have played quite well about the quality of our tournament. They know exactly what they can expect. It's different with younger players and those that don't know our tournament so well. You still have to work on convincing some of them every now and again."

...about the virtues of the tournament that help her to convince the players:
"I tell them about what they can expect here. That we go the extra mile to offer them conditions in which they can display their best tennis, starting with the excellent practice facilities right up to the fantastic Porsche Arena with the great crowd. And we try to anticipate the players' every wish in the tournament week."

...about the level of tennis at the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix and how difficult it is to keep it at that level:
"Stuttgart is a fixture for many players when planning their season. They feel at home here and like coming back to us. It gives us a certain amount of pride. It's also so nice seeing them feeling at home. But as I said, it would be presumptuous to expect that we automatically have eight or nine Top 10 players every year. We go to a lot of trouble to make sure everything stays that way."

...about how she stays in contact with the players in between tournaments:
"It generally happens in late autumn when you can see which players are so far up the world rankings so that they are high enough to be in with a good chance of getting into our main draw. I call or write to the players and their management and take advantage of big events like, this year, the WTA Finals in Cancun to talk to them personally."

...about the current situation in women's tennis:
"The standard is for sure better than two, three years ago. There is less to choose between the players at the top and there's greater consistency. There were times when six or seven players broke into the Top 10 in a season and then quickly dropped out again. It's no longer the case. With players like Iga Swiatek, Aryna Sabalenka, Coco Gauff, Elena Rybakina and Jessica Pegula, there's more continuity at the top."

...about her "players of the year":

"Iga Swiatek and Aryna Sabalenka were outstanding. The fact that these two exceptional players contested the final of the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix in each of the past two years is an honour for our tournament. Iga is unbelievably consistent even though she has lost a few matches recently. She's concentrated and focussed and moves around the court extremely well. She's already got a lot of experience for her age. Aryna's strengths are her explosive power and energy. She can play incredibly quickly, has a powerful serve and showed at this year's Australian Open that she can win a Grand Slam. Coco Gauff also excites me. Her triumph at the US Open has given her a big boost, one I've waiting for the whole time. She'll definitely be somebody people have on their cards in the next years when Grand Slam titles are up for grabs."

...about the return of the successful trio to the Porsche Arena:
"In the case of Iga and Aryna, it was quite early on that they would be returning here this year. You should never feel certain, but with the finalists in the past two years, we were pretty sure it was going to happen. Iga after all has the rare chance to win her third consecutive title, and therefore go down in the history books. After the 2023 final, Aryna said she just had to win a Porsche. And Coco has told us over and over again just how much she likes it in Stuttgart."

...about talented youngsters capable of following in the footsteps of the two German Stuttgart winners Angelique Kerber and Laura Siegemund:
"At the moment, there's nobody in Germany that you feel is capable of doing it. We have to be patient and wait two or three years to see if our highly talented players Noma Noha Akugue, Eva Lys or Ella Seidel manage to get to the top. After a successful generation that included players like Angie Kerber, Julia Görges and Andrea Petkovic, it's relatively normal that there will initially be a gap. There are a number of young hopefuls in the junior teams supported by Porsche who have to be given the necessary time to develop."

...about Angelique Kerber springing a surprise:
"Angie is always good for a surprise. Especially in the Porsche Arena."

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



Markus Rothermel

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

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