

“Angie is a fighter”

24/10/2018 Anke Huber on a business trip to Singapore: At the WTA Finals, the Operating Tournament Director of the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix is nurturing her contacts with players, managers and officials. We talked to her about Porsche Brand Ambassador Angelique Kerber and the latest developments in women’s tennis.

For Anke Huber the short trip to Singapore is not all for pleasure. She has a lot to do. It is noticeable on the short walk from the indoor arena to the Raquet Club where the honorary guests at the WTA Finals relax between matches with cocktails and finger food. First her mobile rings a couple of times and then WTA CEO Steve Simon comes over for a chat. It is very obvious that the Operating Tournament Director of the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix is well-networked in the tennis scene. Before Anke Huber sets off to meet Sascha Bajin, the coach of the sensational US Open winner Naomi Osaka who she wants to attract to Stuttgart, she takes some time to talk to us. She spoke about...

...Angelique Kerber’s chances at the WTA Finals:

“Despite losing her opening match, Angie can go a long way. She is a fighter that never gives up. She has had a very good year and still seems amazingly fit. By winning in Wimbledon, she has fulfilled her

dream. She doesn't have to prove anything anymore. She can approach the WTA Finals, the last big challenge in the tennis season, in a relaxed frame of mind which will allow her to play her best tennis without being under any real pressure. It's exactly what she did in the first set against Kiki Bertens but she then let the match slip."

...the current situation in women's tennis:

"I wouldn't like to bet on who will win these finals. Four, five years ago, predicting the winner was easier. A lot has happened at the top this season. Just remembering that all four Grand Slams have been won by four different players speaks for greater competitiveness. This wasn't the case in the recent past. It's a very positive development."

...the players that have impressed her most of all in 2018:

"First of all, naturally, Naomi Osaka. The way the young Japanese beat Serena Williams to win the US Open in the Flushing Meadows cauldron was really impressive. I can remember her playing qualifying at the 2016 Porsche Tennis Grand Prix. Even then, it was obvious she was highly talented. She's one for the future. But as the Wimbledon champion, Angelique Kerber is one of the big winners in 2018, as is Simona Halep. After her win at the French Open, she'll go into the winter break once again as the world no. 1."

...a possible changing of the guard at the top of women's tennis:

"I don't see it happening just yet. Whilst I hugely admire the performances of Noami Osaka or Daria Kasatkina, who only narrowly missed out on qualifying for Singapore, I feel players like Simona Halep, Caroline Wozniacki, Petra Kvitova, and naturally Angelique Kerber are still strong enough to continue to assert themselves at the top in the next few years. Nevertheless, it's nice to see young talented players keep forcing their way to the top."

...Julia Görges, who missed out on qualifying for the WTA Finals:

It's a great pity that she didn't quite make it. She's playing the WTA Elite Trophy in China next week and despite being up against tough opponents like Garbine Muguruza and Caroline Garcia, she for sure has good chances of successfully defending the title she won last year. Jule has played excellently this season and she's definitely good enough for a quick return to the Top 10."

...her last WTA Finals as a player:

"Yes, it was in Munich in 2001. Back then, 16 players qualified for the finals and it was played as a normal knock-out tournament – one defeat and you were out. Unfortunately, that's what happened to me against Justine Henin, the Belgian who was later the world No. 1 for 100 weeks. It was on 31 October. I know it so exactly because I retired after the match."

...her trip to Singapore:

“First and foremost, it is about nurturing the good contacts we have with the players. Every player has a different personality and it makes it all very interesting. I’ll be talking to the coaches and managers with the aim of them getting them to play our tournament again in 2019. Though such trips like the one now to Singapore take up a lot of time, it's all worthwhile which is shown every year by our fantastic main draw field.

...about the probability that all the Singapore finalists will play in Stuttgart in 2019:

“Not everybody has confirmed their coming yet, but I’m quietly confident.”

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