

Angie Reloaded

23/04/2018 What counts in sport is mental strength. It is the only way to cope with the ups and downs. One could fill whole posters with one's thoughts in such times. Angelique Kerber did just that for us – and highly enjoyed herself.

There was a time when Angelique Kerber was known as being camera-shy. Not any more as there was no trace of it at the photo shoot for the Porsche Tennis Magazine – she sports an excellent figure in every pose. "You somehow get into it," she explains. It's not only true for photo sessions. In the last two years, Kerber basically had no other choice but to learn how one "gets into" unknown situations.

In her dream year in 2016 when, winning the Australian Open, she became the first German woman to claim a Grand Slam since Steffi Graf, she beat Karolina Pliskova in the US Open final, won silver at the Olympic Games and became the world No. 1. She however soon learned how quickly success can turn one into a bundle of nerves: "I first of all had to get used to the pressure," she says. The heady heights of success were followed in 2017 by a series of poor performances. Kerber duly slipped from the top of the world rankings to No. 21.

"Empty and disorientated" was how she felt after a year dominated by defeats said Kerber. But at the

start of 2018, there is no trace any more. Together with her new coach Wim Fissette, she has fought her way back and won match after match. Though she failed to get past the world No. 1 Simona Halep in the thrilling Australian Open semi-final, her comeback has to go down as being successful: “I’m on the right track,” she says confidently.

How has Angelique Kerber dragged herself out of the pits? “My loved ones have encouraged me and accepted me as I am. I consequently realised that I can’t allow myself to only define myself through sporting success.” Even though Kerber continues to be critical of herself, she has learnt not to dwell on defeats. It is obvious for all to see that she is enjoying playing tennis again – even though she says that before matches she is just as nervous as she was at the start of her career. The difference: “For sure, I get frustrated when I lose. On the other hand, I savour the good moments even more. In sport, ups and downs are a part of everyday life.”

Photoshoot with Angelique Kerber

Kerber is proud of what she has achieved but resting on her laurels is not for her: “I want to play my best tennis in every match and continue to exceed myself. No matter which tournament.” The WTA Ranking alone should no longer be a measure of her success and she blends out all the “unimportant frills”: “It enables me to concentrate on my job better.”

Next up, Angelique Kerber wants to reconquer the court at the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix. She would love to again be part of an all-German final – like in 2016 against Laura Siegemund. She additionally looks forward to the home advantage that helped give her the decisive burst of motivation in the 2015 final against Caroline Wozniacki. “I was behind in the third set and had little left in the tank. The fans picked me up, I turned the match around. It was unbelievable.” Let’s see if the crowd can again help Angelique Kerber to “get into things” – or whether it won’t be necessary.

**APRIL I hope you spent a peaceful and relaxing Easter break with your families! Coming up this month is my home tournament in Stuttgart @PorscheTennis and the @FedCup semifinal vs. Czech! Can‘t wait to see you in Stuttgart #porschetennis #TeamAngie #WirfuerD pic.twitter.com/suokEtkCj2

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