“This tournament is very important to me”

15/04/2019 A German Wimbledon champion will be playing at the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix for the first time in the tournament’s history. In the run-up to the tournament Angelique Kerber talks about her current form, her motivation and memories of Stuttgart.

Angelique Kerber fulfilled a lifelong dream by winning the world's most important tennis tournament. The Porsche Brand Ambassador and Wimbledon winner not only appreciates the feel-good atmosphere, but also the support from the spectators at the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix. She also enjoys the sporting challenge at this long-standing tournament, held between April 20 and 28 at the Porsche Arena. “These numbers of top players usually only come to Grand Slam tournaments”, said the two-time Stuttgart winner in our interview. “But that’s exactly what makes this event so interesting. Right from the outset, you need to be completely focussed and in top shape.”

Angelique, this year you already played in Brisbane, Melbourne, Doha, Dubai, Indian Wells, Miami and Monterrey. Now you are coming to Stuttgart. How important is the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix to you personally?

“This tournament is very important to me. I associate many emotions with it and get goosebumps when I think about it. I always really look forward to coming to Stuttgart. Playing in front of a home crowd is something very special. After all, we don’t have that many tournaments in Germany. It's always a very special week for me. The support from the spectators at the Porsche Arena is incredible and other players also rave about it.”

What do you particularly enjoy at the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix?

“Everything, really. I don’t know where to start! The atmosphere at the Porsche Arena is very special. I look forward to meeting all the people that have been making this tournament a success for many years, both publicly and behind the scenes. In Stuttgart I am surrounded by my family and many friends. And we can’t forget that organisers really anticipate any wish we might have as players, that’s something really unique. No surprise then that the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix has been voted the most popular tournament so many times.”

Even though competition is particularly strong, especially in Stuttgart. This time no fewer than eight top ten players will be taking their place at the baseline at the Porsche Arena.

“The competition is crazy! You usually only get this many top players at a Grand Slam. But that’s exactly what makes this event so interesting. There don’t seem to be any supposedly easy opponents. Right

from the outset, you need to be completely focussed and in top shape. That's a massive challenge."

You have already demonstrated that you are in good shape this season, most of all by making it to the final at Indian Wells, an event many perceive as the fifth Grand Slam tournament.

"The tournament gave me a real confidence boost. It was an event where everything came together and that's not happened all too often recently. I felt really good and beat such strong players, for instance Venus Williams and Belinda Bencic. It was a really good tournament."

Unfortunately, you were unable to take home the trophy. How long does it dwell on your mind when you've lost a major final like this one?

"I don't blame myself for my performance. I gave it my all and fought to the end. Ultimately, two, three points made the difference in this match. Let's not forget that my opponent played an incredible tournament and beat quite a few top ten players on her way to the final. She was on a roll. You just have to accept that."

You are currently ranked seventh in the "Porsche Race to Shenzhen", the qualification ranking for the WTA Finals. Consequently, you would qualify for the tournament of the eight most successful players of the past twelve months in China. What is your opinion on the WTA Finals relocating from Singapore to Shenzhen?

"Singapore is a great city with plenty to discover. However, I am now also looking forward to Shenzhen. Ultimately, it doesn't matter where you play. In addition to the Grand Slam tournaments, the WTA Finals are an absolute season highlight – with the difference that you are directly matched up with a top eight player in the first round. You need to be focussed and deliver your best performance from the first match onwards. This tournament at the end of a long season is the ultimate challenge in our sport."

Back to the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix. You have already won the tournament in Stuttgart twice. Does this give you an extra confidence boost?

"Of course, after all, this shows that I am capable of putting on an extraordinary performance at this tournament. It boosts my confidence and motivation."

Talking about motivation: how important is the Porsche 911 4S Cabriolet in this context? After all, the winner takes it home as the main prize.

"We can see the car from wherever we are on centre court at the Porsche Arena. Personally, I think it's the most beautiful winner's trophy of the WTA tour. Each of us gives it her all to win this car. There is no greater motivation."

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