

Porsche Tennis Grand Prix 2019

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28/04/2019 The 42nd edition of the long-standing tournament in the Porsche Arena in Stuttgart at a glance.

“I’ve never been in such a situation”

When Anett Kontaveit discovered at midday that she had been given a walkover and was in the final, she was both surprised and happy. “It was obviously something I never expected and I can’t remember ever being in such a situation,” said the Estonian, the world number 15. “I just can’t say whether it’ll be an advantage or disadvantage. Petra is a great player, but I also know that if I play well then I can live with the best.”

Naomi Osaka forced to withdraw

The first semifinal in the Porsche Arena was still to begin but the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix had lost its number 1 player as Naomi Osaka was forced to withdraw due to an abdominal injury she had incurred in her quarterfinal match on Friday when she sensationally came back to beat Croatia's Donna Vekic.

"I would have loved to have played here but it simply wasn't possible," said the visibly downhearted Japanese player. "When I woke up today, I could only roll out of bed. So, I decided I unfortunately wasn't able to play. Stuttgart has given me a boost for the clay court season. I'm happy I won two games and I would like to say a big thank-you to the fans that supported me so fantastically."

Naomi Osaka's withdrawal also came as a shock to Tournament Director Günthardt. "It's naturally sad for any tournament to lose a semifinal, especially for the spectators. We certainly didn't have much luck this week but it's an indication of the quality of the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix that we still had excellent matches of the highest quality. The Porsche Arena was full and there was a wonderful atmosphere, it speaks for the tournament. I'm sure we're in store for a top-class final on Sunday."

Mona Barthel and Anna-Lena Friedsam in doubles final

Two Porsche Team Germany players will grace the doubles final - Mona Barthel and Anna-Lena Friedsam will face Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova (Russia) and Lucie Safarova (Czech Republic).

After first-round losses in both 2017 and 2018, reaching the semifinal this year is the biggest success ever for Kiki Bertens at the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix. The Dutchwoman will now play the Czech Petra Kvitova.

Petra Kvitova made to work hard

It was not an easy day at the office for Petra Kvitova. The world number 3 and leader of the Porsche Race to Shenzhen, the official qualification ranking for the prestigious WTA Finals in November, was forced to dig deep in the day's first encounter. Anastasija Sevastova proved to be the expected tough opponent and forced the favourite to pull out all the stops when winning 2-6, 6-2, 6-3. The Latvian raced into a 4-0 first set lead and all Petra Kvitova could do was watch and applaud her opponent's shots. "I have no idea when I last started a match so badly," said the Czech after advancing to the semifinals. "I made too many mistakes and Anastasija hardly made any." The two-time Wimbledon winner took the second set relatively easily and although Anastasija Sevastova was not going to lie down in the third, she was unable to put the Czech under any real pressure.

The reward for all the hard work is a third semifinal appearance in Stuttgart. Kvitova has never gone any

further in the Porsche Arena, something she will want to redress on Saturday. She is however well aware that if she wants to win the tournament "then I'm going to have play better or it's not going to happen".

Naomi Osaka wins tennis thriller

There was a sensation in the air in the Porsche Arena. The second quarterfinal between the two youngest players (Osaka is 21, Vekic 22) left in the tournament had long become a real thriller. Naomi Osaka, the world No. 1 from Japan, looked to be heading for defeat when 5-1 down in the third and final set against the Croatian Donna Vekic, the number 25. However, the two-time Grand Slam champion clawed her way back into the match to force a tiebreak which she clinched 7-4 on her second match point. On the edge of their seats for much of the final set, there was nothing holding the spectators there anymore and the Porsche Arena was turned into a mad-house.

"I was obviously in trouble when I was so far behind in the third set. But I didn't want to regret anything afterwards," said Naomi Osaka. "It's why I fought and tried to be consistent. I wanted to have good memories of this tournament."

Her opponent in the semifinal is Anett Kontaveit. The Estonian profited in the last quarterfinal match of the evening from the retirement due to injury of her opponent Victoria Azarenka with the score at 5-7, 7-5, 3-0.

Laura Siegemund will now meet Anastasija Sevastova in the last 16 after the Latvian defeated her compatriot Jelena Ostapenko 6-2, 4-6, 6-0. Also in round two is Daria Kasatkina (Russia) who won 7-6(8), 7-5 against Elise Mertens (Belgium). Greet Minnen (Belgium) was a surprise 7-5, 6-3 victor against Dominika Cibulkova (Slovakia) and will be back on court on Wednesday – against of all people Petra Kvitova. The Czech is the world No. 3 and the leader of the Porsche Race to Shenzhen, the qualifying ranking for the prestigious WTA Finals for the season's eight most successful players.

More information in the press release.

After the thrilling tournament in tournament and the qualifying finals, the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix will pick up pace on Tuesday when the first main draw singles matches are played.

Anna-Lena Friedsam books a main draw ticket

In the qualifying tournament by virtue of a wild card, she is now in the main draw: Porsche Team Germany's Anna-Lena Friedsam won her qualifying final 6-4, 6-4 against the Czech Tereza Smitkova and has thus completed a German quintet at the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix. "I'm so happy to have made it to the main draw at this fantastic tournament," said the 25-year old who plays in the top German

league for the local TEC Waldau Stuttgart club. “Immediately in the year’s first tournaments, I felt I was in pretty good form after my long injury break. Now I want to go as far as I possibly can.” It will not be easy as she will face Kiki Bertens, the world No. 7 from the Netherlands, in her opening match on Tuesday.

Turkish Airlines Tiebreak

The second German hope in the qualifying finals, Anna Zaja, however narrowly missed out on a place in the main draw. After winning the first set 6-1 and losing the second by the same score, she was 5-2 up in the decider. However, the Spaniard fought her way back to eventually win the enthralling match in the tiebreak. She is now Andrea Petkovic’s opponent in the first round of the tournament proper. Also in the main draw are Mandy Minella (Luxembourg), who beat Vera Zvonareva (Russia) 6-3, 5-7, 6-2, and Greet Minnen (Belgium), who overcame Giulia Gatto-Monticone (Italy) 6-1, 6-7(3), 6-2.

More information in the press release.

Another player with the main draw firmly in her sights is Vera Zvonareva. Once ranked in the Top 10, the Russian was a clear 6-2, 6-1 winner against Isabella Shinikova (Bulgaria). She will now face Mandy Minella for a place amongst the top 28 players in Stuttgart. The Luxembourger beat Anna Kalinskaya (Russia) 7-5, 6-1. The fourth final will be contested by Giulia Gatto-Monticone (Italy) and Greet Minnen (Belgium). Gatto-Monticone downed Magdalena Frech (Poland) 6-4, 6-4 whilst Minnen progressed at the expense of Anna Blinkova (Russia) 3-6, 7-5, 6-4.

Angelique Kerber: first practice session in the Porsche Arena

The Porsche Brand Ambassador Angelique Kerber is on the road to recovery. After missing the Fed Cup over the weekend because of illness, the reigning Wimbledon champion and two-time Stuttgart winner absolved her first practice session on Centre Court in the Porsche Arena early on Sunday evening.

More information in the press release.

Compatriot Antonia Lottner had little trouble in beating Paula Ormaechea (Argentina) 6-1, 6-1 and will now meet Anna-Lena Friedsam, a Porsche Team Germany teammate. Friedsam won her first match 7-5, 6-2 against Ekaterina Alexandrova to cause a surprise as the Russian, the world No. 57, was the highest ranked player in qualifying.

The main draw: two Grand Slam winners go head-to-head

The drawing of the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix main draw promises high-tension in the first round. Four

Porsche Team Germany players will have their work cut immediately in their opening matches. The reigning Wimbledon champion Angelique Kerber will face Donna Vekic (Croatia) and Julia Görges has been drawn to play the Russian Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova. Wild card holder Laura Siegemund will meet Lesia Tsurenko (Ukraine) for a place in the last 16. A qualifier awaits Andrea Petkovic. High tension in particular is promised by the duel between two Grand Slam winners and former world No. 1s – Garbiñe Muguruza (Spain) versus Victoria Azarenka (Belarus).

More information in the press release.

Two other Grand Slam winners will also be appearing at the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix, namely the Spaniard Garbine Muguruza (2016 French Open, 2017 Wimbledon) and the Latvian Jelena Ostapenko (2017 French Open). Fans in Stuttgart can also look forward to the Russian Daria Kasatkina, one of 2018's most improved players, the Frenchwoman Caroline Garcia and the Swiss Belinda Bencic, who in February celebrated an impressive return to the top of the women's game when winning the 2.8 million-dollar tournament in Dubai.

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