

Sport Apr 21, 2015

Huber versus Günthardt

They are the unbeatable team in the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix: Operating Tournament Director Anke Huber and Tournament Director Markus Günthardt.



HUBER Markus, were you ever a guest on ZDF Sportstudio?

GÜNTHARDT I'm a Swiss national and as a foreigner, it's not so easy to be invited to the Sportstudio.

HUBER But Pelé and Carl Lewis also made appearances there. Probably because they ran more than you did.

GÜNTHARDT My success is based on technical skills – and I've also been on TV. That was during the US Open against Björn Borg. Live all over the world.

HUBER Yes, because of Borg. In my time, we never really thought about live transmissions. It was obvious anyway we would appear on ARD or ZDF. And after every game there was an interview with Volker Kottkamp or Hans-Jürgen Pohmann. It was all broadcast. And after my win at the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix, I was invited to the Sportstudio.

GÜNTHARDT Yes, yes, you were always on TV.

HUBER What do you mean by that?

GÜNTHARDT Come on, whenever Steffi Graf or you touched up your eye shadow, there was a special broadcast. But all the same, when I and Ion Tiriac organised the Eurocard Open and the Tennis Masters in Stuttgart in the 1990s, we received up to 30 hours live transmissions on ARD and ZDF with average ratings of 2.8 million viewers.

HUBER But that's exactly what I'm saying. Great performances are broadcast live. But in your case it's not your play but your organising talents.

GÜNTHARDT Was that supposed to be a compliment?

HUBER Of course it was! The proof is our Porsche Tennis Grand Prix. It's one of the most attractive tournaments of the tour, almost Grand Slam level, and it's televised live.

GÜNTHARDT Yes, and eight top ten women players are again on board as well as the entire German elite. The hall will be full and millions will be able to follow the tournament on screen all over the world.

HUBER The players are looking forward to it. In the past few years, they have been asking me: will my match be televised live? That's important to them.

GÜNTHARDT Yes, it is important. The WTA has concluded a new TV contract. 500 million US dollars over ten years. From 2017 on,

every single match in the 54 most important WTA events will be produced. That's over 2,000 singles every year. They must be offered by TV stations and all live streaming platforms world-wide.

HUBER Why is live streaming so special?

GÜNTHARDT Do you think your children will still be watching TV like us in a few years' time? They will sit in front of their laptops and compile their own TV programme. Then they'll be able to view every match with Angelique Kerber live over the whole world.

HUBER I'm not so sure that Angelique Kerber will still be playing on the tour when my children are old enough to put their own TV programme together.

GÜNTHARDT It's only theoretical! Everyone will be able to follow all the matches of their favourite players on live stream, even if they are played on a secondary court. Fans will be able to better estimate how the women perform over the year. Interest in women's tennis will increase and in our tournament as well.

HUBER Interest in the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix is already enormous now. Among women players as well. In 2014, they rated it the top favourite tournament of the entire tour for the sixth time.

GÜNTHARDT Yes, and TV viewers all over the world should see why.

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