

1978 - 1987

15/11/2025 Porsche Tennis Grand Prix '78 - '87

Tracy Austin (USA) vs. Betty Stove (NL) 6-3 6-3

Winner's Prize: Porsche 924

Prize Money: 35,000 US Dollar

The first step is always the most difficult: Dieter Fischer, who wanted to make his new tennis centre in Filderstadt-Plattenhardt a meeting place for the world elite, had knocked on many doors in vain in his search for financial backing. Yet Lars Schmidt, the then board member for sales and marketing at Porsche AG, let him in, listened and was open to the idea of creating a sporting event with individual flair in Filderstadt. “It's thanks to Schmidt,” says the tournament owner today, “that we have a tennis Grand Prix today.” The contact had been established by former Porsche motorsport boss Manfred Jantke.

Tracy Austin (USA) vs. Martina Navratilova (USA) 6-2 6-0

Winner's Prize: Porsche 924 Turbo

Prize Money: 100,000 US Dollar

The hot tip came from Hajo Friedrichs, the then Head of Sport at the state ZDF television channel – why not concentrate on the women in the future and make the weaker sex stronger? Dieter Fischer consulted his sponsors during the course of the tournament and decided in favour of simplicity – women only. In no time at all, the event was honoured with its first award from the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) – for the best organisation of all 32 Grand Prix tournaments in the Colgate Series.

Men's Final: Wojtek Fibak (PL) - Guillermo Vilas (ARG) 6-2 6-2 3-6 6-3

Winner's Prize: Porsche 928

Prize Money: 75,000 US Dollar

No, it is not a misunderstanding – the men really did get a look in on one occasion in the history of the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix. The biggest stir was caused by somebody that failed to turn up – Ivan Lendl, the then No. 6 seed, had to pay the ATP a 1000-dollar fine. The Argentine poet Guillermo Vilas was the star of the stories in the newspapers but only until he was beaten in the final by Wojtek Fibak who was able to drive a Porsche 928 for a year. The sports car was later auctioned off by the ATP to the highest bidder.

Tracy Austin (USA) vs. Sherry Acker (USA) 6-2 7-5

Winner's Prize: Porsche 924 Turbo

Prize Money: 125,000 US Dollar

The American Tracy Austin amazed spectators in Filderstadt by completing a hat-trick of wins, but the focus of attention was more on a 15-year old teenager with braces, waist-length pony tails and the stoic efficiency of a computer-controlled racket arm. "Wunderkind" Andrea Jaeger catapulted Germany's top player, Sylvia Hanika, out of the competition and sparked a debate as to how far ambitious parents should be allowed to push their young tennis daughters.

Tracy Austin (USA) vs. Martina Navratilova (USA) 4-6 6-3 6-4

Winner's Prize: Porsche 944

Prize Money: 125,000 US Dollar

Tracy Austin was still a child when she celebrated becoming the first Porsche Tennis Grand Prix winner in 1978. Her mother was her constant companion; her father, a nuclear physicist, had no time. Playing tennis made her grow up fast. Aged 18 and the world No. 3, she had already won 23 tournaments and was the youngest player of all time to win the US Open when she battled her way to a fourth Porsche to complete her family's fleet. She even wrote a note of thanks to the organiser – not for having won but for having been made so welcome: "Every player feels at home here. Many thanks. Yours, Tracy".

Martina Navratilova (USA) vs. Tracy Austin (USA) 6-3 6-3

Winner's Prize: Porsche 911 SC Cabriolet

Prize Money: 125,000 US Dollar

Changing of the guard: the princess reached the Filderstadt final for one last time but was unable to prevent the future tennis queen, Martina Navratilova, from "driving" off with the win. The American duly left Centre Court in a 911 Cabriolet. Incidentally, Sylvia Hanika drove to Filderstadt in a Porsche but she was never able to win one. Not even in 1982, her golden year in which she beat the world No. 1 and Filderstadt winner, Martina Navratilova, in the Masters final in New York. Just one more word about Tracy Austin: at 21 her career was over but another has just started. A shy 13-year old girl called Stefanie Graf played her first ever match at such a big tournament and immediately faced Tracy Austin in the first round. Afterwards everybody agreed that, despite the defeat, one would be hearing a lot more from her. And that is exactly what happened.

Martina Navratilova (USA) vs. Catherine Tanvier (FRA) 6-1 6-2

Winner's Prize: Porsche 911 Carrera Cabriolet

Prize Money: 150,000 US Dollar

Martina Navratilova ruled the world of tennis – and Filderstadt. In the space of just one year, the 27-year old notched up 72 victories and looked down pensively from her throne: "If every step you take in every direction only leads downwards, then you've reached the top. It's time to retire." She refrained – for the time being that is. Steffi Graf was back but this time lost 6-0, 6-3 in the second round to Jo Durie.

The tournament enjoyed a record attendance (over 16,000). For the first time Dieter Fischer was in the black but he still had to put up with criticism as he was accused of turning the family party for the world's top players into a show event for the upper class. The popping of too many champagne corks did not go down well either with the sponsors. They agreed upon a course correction at just the right

moment. Rumour had it that the title-sponsor, Porsche, was planning to relocate the event to the Schleyer-Halle in Stuttgart. But nothing came of it.

Catarina Lindqvist (SWE) vs. Steffi Graf (GER) 6-1 6-4

Winner's Prize: Porsche 911 Carrera Cabriolet

Prize Money: 150,000 US Dollar

The tournament was praised for having regained its modesty and received plaudits for the fact that the main draw field was not quite so top class as in previous years: "A degree of normality that benefited the tournament." Normal for Filderstadt that is. The natural, cheerful, and at the same time, unconventional style of the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix held many surprises in store. With Claudia Kohde-Kilsch, Bettina Bunge and Eva Pfaff, three Germans reached the quarterfinals. And the 15-year-old Steffi Graf – the world No. 42 – made her big breakthrough as a professional by making it to the final. The German enjoyed her, "nicest tournament" and Dieter Fischer tried his hand at fortune telling by saying, "A new world star has been born here."

Pam Shriver (USA) vs. Catarina Lindqvist (SWE) 6-1 7-5

Winner's Prize: Porsche 911 Carrera Cabriolet Turbolook

Prize Money: 175,000 US Dollar

"Porsche or money?" Hans-Joachim Stuck cheekily asked the winner on Centre Court. Much to the delight of the racing driver and guest presenter, Pam Shriver chose the cabriolet for which Professor Dr. Ferry Porsche handed over the keys. The American did a couple of laps around Centre Court and when Stuck gallantly manoeuvred the car up the narrow ramp and out of the hall, she warned him: "Take good care of my car." Porsche knows all too well that quick women players love being driven quickly in sports cars: they are always very keen to take chance to go out onto the test track at the R&D centre in Weissach and feel the speed and technology for themselves.

Martina Navratilova (USA) vs. Hana Mandlikova (AUS) 6-2 6-3

Winner's Prize: Porsche 911 Carrera Cabriolet

Prize Money: 175,000 US Dollar

Jubilees galore at the tenth Porsche Tennis Grand Prix. Martina Navratilova celebrated her 30th birthday, her 1000th win and her third success at the tournament in Filderstadt. Her friend Judy Nelson

appeared to have had doubts about the latter. To be on the safe side, on the day before the final she gave Martina a special model of a blue Carrera cabriolet to mark the special birthday. The “real” cabriolet was won by Navratilova in convincing manner against Hana Mandlikova, who incidentally had previously ballgirled for her in the country of their birth.

To mark the tournament's anniversary, Dieter Fischer converted Court One into a Swabian eatery and served his guests regional fare. The host, too, was honoured as the Minister President of the federal state Lothar Späth awarded Fischer the Order of the Federal Republic of Germany in acknowledgement of his contributions to the community and the town of Filderstadt. The celebrated lady and the celebrated gentleman sealed their friendship with a drink – proof is provided by a photo with a dedication from Martina Navratilova: “Dear Dieter, I'm still standing – and you? Love Martina.”

Martina Navratilova (USA) vs. Chris Evert (USA) 7-5 6-1

Winner's Prize: Porsche 911 Carrera Cabriolet

Prize Money: 175,000 US Dollar

In 1987 Martina Navratilova caught up with Tracy Austin after winning the tournament for the fourth time. In one of the most exciting and top-class matches in the tournament's history, she beat her long-term rival and friend Chris Evert. As in all previous years, tickets for Centre Court were sold out - and amongst the spectators, year in, year out, one could find the same familiar faces: regulars from near and far – including many celebrities. Whether politicians, managers from industry and commerce, football professionals or presidents of football clubs (like Axel Dünnwald-Metzler from Stuttgarter Kickers or Gerhard Mayer Vorfelder from VfB Stuttgart), skiers like Hansi Hinterseer, Christa Kinshofer or the Epple sisters, racing drivers like Jacky Ickx or Jochen Maas, golf champions such as Bernhard Langer, people no longer came to be seen but to see something special themselves in a pleasant and familiar atmosphere: women's tennis on a world-class scale.

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