



Review Cujic International Junior Trophy 2023

From August 12 to 19, 2023, the second CUJIC International Junior Trophy took place at the SCC facility in Berlin-Charlottenburg. With perfect conditions, we were able to welcome 125 players from a total of 21 European countries who were fighting for world ranking points.

We thus exceeded those numbers from the first year by a little over 20%.

In addition to the licensors of Tennis Europe and the German Tennis Association DTB, this tournament is made possible for us by our partner Cujic Gebäudedienste led by managing director Tanja Cujic, who interrupted us already during our opening plea and gave the "green light" for a continuation in 2023. We are also pleased that, for the fourth year in a row, the Angie Kerber Academy from Poznań, has provided us with valuable vouchers for a stay at the newly renovated high-end tennis facility for the first, second and third place winners.

The organizational crew from last year had changed a bit: White Badge Referee Tobias Fuchs and the SCC tournament managers Jens Thron and Sascha Plambeck hosted eight days of great tennis on eleven tournament courts, including two extremely popular training courts.

With the "soft facts" floodlights, digital scoreboards on two courts, free use of the new 200 square meter gym, high-quality prizes including glass trophies, stringing service on the facility within a few hours, high quality Website with many photos of the players, tournament-video from our partner hauptstadtspor.tv on our website and on Youtube, Icebein recovery tools, welcome bags, tournament badges and our renowned always open Gastronomy with a special menu for all players, we now hope to be upgraded to a Grade II tournament by Tennis Europe in 2024.

But let's go to the games:

Girls under 14 singles

As in the previous year, we were able to start directly in the main draw for the girls under 14, since the field of 36 participants was significantly smaller than that of the boys. With Sophie Triquart, we were happy to welcome a Berlin local from the Zehlendorfer Wespen in first place. But Sophie met a very strong Kira Kalinouskaya in the semifinals, who had already shown in the previous rounds that she could bring an extremely strong mixture of athleticism, speed, tenacity and playfulness to her game. She still has to work on her serve, but Sophie wasn't able to capitalize on this weakness in the semifinals: the unseeded Kira won 7:5 6:3 and advanced to the final.

In the lower half of the tableau, Antonina Snochowska from Poland was seeded in second place. She met attacking player Camilla Montenet from Italy in the quarterfinals. Camilla had an absolute dream week and dominated Antonina 6:4 and 6:0: Semifinals! Two unseeded players met with Meta Dervine from Lithuania. A tight, high-class match finally decided again by the Italian 6:4 7:6.

Reaching the finals was already a great success for both girls. For Camilla in particular it was only the second Tennis Europe tournament and now in the final: you could tell that! Kira Kalinouskaya immediately played at her well-known high level, while Camilla didn't find her game at all. Many mistakes and the opponent's tactics were the reasons why it was quickly 1:6 1:3. But the Italian fighter changed her tactics, now played more defensively and more safely and fought... At a score of 5:4 for Kira, it was a mammoth game with breakballs and six (!) match points. With her last will, after more than two hours of play, finally she converted the last point. Kira sank to her knees and then happily after that into her father's arms. Brave Camilla was also great, bravely enduring the result and smilingly congratulating her opponent on a strong match.

In conclusion, it was noticeable that, the further we are moving in the direction of the finals, the less the referees had to go to the field to check marks. Anyway, from the semi-finals chair umpires were on site.

Boys U14 singles

With 90 participants, more than twice as many players registered for the boys, so that the qualifying fields were almost as large as the entire girls' field. A few still very young local heroes from the SCC (Karl Hentschel, Raphael Plambeck and Luis Bengsch) were at the start, but had to acknowledge without envy what a level is played at international level. Of course, the main factors here are age and physical development.

The field was led by the Italian Antonio Di Rubba, followed by Tsikhan Koran. The latter met Germany's Miko Koeppen in the second round of the field of 64. It was to be the longest game of the tournament (or year?), fittingly on Center Court in the sun on very high temperatures. Tsikhan was the clearly more powerful player, dominated the rallies, but these went long, very long. Because "Leftie" Miko worked behind the baseline and played the balls back to the other side with a lot of spin at an uncomfortable height. It always seemed like Tsikhan would eventually succeed with his harder punches. But it was Miko who won the first set 7:5. The second set, now with slower balls, lasted even longer. Now Tsikhan was ahead 7:6. But how could it be different, there was a tie-break in the third set. We were just before the sixth hour when the underdog finally reached his arms in the Berlin sky and converted his first match point. Big respect for both players though.

Above all, it was remarkable how Tsikhan, as the clear favorite, accepted this defeat despite a short shock after the last point. Not once in the whole match a referee was needed or any freak-outs were heard from him. By the way, the first round match of Tsikhan against the Czech Matyas Perutka the day before was just as great, which had to be ended under floodlights and here too there was such fairness and quality that 30 spectators stayed spellbound until 10 p.m. and watched how Tsikhan finally triumphed 7:5 in the third set. The match was probably still a bit mental and physical in his legs. By the way: The Icebein

Recovery pants, in which ice-cold water is pumped through pants filled with water cushions, helped Miko so much after the 5-hour marathon that after his mammoth match he also voluntarily competed in the doubles an hour later.

It continued seamlessly with top-class tennis. In the semifinals, three-seeded Lasse Bohr faced the surprise winner of the day before, Niccolo Crivelli (Switzerland), who shot tournament favorite Antonio Di Rubba off the field with his impressive forehand. The match really didn't deserve a winner, or two of them. Niccolo had three match points, but in the end Lasse Bohr from TC Hechingen won. Fourth seeded Philip Lymar (Ukraine) and Benjamin Schmidt from TC Miesbach worked similarly intensively on the neighboring pitch. But Philip finally lived up to his role as favorite and won 6:4 in the third set.

The final then went quite quickly. Lasse was the safer player and also the one who followed a clear match plan. Patient and yet energetic when given the opportunity. After it was already 6:0 2:0, Philip came back again and suddenly led 4:2 in the 2nd set. But the party tipped back in the direction of Lasse Bohr, who finally received the winner's trophy, a HEAD bag and a voucher from our partner, the Angie Kerber Academy, worth €650.

The doubles competitions were won by Jana Schwering and Nicol Kovar for the girls and Philip Lymar and Alexander Tiutchenko for the boys. They are a nice complement to the hard singles matches, since the teenagers have to present themselves as a team. Also the player exchange at the beginning of the tournament ensures new pairings from which international friendships can develop. Not unimportant, especially nowadays.

My thanks go once again to all the helpers of the tournament, Tobias Fuchs as head referee and to our referees of the final days. I would also like to thank parents for the many kind words who praised our tournament. Hopefully then for a new one as Grade II tournament in 2024 🙏

Your Jens Thron • Tournament Director SCC