



## Successful second edition of the ITF Beach Tennis Open Saarlouis 2018

Press release, Munich August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018

**Following last year's successful premiere, Germany's number one beach tennis tournament once again proved a huge success this year thanks to perfect organisation, thrilling action and fast rallies combined with a unique urban atmosphere on the Kleiner Markt square in the centre of Saarlouis. The success of the tournament underlines the Saarland region's reputation as a top destination for sporting events. In the ITF \$15,000 tournament victory in the men's category went to the Italian duo of Dorian Beccacioli/Davide Benussi, while in the women's category it was Maraike Biglmaier/Rafaella Miiller who came out on top. The German number one and her Brazilian partner celebrated an impressive 6:2, 7:5 victory over last year's runners up, Sofia Cimatti/Flaminia Daina from Italy.**

In the German National Championships, taking place at the same time, the brothers Manuel and Benjamin Ringlstetter claimed their fourth title in the men's category. In the mixed category it was once again last year's winners who triumphed: Benjamin Ringlstetter/Maraike Biglmaier were too strong for challengers Manuel Ringlstetter/Laura Kemkes in the final. Among the women there was a shock result as Debora Döring/Christin Meyer beat the favourites Laura Kemkes/Lisa-Marie Bürkle. Manuel Ringlstetter summed up the feeling at the end of the tournament: "That is beach tennis! What an atmosphere on centre court!"

That is precisely what makes the ITF \$15,000 tournament in Saarlouis so special – the incredible atmosphere. Despite changeable weather conditions, the games on centre court were well-attended on all four days of play. The tournament brought a real beach atmosphere to the Kleiner Markt square in the centre of Saarlouis. Ahead of the tournament 400 tonnes of sand had been transported into the square by lorry to create four beach tennis courts, including the showpiece centre court with space for 600 spectators. The highlight of the four-day event were the floodlit evening sessions on Friday and Saturday night as well as the finals on Sunday morning played out in front of enthusiastic fans cheering on the competitors.

The local politicians who had helped bring the event to Saarlouis were also in attendance and could be rightly proud of the result. Regional sports minister for Saarland, Klaus Bouillon, underlined the potential of this beach tennis tournament and said that it can now be considered a benchmark as one of the best international events of its kind: "It was the right decision to hold this tournament here in Saarland once again. It is great event for Saarland which we will campaign for again."

Raphael Schäfer, member of the regional parliament and head of his party in the Saarlouis city council, assumed the patronage of this year's tournament and was delighted with the way everything went: "Saarlouis is a sports town, so we are always pleased when we can bring events like the Beach Tennis Open Saarlouis here. We hope that things will continue in the same way next year. It is important for us to try out new directions. We have to bring sport to the people. This beach tennis tournament in the centre of town is a great way of doing that. Organising a third edition here in Saarlouis will be a challenge, but it is one we are very much willing to take on."

The sporting highlight of the four-day event was the men's final between Italian duo Dorian Beccacioli/Davide Benussi and last year's winners Nikita Burmakin/Tommaso Giovannini (Russia/Italy). After three tight sets the Italian pair, seeded number three going into the tournament, came out on top 7:6, 4:6, 7:5. Fans could enjoy a thrilling final with an incredible atmosphere on centre court thanks to numerous duels at the net between Nikita/Giovannini and Beccacioli/Benussi.

The first set went to the challengers Beccacioli/Benussi (7:6 after tiebreak), the second set was won by the defending champions 6:4. In the third set it appeared for a long time that it would be an easy win for Beccacioli/Benussi as they surged into a 5:1 lead. However, Burmakin/Giovannini hit back and managed to tie things up at 5:5 before agonisingly losing the last two games. Davide Benussi: "That was our first \$15,000 tournament win together. What a great feeling, especially as it was such a tough match."

While in the men's category the German players were knocked out in the Round of 16, Germany's number one female player Maraike Biglmaier celebrated a double victory. She won not only the mixed category of the German National Championships alongside Benjamin Ringlstetter but also the women's category in the ITF \$15,000 tournament.

WE BRING BEACH TENNIS TO THE WORLD!





The previous year Biglmaier was visible still suffering from the effects of a nine-month break from beach tennis due to injury, but this year the 31-year-old Berlin native was back to her best alongside her Brazilian partner Rafaella Miiller. The first set in the final against Cimatti/Daina went to Biglmaier/Miiller 6:2. However, last year's runners up from Italy didn't roll over and came out fighting in the second set. After the lead changed hands several times it was Biglmaier/Miiller who in the end won the second set 6:5. "There are more and more really good women playing beach tennis now," commented Germany's number one player. "The last few weeks were a bit frustrating for us – we kept getting close to winning but lost out in the end. That makes this victory here event sweeter. I want to thank the fans for their support and I hope we will have more big tournaments like this in Germany in the future."

### German National Championships

Taking place near the Kleiner Markt square in the centre of Saarlouis were the German National Beach Tennis Championships, being held at the same time at the TSV Ford Steinrausch tennis club. The finals held under the lights on Friday and Saturday night provided a fittingly thrilling conclusion to a successful tournament. In the men's category it was the defending champions Manuel and Benjamin Ringlstetter who underlined their status as favourites with a 6:1, 6:1 win against Hauke Große Holthaus and Oliver Wagner. "The first part of the match was tricky, but then we got into our rhythm and built up confidence. This may be our fourth national title together, but each one counts and it is even better to win together as brothers," explained Benjamin Ringlstetter after the final. The duo celebrated their fourth national championships title with the obligatory champagne shower.

In the women's final things were wide open from the start of the match. Both teams, Debora Döring (who only started competing in beach tennis in March) and Christin Meyer as well as Laura Kemkes and Lisa-Marie Bürkle, were relatively inexperienced playing together as a team. Despite this, Kemkes/Bürkle went into the final as red hot favourites. However, to many people's surprise it was Döring/Meyer who claimed the first set 6:4 and surged into a 4:1 lead in the second set. A short-lived fightback by Kemkes/Bürkle reduced the deficit to 3:5, but in the end Döring/Meyer managed to win the second set 6:3 and claim their first national championships title.

"We really, really weren't expecting to win. Until the end we still had our doubts. This is only the second tournament for us together as a team. The location and atmosphere here in Saarlouis were fantastic," said the new German champions. "We made too many mistakes," explained the defeated finalist Lisa-Marie Bürkle.

In the final of the mixed event the defending champions Benjamin Ringlstetter/Maraike Biglmaier faced Manuel Ringlstetter/Laura Kemkes. A thrilling first set went to a tie break, which Ringlstetter/Biglmaier won 7:6. Benjamin Ringlstetter played the final despite a minor injury in the warm-up caused by a spectator throwing a ball back to him.

The second set was more emphatic as the defending champions raced into a 4:0 lead and only lost one game as they came out on top 6:1. However, Maraike Biglmaier certainly didn't take the win for granted: "The first set was really close. I am happy that we managed to win," commented the player from Berlin as she soaked up the atmosphere in Saarlouis. "I am really pleased that we have such a major tournament here in Germany. That's great," she added. Laura Kemkes agreed: "I had so much fun here. The setting and atmosphere in Saarlouis are fantastic. I am really pleased with second place."

The competition also included national championships in the categories Under 14 and Over 40. In the Under 14 category it was Fynn Krämer and Oliver Schleich from the Saarland region who won, while in the Over 40 category Yvonne Thome/Thomas Guckeisen won with 7:6 6:3 against Simone Koch/Christian Koch.

German Tennis Federation vice president Dr Eva-Maria Schneider: "The past few days have once again shown how exciting and spectacular beach tennis can be. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the players for the great entertainment they provided for the spectators. And, of course, I would like to thank our event partner Plan B and the town of Saarlouis for supporting the event."

WE BRING BEACH TENNIS TO THE WORLD!





Results: <https://beachtennis-saarlouis.com/en/live-scoring-results/>

**Contact press & communication:**

PLAN B event company GmbH  
Julia Conrad  
M: +49 151 55010151  
E: [julia.conrad@planb-event.com](mailto:julia.conrad@planb-event.com)  
W: [www.planb-event.com](http://www.planb-event.com)

WE BRING BEACH TENNIS TO THE WORLD!

