

ISSUE 2

FRIDAY, AUGUST 22

EUROPEAN INDIVIDUALS



**TOP STORY : SPAIN MAKES
HISTORY**



**ROAD TO THE
SEMIFINALS**

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SPAIN MAKES HISTORY

Marta Dominguez and Iker Pajares in the semis

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE HISTORY OF THE INDIVIDUAL EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS, SPAIN HAS A MAN AND A WOMAN IN THE SEMIS. WE CAUGHT WITH THE SPANISH SQUAD.

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Margaux Pitarch (head coach)

“It’s definitely a great achievement for us. We may not have the same structure than other countries but we work hard and the number of our players playing professionally has increased lately. The players are very close friends and it helps, as far as I am concerned I’ve known them for a long time, for some of them I was already the coach when they got the bronze medal at the U19 World Team Championships in 2014! I wouldn’t say they are like my children but it’s close... It’s a pleasure to work with such dedicated athletes as Marta and Iker, and I hope they can go one step further on Friday.”

Marta Dominguez will be up against top seed Tinne Gilis

"I am happy with the way I managed the day on Thursday, with two matches and the transition to the glass court. Against Jacqueline Peychar, I was behind in the 2nd game and I came back focusing on the gameplan. It wasn't easy to back up after the World Games, I spent very little time at home but the bronze medal helps forget the fatigue! I am very happy with the level I produced in China. Last year, I faced Tinne Gilis in the quarters, it's better to play her in the semis... I'll be the underdog but when you face a higher-ranked opponent, you have to tell herself that she can have a day off.



I have always had physical abilities, and I love fitness sessions. To take another step forward, I need to have more confidence in myself, and for that I need to play more big tournaments.

The 2028 Olympics, yes I'm thinking about it. Before squash wasn't part of it and we couldn't dream, now we can! When I watched the 2024 edition in Paris, I said to myself that it would be incredible to participate in such an event..."

Iker Pajares wants to come back to his best after many injuries

The 2024/25 season was the worst of my life, I had problems with both feet. It's impossible to play when you have the fear of getting hurt, and losses hurt your confidence. I am not completely pain-free yet, but it's much better. I started the season winning a Challenger event, the goal was to getting back into the habit of winning. I would like to come back to top 20 in the world but I will take things step by step, when you are a professional athlete you cannot know how your body reacts from one week to the next.



I didn't know that it was the first time that we had a male and a female player in the semis. I am happy for Marta, she works very hard and deserves what is happening to her, I hope she will move up the rankings quickly. Squash is not the biggest federation in Spain, but things are going in the right direction and we can't complain, we have coaches with us at most tournaments. For sure if Spain was represented at the 2028 Olympic Games, that would give us even more visibility.“

There are 4 players above the rest of the field on paper, therefore it's no surprise that all the quarters were relatively one-sided.



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THE WOMEN'S DRAW

One-way traffic for the favorites

Having said that, World No.97 Jacqueline Peychar made a good account of herself against Marta Dominguez (WR58): the Austrian had a big lead in the 2nd game, but the Spaniard put her foot on the gas to avoid a potential banana skin and closed it out in three. As for World No. 7 Tinne Gilis, World

No. 14 Nele Gilis-Coll and World No. 20 Mélissa Alves, they were in control from start to finish, respectively against Kara Lincou (WR153), Franka Vidovic (WR203) and Emilia Soini (WR64), which means they made it to the semis with a tank full of gas (see page 12). Even if their journey in the main draw brutally



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came to an end at the Halle Jean-Cochet, Lincou and Vidovic had a remarkable start of the day at C'Chartres Squash & Badminton. The Frenchwoman showed great composure to dispatch higher ranked Saskia Beinhard (WR76) from Germany and secure a top 8 spot for her first appearance in the EICC. As for the Croatian, she simply became the first representative of her country to reach the quarters (men and women combined): she was 2-1 down against Renske Huntelaar (WR220), but Vidovic ended up taking down the 16-year old Dutch girl. You can read Vidovic's interview on pages 16-17.

*Crouin,
Mueller,
Pajares,
Masotti: the
top 4 seeds
made it
through to the
semis but the
Swiss rocket
had to dig
very deep to
beat Balasz
Farkas*



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THE MEN'S DRAW

Mueller edges to the finish line

Despite the gap in the rankings, the clash between World No. 25 Nicolas Mueller and World No. 47 Balasz Farkas had the potential to be a tussle, with the Hungarian coming off a big week at the World Games where he reached the final. It didn't fail to deliver, and the two attacking prone men engaged in a fierce

battle. Of course we reached 9-9 in the fifth, and Mueller prevailed thanks to a tin from his opponent and then a superb winner. "Balasz is on fire at the moment, and against him you have to be very solid because he's so good at the front, even more than me (he laughs)." On Friday, the Swiss will meet Victor Crouin for



the 3rd time at the European Championship - Mueller won in the 2022 final while the Frenchman got his revenge in the semis last year. On the bottom half, it will also be a remake, but from last year's quarterfinal won by Iker Pajares against Baptiste Masotti. The Spaniard put an end to the very good run of Edwin Clain, who clinched a milestone win in the round of 16 against 2019 winner Raphael Kandra. As for Masotti, he had a big lapse of focus in the 3rd but he managed to regain his composure and close it out in 4 games.



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National coach Yann Menegaux analyses Thursday's matches for the French ladies.

“Mélissa Alves played a very good match against Emilia Soini, she used the angles well to set up her attacks. Playing Nele Gilis-Coll is a better draw than her sister Tinne, and it's ideal before the PSA tournaments coming up. The goal for Mel is to break into the world top 10, and to do that you need to perform in the big stages.

FRENCH CORNER (1)



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Kara Lincou had a great win in the round of 16 against Saskia Beinhard, I am happy for her. Even if she lives in the USA, I follow her closely and I hope that she will come back to France after her studies. Against Tinne Gilis, the task was too hard but she can see what she needs to work on to try and reach that level.

FRENCH CORNER (2)



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National coach Mathieu Castagnet was dreaming of 3 French medallists but it vanished after Edwin Clain's loss against Iker Pajares. Edwin had a milestone win though, in the round of 16 against Raphael Kandra. "This is the reward for his commitment, he works very hard," said Castagnet. "As for Victor Crouin and Baptiste Masotti, they are living up to their seedings of 1 2 so far and we can expect some great matches in the semis

against Mueller and Iker. Victor's match against Melvil Scianimanico was quality, with a lot of intensity. As for Baptiste, sure he lost his focus against Rui Soares but I have no doubt he'll be able to raise his level tomorrow."

Road to the semis

In a long interview on the PSA website released yesterday, Nele Gilis-Coll expressed her desire to return to the world top 4 after a 2024/25 season that was plagued with injuries. The Belgian was not really troubled so far in Chartres, and she will play her first big match of the season against Mélissa Alves.



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[3/4] Mélissa Alves vs [2] Nele Gilis-Coll

5:20pm

©Gerhard Nel



The French Guiana born draws positive vibes from the result of their last meeting - she won 3-0 at the end of 2024 in Canada. "This match is in my top 3 from last season. In this situation, you think about it when you come onto court and it gives you confidence, while it is generally the opposite for the opponent but in the meantime they are hungry for revenge."

Road to the semis

As he told us in our top story, Iker Pajares is now playing almost pain-free after a very difficult 2024/25 season and the Catalan wants to return to the level that propelled him into the world top 15 in 2024. This match is a remake of last year's quarter-final, won in 4 games



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[3/4] Iker Pajares **vs** [2] Baptiste Masotti 18h

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by Pajares. “It was in Spain, this time we are in France so we know the result,” said Masotti with a smile after his match against Rui Soares on Thursday evening. The Niort-born likes electric atmospheres, and he invited people to come and support him at the Halle Jean-Cochet. It should be a great show!

Road to the semis

The fact that she is the title holder as well as her 4-0 H2H against Marta Dominguez makes Tinne Gilis the big favorite of this match but the Belgian does not see things that way. “I don't tell myself that I must win this tournament, my first goal is to perform well. Besides, I treat all the opponents the same and



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[1]Tinne Gilis vs [3/4] Marta Dominguez

7pm

©Gerhard Nel



Marta has been playing better every time against me.” As for the Spaniard, she is aware she will be facing a tough task but wants to believe in her chances. “When you play a much higher ranked opponent, she can have a bad day and you have to seize the opportunity.”

Road to the semis

Building on his victory at the World Games last week in China, Victor Crouin has shown great control since the start of the tournament, especially against a very determined Melvil Scianimanico in the quarters, the young Frenchman trying everything to upset his elder compatriot. The Toulon-born is only two matches away from



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[1] Victor Crouin vs [3/4] Nicolas Mueller

7:40pm

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achieving a treble at the Individual European championship, but he is wary of the experienced Nicolas Mueller - who will celebrate his 36th birthday on Sunday. "Nici is as intelligent as ever on court, and his wingspan is impressive," said Victor. The two players have faced each other 5 times in the last 3 years, and the Frenchman won 3 of those.



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MEET FRANKA VIDOVIĆ

ALTHOUGH SHE LOST AGAINST NELE GILIS-COLL, FRANKA VIDOVIĆ HAD BECOME THE FIRST EVER PLAYER FROM CROATIA - MEN AND WOMEN - TO QUALIFY FOR THE QUARTERS OF THE EUROPEAN INDIVIDUAL CHAMPIONSHIP. E CAUGHT UP WITH THE 21-YEAR OLD.

History maker

This achievement makes me very proud, it's the reward for all the work done. There are some good youngsters coming up at the moment in Croatia but I don't know if I am an inspiration for them, the load is a bit heavy to carry (she laughs).

She surrendered to Nele Gilis-Coll in the quarters but has no regrets.

It was an honor to share a court with Nele. The main thing with players of this caliber is their consistency, they give you nothing. I love playing on a glass court and a low tin, but to be honest it seemed higher and higher as the match progressed!

Squash beginnings

It was completely random! I played tennis, handball and football which is the number 1 sport in Croatia. At 8 years old, a friend took me to play squash, I'd never heard of it and I got hooked straight away.

Franka studies at the prestigious universty of Pennsylvania.

It was random, again! During covid I received a message from the coach on Facebook. I didn't even know what Penn and to be honest I thought it was a scam! It turned out Stuart Crawford, who was assistant coach at the time had told them about me, he knew me from the European junior tournaments. Leaving my country to go to the other side of the planet, living by myself at 18, it was a big décision, it was actually harder to accept for my mum! But I wouldn't change it for the world, it's been an incredible experience.

Franka Vidovic has had goods results lately, especially at the World Games.

Yes I've had some good wins but I am nowhere near happy with that! I'd like to play in PSA full time after I finish my studies in two years. I trained a lot over the summer to be fit for the World Games. It means I had to skip holiday, and with the beaches we have in Croatia, believe me, it's a big sacrifice!



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WOMEN'S DRAW

Round of 16 August, 21	Quarters August, 21	Semifinals August, 22	Final August, 23
<div>[1] Tinne GILIS </div> <div>11-3, 11-9, 11-2</div> <div>[17/32] Hannah CHUKWU </div>	<div>[1] Tinne GILIS </div> <div>11-2, 11-3, 11-5</div> <div>[17/32] Kara LINCOU </div>	<div>[1] Tinne GILIS </div> <div>7pm, glass court </div>	
<div>[17/32] Kara LINCOU </div> <div>11-9, 11-4, 4-11, 11-9</div> <div>[5/8] Saskia BEINHARD </div>	<div>[9/16] Jacqueline PEYCHAR </div> <div>11-9, 11-8, 11-3</div> <div>[3/4] Marta DOMINGUEZ </div>	<div>[3/4] Marta DOMINGUEZ </div> <div></div> <div>3pm, glass court </div>	
<div>[17/32] Karolina SRAMKOVA </div> <div>11-6, 11-7, 12-14, 3-11, 11-7</div> <div>[9/16] Jacqueline PEYCHAR </div>	<div>[3/4] Mélissa ALVES </div> <div>11-3, 11-3, 11-6</div> <div>[5/8] Emilia SOINI </div>	<div>[3/4] Mélissa ALVES </div> <div>5:20pm, glass court </div>	
<div>[9/16] Cristina TARTARONE </div> <div>11-5, 11-8, 11-9</div> <div>[3/4] Marta DOMINGUEZ </div>	<div>[17/32] Olivia BESANT </div> <div>11-3, 11-1, 11-7</div> <div>[5/8] Emilia SOINI </div>		
<div>[3/4] Mélissa ALVES </div> <div>11-8, 11-5, 11-0</div> <div>[9/16] Ambre ALLINCKX </div>	<div>[17/32] Franka VIDOVIC </div> <div>11-5, 11-4, 11-5</div> <div>[2] Nele GILIS </div>	<div>[2] Nele GILIS </div>	
<div>[17/32] Olivia BESANT </div> <div>11-3, 11-1, 11-7</div> <div>[5/8] Emilia SOINI </div>	<div>[2] Nele GILIS </div>		
<div>Renske HUNTELAAR </div> <div>11-5, 7-11, 10-12, 11-8, 11-3</div> <div>[17/32] Franka VIDOVIC </div>	<div>[2] Nele GILIS </div>		
<div>[9/16] Katerina TYCOVA </div> <div>14-12, 11-8, 11-3</div> <div>[2] Nele GILIS </div>			

MEN'S DRAW

Round of 16
August, 21

[1] Victor
CROUIN 

11-2, 11-7, 11-3

[9/16] David
BERNET 

[9/16] Toufik
MEKHALFI 

11-3, 11-5, 11-5

[5/8] Melvil
SCIANIMANICO 

[5/8] Balasz
FARKAS 

11-3, 11-9, 11-6

[17/32] Louai
HAFEZ 

[9/16] Ivan
PEREZ 

5-11, 12-10, 11-5, 11-8

[3/4] Nicolas
MUELLER 

[3/4] Iker
PAJARES 

12-10, 11-5, 5-1 ab.

[9/16] Viktor
BYRTUS 

[9/16] Edwin
CLAIN 

11-6, 5-11, 11-6, 11-8

[5/8] Raphael
KANDRA 

[5/8] Rui
SOARES 

8-11, 14-12, 11-7, 11-9

[9/16] Jakub
SOLNICKY 

[9/16] Edmon
LOPEZ 

11-9, 11-5, 11-7

[2] Baptiste
MASOTTI 

Quarters
August, 21

[1] Victor
CROUIN 

11-7, 11-9, 11-5

[5/8] Melvil
SCIANIMANICO 

[5/8] Balasz
FARKAS 

11-6, 6-11, 13-11,
10-12, 11-9

[3/4] Nicolas
MUELLER 

[3/4] Iker
PAJARES 

11-2, 11-6, 11-6

[9/16] Edwin
CLAIN 

[5/8] Rui
SOARES 

11-7, 11-3, 8-11, 11-7

[2] Baptiste
MASOTTI 

Semifinals
August, 22

[1] Victor
CROUIN 

7:40pm, glass court 

[3/4] Nicolas
MUELLER 



[3/4] Iker
PAJARES 

6pm, glass court 

[2] Baptiste
MASOTTI 

Final
August, 23

4pm, glass court 

EUROPEAN INDIVIDUAL SQUASH CHAMPIONSHIPS



CHARTRES
20-23 AUG. 2025



HALLE JEAN-COCHET
6 RUE JEAN MONNET
21-23 AUG. 2025

C'CHARTRES SQUASH
12 AVENUE F. MITTERRAND
20-23 AUG. 2025

