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FIP Platinum Sardegna, Carolina's "second time" and Marta's first as a mother

"Follow me everywhere!". **'Caro' Orsi** has just tasted the thrill of reaching her second consecutive final in **Cagliari**, defeating the number one seeds of the **FIP Platinum Sardegna, Riera/Goenaga**, and securing a spot in tomorrow's final against **Marrero/Osoro**, their tough opponents and number 2 seeds, scheduled for 5 PM.

The same court where she reached the final last year. The same crowd celebrates her. Carolina plays along and adds: *"Second consecutive final here in Cagliari, with this amazing crowd: I told you that the feeling with this land is a touch of magic, if I could I would bring the entire circuit to Cagliari given how well things go here in Sardinia"*.

An Italian in the final just days before the **FIP European Padel Championships** next week – also in Cagliari – is a beautiful story for Carolina, who will be part of the "Azzurri" team. According to the **FIP ranking**, she is the best Italian, number 27 in the world. Next to Orsi, **Nuria Rodriguez**, the Spanish number 25, celebrates, having played a near-perfect match for consistency and intensity. Focused and relentless in keeping Goenaga in the corner and constructing tactical worlds where Carolina closed out crucial points, as seen in the final game, after sealing the first set 6-3. At 5-4 with Orsi serving, two winning smashes, a ball in the corner knocking out Riera for 40-15; then the match point and raising her hands to call for the crowd's roar, which arrives along with Riera's winner, leading to the final against Osoro-Marrero. **Carolina** then said: *"I've been doing great here for two years, I am proud and very happy to perform so well here. I have to hug Nuria once more today because she played an extraordinary match, giving me confidence against two very strong opponents"*. The hug comes together with the journalists quickly capturing the first impressions: *"I know you're going to ask me if I have anyone to dedicate this final to, and yes, of course I do: I dedicate it to the Cagliari crowd, to all those who supported us today, cheered and shouted our names, and to all those who will come to do the same tomorrow for the final"*.

THE JOY OF MARRERO A final where they will meet the former world number one **Marta Marrero** – who returned to the circuit a few weeks ago after becoming a mother – and the Argentine **Aranzazu Osoro** (they are the tournament's number 2 seeds) who won the battle against **Guinart-Iglesias** in three sets, 6-3 2-6 6-4 in the semifinals. **Marrero** is beaming in her first final since the break (2022) for pregnancy and the early months of motherhood: *"A wonderful result, I am very happy because coming back after so much time is never easy and there are no guarantees of regaining your level"*. The fiercely contested semifinal with the

number 3 seeds in a highly competitive women's tournament: *"Women's padel is leveling up, there are very strong young players and the difference between the top players in the ranking is becoming less and less evident, making every match a balanced challenge where mental strength often makes the difference"*. In this tournament marking Marta's return to top-level play, she and Osoro made that difference.

MEN In the men's draw, **Pablo Lijo** and **Alvaro Cepero** continue their incredible run. After eliminating **Belasteguin/Garrido**, they pulled off another impressive feat by defeating the fourth seeds, **Gonzalo Rubio** and **Alex Arroyo**. They won the first set 6-4, and continued smoothly in the second set up to 4-1. Here, the drop of the tournament's most unpredictable "pareja" occurred, with Rubio and Arroyo – as in the previous night's match against **Goenaga-Esbri**, when they made a great comeback – recovering to 5-5, before Lijo and Cepero's decisive push led to a final score of 7-5.

For Cepero, these weeks have been remarkable following the semifinal at the **FIP Gold Valladolid** at the end of June, while Lijo achieved his best result since November 2023, when he reached the semifinal of another **FIP Platinum** in Mexico. Cepero (ranked 55) and Lijo (57) can now dream about the upcoming challenge against **Momo Gonzalez** and **Edu Alonso** (2), who in the afternoon secured the first ticket to the men's final (scheduled for tomorrow, not before 7 pm). In this case, the prediction was accurate, with the number 2 seeds defeating one of the tournament's surprise pairs, **Fran Guerrero** and **Javi Garcia** (6-2 6-4).

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