

Bartoli, Stosur into Eastbourne semifinals

Contributed by Administrator
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EASTBOURNE, England (AP)—Wimbledon finalist Marion Bartoli beat Russian qualifier Alisa Kleybanova 6-3, 6-3 Thursday and reached the semifinals of the Eastbourne International Women's Open.

The second-seeded Bartoli had won just eight matches in 14 events coming into Eastbourne, and her run to the semifinals this week is only her second since Wimbledon a year ago.

She began strongly, surrendering just three points in the first four games, but Kleybanova eventually settled. Bartoli failed to serve out the first set at 5-1 or convert two set points on Kleybanova's serve at 5-2 before taking the set in the next game.

Bartoli broke for a 3-2 lead in the second set, and she closed out the match by winning the last eight points.

"I had a tough time because I was not healthy to play tennis, but now I'm feeling really well and really happy to be back on track," Bartoli said. "I arrived here and kept trying to practice and one day my energy came back and I felt it was the same like last year."

Bartoli next plays fourth-seeded Agnieszka Radwanska, who first completed a 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 second-round win over Virginie Razzano that was suspended at one set each overnight and then beat Gisela Dulko 7-5, 7-5 in the quarterfinals.

The second semifinal will be between eighth-seeded Nadia Petrova and Australia's Samantha Stosur.

Petrova had little difficulty in overcoming qualifier Elena Makarova 6-4, 6-3, and Stosur beat Caroline Wozniacki 7-6 (3), 6-4.

Stosur has not reached the semifinals since August 2006, and she was thrilled with her progress since returning to competition in May after missing eight months with illness.

"I've managed to stay positive and just focus on one thing at a time, basically about my game and what I want to improve," said Stosur, who was limited to walking for no more than 15 minutes at a time when she began training again. "If you keep it simple like that I think it makes it a little bit easier."