

Rain disrupts play at Champions of Tennis Tournament



After two days of glorious weather, the rain arrived with a vengeance to limit the play at the Brodies Champions of Tennis tournament in Stockbridge in Saturday.

A capacity crowd turned out to see the great John McEnroe play his first singles match in the Scottish capital for more than 25 years, and speaking ahead of the game, the 54 year old former Wimbledon champion explained his reason for playing in the tournament: "We want to show we can still play, and I think people will be surprised at the level of tennis they see here. I love to play still; I love to get out on the court. I work out regularly and I like to try and show the 50 plus people that it can still be done."

Opponent, 49 year old Swede Mikael Pernfors said: "I don't think any one of us have travelled to Scotland to lose," so the stage was set for a competitive encounter.

The game was delayed whilst the volunteers tried to dry the court, but it eventually started around 2.30pm. McEnroe served, but lost the first two points, the second when his backhand volley hit the top of the net, then, to the amusement of the sell-out crowd, he checked the height of the cord.

McEnroe then fought back, but with the scores at deuce, the rain returned and the players had to leave the court.



Play eventually resumed after three and a half hours and it was decided that the match would be settled in one set with

the winner being the first to reach eight games. After a hard fought contest, McEnroe took the honours by 8-4.

With Wimbledon starting next week, everyone wanted to hear McEnroe's thoughts on Andy Murray's chances: "I think it very well could be Murray's year," said McEnroe. 'I was beginning to wonder if he could do it because these other guys are so great but he really stepped up with the Olympics and then he dug deep at the Open to win that. He's as confident as he's ever been, he's handled the pressure well for the most part so when the going gets tough he's got to step up.

"The thing is that he's playing great,' he continued. 'He's positioned himself well having not played at the French; I think that will help him. And obviously winning Queen's is a nice positive for him. But the draw is tough, there's no doubt about it. Tsonga in the quarters is tough because for me he's the guy best positioned outside of the top four to win. And then he'll have to play one of Rafa or Roger in the semis and then another guy that's not too shabby Djokovic in the finals. So he's got his work cut out for himself no doubt about it. But having won a Slam and won the Olympics now he's really comfortable on this court and on the biggest stage."

Next up came Mark Philippoussis against Carlos Moya. Moya started strongly, but the Australian fought back well to win the first set after a tie break, before the rain returned.

Play was eventually suspended around 9pm despite the fantastic efforts of the volunteers.

The tennis starts at 10.30am tomorrow with the fixtures still to be announced.

☒ Seventeen volunteers will be out in force on the final day collecting for Lifecare, a charity that supports the independence and wellbeing of older people in Edinburgh, at Brodies Champions of Tennis.

Each volunteer will be wearing a Lifecare t-shirt and trying to raise as much money as possible to fund the charity which has helped a lot of people over the 72 years it has been running.

Photographs by John Preece

<http://www.photoboxgallery.com/jlp-photography>