

Jacob returns to court in high class Orleans field

Fast rising Edinburgh tennis star Jacob Fearnley is expected to have to go up a level, adding to his laurels when he returns to the ATP Challenger tour at the Co'met Orleans Open in France this week.

Fearnley, winner of three Challenger titles since June and up to world No 129 after a meteoric climb of 400 places in three months, finds himself in the draw alongside the likes of Richard Gasquet, 37, a 16 times ATP tour winner and successful in over 600 professional matches. He has been as high as world No 7.

Also taking part will be Denis Shapovalov, the 25-year-old Canadian who is a former world No 10 but like Gasquet has slipped down the rankings though he did help his country qualify for the Davis Cup finals in Manchester earlier this month.

Shapovalov is seeded second behind Quentin Halys, a Frenchman beaten by Fearnley in the final at Rennes last time out.

Fearnley is seeded eighth and is due to open against a qualifier. If successful another ranking boost could beckon and he goes into action with words of encouragement ringing in his ears from GB Davis Cup coach Leon Smith who was quoted in "The National" newspaper saying: "He's gone (up) really quickly. It's really impressive the way he is going. He'll be

part of our squad in future for sure.



“It’s one thing going up the rankings but you also see his quality. You look at the players he has been beating.

“He’s had to beat five (French players in France) in a row.

“That’s also a sign if you are going to be a Davis Cup player. You have to be able to handle these sort of things.”