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Newsroom

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Zvonareva, Tu and Bartoli Make Winning Starts in Charleston

CHARLESTON, SC, USA - Twenty-eight women took to the green clay courts of Charleston on Monday but only 14 were left standing, as first round action began at the \$1,340,000 Tier I Family Circle Cup. The only two seeds in action were both victorious in their opening matches of the week.



One of the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour's most in-form names, Vera Zvonareva, was the highest seed in action. The No.9-seeded Russian took on unseeded Frenchwoman Nathalie Dechy and prevailed in straight sets, 64 64. She has now prevailed in each and every one of their last eight meetings, a loss in their first ever match putting their lifetime head-to-head series at 8-1.

Zvonareva and Dechy are one of the world's toughest doubles pairings at the moment; the Russian-French duo captured the US Open title last September and serves as this event's No.8-seeded team.

Joining Zvonareva among the singles winners was No.13-seeded Marion Bartoli, who won an intense first round match against American Shenay Perry in three sets, 57 64 61. It has been a tough start to 2007 for Bartoli, one of last season's most improved players; in 10 events coming in she has won consecutive matches just once, reaching the round of 16 at Indian Wells. She hopes to find her feet on clay this week at Charleston, where she reached the third round last year.

Other first round winners Monday were Chinese stars Peng Shuai and Zheng Jie, Americans Meilen Tu, Jill Craybas and Ashley Harkleroad, Russians Anastassia Rodionova and Vasilisa Bardina, Australian veteran Nicole Pratt, Frenchwoman Aravane Rezai, Chinese Taipei's Chan Yung-Jan, Dutch teen Michaella Krajicek and Spaniard Lourdes Domínguez Lino. Tu (pictured) was a 75 64 winner over Flavia Pennetta, a three-time Tour titlist on clay.

The remaining first round matches are all on the schedule on Tuesday, as well as the first three second round matches. Former champion Venus Williams battles Samantha Stosur in a first round duel, while Nicole Pietrangeli, Serena Williams and Li Na all play their second round matches.

