
October 7, 2017

\$100,000 Stockton Men's Challenger, A USTA Pro Circuit Tour Event

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AMERICANS SMYCZEK, MMOH, GREAT BRITAIN'S NORRIE, AND BARBADOS' KING ADVANCE TO SEMIFINALS OF SECOND STOCKTON MEN'S CHALLENGER

Stockton, Calif. – Two Americans will be in the spotlight in today's singles semifinals at the second \$100,000 Stockton Men's Challenger tournament at the Eve Zimmerman Tennis Center on the University of the Pacific campus.

Unseeded veteran Tim Smyczek, once ranked as high as 68th on the ATP World Tour, held off a late challenge from young Swedish up-and-comer Elias Ymer 6-3, 6-2 in Friday's quarterfinals.

Meanwhile, third-seeded young American Michael Mmoh won the first set 6-3 and was about to start the second set before his opponent, former world's top 20 Dmitry Tursunov of Russia, retired due to a hamstring injury.

Smyczek stormed out to a 5-1 first-set lead before Ymer rallied with a three-game spurt to close the gap to 5-4. However, Smyczek held serve, firing an ace at ad-in, to win the set.

Ymer, the 200th-ranked player in the world, fought back and was up 4-3 in the second set, but Smyczek held serve at 40-15 to tie 4-4, then broke Ymer, who had three double faults, to lead 5-4.

Smyczek had a shaky start in the final game, and was down 30-40 before getting deuce on an Ymer unforced error. Ymer eventually had break point before Smyczek went forward and got deuce on a forehand volley winner, then claimed the match on a pair of forehand winners.

"Neither one of us were playing our best tennis, in fact, we were both very tight," Smyczek said. "I'm not really sure why, but luckily I got fed up a couple of times, and just said, 'OK, I'm going to play more aggressive and play like I'm supposed to,' and I finished off some points at the net. and it worked out for me, but there were just a lot of nerves."

Of Ymer, Smyczek said: "He's hard on himself, so when he gets upset, he doesn't get mad at anyone but himself. Elias is very talented and going to be a good player, and he's working as hard as he is possible."

On making the semifinals, Smyczek said: " It's good to string a couple of matches together, and I feel I can get on a little bit of a roll."

Mmoh, meanwhile, played well in his first set against Tursunov, grinding away from the baseline against Tursunov's all-court style, but also came to net and hit a nice angle forehand volley for a winner. However, one set was all Mmoh and those in attendance would see as Tursunov came to net to shake his opponent's hand.



"(Tursunov) said something was wrong with his hamstring and I actually saw him in the trainer's room the day before. He's played tennis a long time and I'm sure his body is really banged up," Mmoh said of Tursunov. "I hope he gets better ... Maybe on the serve he was serving 50 percent, but he was moving very well from the baseline. We had a ton of long rallies until 3-3. The tennis was at a very high level."

Today, Smyczek will face sixth seed Darian King, who upset No. 4 Stefan Kozlov of the United States 6-4, 6-4. Before that, Mmoh plays eighth seed Cameron Norrie of Great Britain, who outlasted American Tennys Sandgren 6-3, 7-6 (5).

Mmoh expects a tough match against the 136th-ranked Norrie, who defeated Sandgren a week ago in the Tiburon Invitational singles final, and along the way also beat Mmoh at Tiburon.

Said Mmoh: "(Norrie) is very confident now, and obviously playing well. He really believes in himself, but I'll take my chances against him, and it should be a good match."

The left-handed Norrie breezed in the first set, but Sandgren was aggressive in the second, roaring out to a 4-1 lead. But Sandgren was thwarted by Norrie's three-game rally that tied the score at 4-4. Sandgren held serve for a brief 5-4 lead, but Norrie held at 40-30 to make it 5-5.

Sandgren held at 40-15 to go ahead 6-5, but Norrie held serve as well, forcing a tiebreaker. Norrie was in control with a 5-1 lead but Sandgren challenged to trail 6-5, but Norrie stayed steady as Sandgren hit an overhead out on match point.

"I had a little bit of luck and winning the long rallies, and that's what he usually does very well," Norrie said of winning his second encounter with Sandgren in as many weeks. "That's paid dividends and then I was stepping in and knocking down the volleys when he's on the run and using his slap shot. Staying positive and tough the last two weeks has been good for me."

King was able to beat the 19-year-old Kozlov in both sets of their match the same way. Both times, King jumped out to a 5-1 lead before Kozlov narrowed the gap to 5-4. And both times, King was able to hold serve at 40-15 to end Kozlov's run.

Making the semifinals is a blessing for King, who lost in the first round of Tiburon but used the week to work on his game and reset his mind and body.

"I was just trying to regroup after coming off playing in the U.S. Open, and going home, I didn't really get any rest (before Tiburon). I used the week to get refocused and get ready (for Stockton). ... I played Kozlov a couple of times, and he's a great competitor but I had to go play my game and be solid. Anytime that happens, it can be very tough for my opponent."

In doubles, the fourth-seeded British team of Brydan Klein and Joe Salisbury stunned top seeds Neal Skupski of Great Britain and Australia's John-Patrick Smith and advanced to Sunday's final, which follows after the men's singles final. Klein and Salisbury will play qualifiers Denis Kudla of the U.S. and Mikelis Libietis of Latvia, who rolled past Mitchell Krueger and Mackenzie McDonald 6-2, 6-2.





The singles semifinals begin at 11 a.m. today at the Eve Zimmerman Tennis Center. Tickets are available at the door or at evezimmermantenniscenter.com.

For more information on the tournament, visit evezimmermantenniscenter.com, ustaproircuit.com and atpworldtour.com.

In addition to the Stockton Men's Challenge semifinals, some of the best juniors in the country will be in action alongside the pros as the Eve Zimmerman Tennis Center will host the USTA National Level 2 Junior Championships, featuring singles and doubles play in boys 14-under and 16-under, and girls 16-under divisions. The event begins today and runs through Monday.

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\$100,000 Stockton Men's Challenger

A USTA Pro Circuit Event

Friday, October 6, 2017

Eve Zimmerman Tennis Center

Stockton, Calif.

Purse: \$100,000

Surface: Hard-Outdoor

Singles -- Main draw

(8) Cameron Norrie, Great Britain, d. (2) Tennys Sandgren, United States, 6-3, 7-6 (5)

(6) Darian King, Barbados, d. (4) Stefan Kozlov, United States, 6-4, 6-4

(3) Michael Mmoh, United States, d. Dmitry Tursunov, Russia, 6-3, ret.

Tim Smyczek, United States, d. Elias Ymer, Sweden, 6-4, 6-4

Doubles-Main draw

Q-Denis Kudla, United States-Mikelis Libietis, Latvia, d. Mitchell Krueger-Mackenzie McDonald, United States 6-2, 6-2

(4) Brydan Klein and Joe Salisbury, Great Britain, d. (1) Neal Skupski, Great Britain/John-Patrick Smith, Australia 7-6 (7), 7-6 (5)

Saturday, October 7 - SCHEDULE

Stadium Court - starting at 11 a.m.

(8) Cameron Norrie vs. (3) Michael Mmoh, followed by

Tim Smyczek vs. (6) Darian King



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