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BARTOLI LENDS A HAND TO FIRST SERVE

STANFORD, Calif. (www.BankOfTheWestClassic.com) – Sony Ericsson WTA Tour player Marion Bartoli took time from her schedule Monday at the Bank of the West Classic to meet with 20 youngsters from East Palo Alto Tennis & Tutoring (EPATT), a local First Serve chapter which operates at Stanford University.

First Serve, a not-for-profit program, empowers youth by providing them with the skills, values and experience they need to be responsible and productive adults. EPATT utilizes the First Serve curriculum. The program, which includes kids from 7th grade to high school, is one of the nation's top 10 inner city tennis programs.

During her appearance Bartoli, who reached the singles finals at Wimbledon two weeks ago, spoke about her experiences on the tour, the responsibility and commitment it takes to balance life as a professional athlete and the importance of education in making positive decisions.

“You have to believe in your dreams,” Bartoli said to the kids. “You must always try your best in everything you are doing, no matter what it is. If you do you can get to the top of the world and achieve your goals.” In a gesture of gratitude, the youngsters presented Bartoli with a t-shirt reading “I love EPATT.”

In the past, several Sony Ericsson WTA Tour players have spoken on behalf of EPATT and First Serve during the Bank of the West Classic including Lindsey Davenport and Venus Williams.

The First Serve National Student Athlete Competition is being launched this week at the Bank of the West Classic. The nationwide competition will include participants from local First Serve chapter, EPATT. Competitors earn points based primarily on academic results (grades) and then on junior tennis tournament results, with a Competition Year ending #1 male/female First Serve Student Athlete of the Year. First Serve continues to provide opportunities for youth that motivate and empower them to be successful in life.

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The Bank of the West Classic, the longest-running women only professional tennis tournament in the world, will be played July 23-29 and will feature one of its strongest fields since 2002 with 17 of the top 50 ranked players in the world scheduled to attend including five ranked among the top 18.

The 2007 Bank of the West Classic should be one of the most competitive in recent memory as this year's field has combined to win 52 career Sony Ericsson WTA Tour title.

The Bank of the West Classic, a Sony Ericsson WTA Tour event, features a 28-player singles draw as well as a 16-team doubles draw. The event is owned and operated by IMG and serves as the opening women's event of the US Open Series.

Tickets to the Bank of the West Classic can be purchased by calling the Tournament box office at 866-WTA-TIXS (866-982-8497) or by logging on to www.BankoftheWestClassic.com. Tickets for the tournament's opening round start at just \$18. Full series box seat packages, which include tickets to all 13 sessions, are also available and start at only \$550.

ABOUT THE BANK OF THE WEST CLASSIC: In its 37th year, the longest-running women-only professional tennis tournament in the world became The Bank of the West Classic in 1992 and is the first stop of the US Open Series. A Sony Ericsson WTA Tour Tier II event, the Bank of the West Classic features a 28-player singles draw and a 16-team doubles draw with total prize money of \$600,000. Held on Stanford University's campus at the Taube Family Tennis Stadium since 1997, former champions include: Billie Jean King, Chris Evert, Martina Navratilova, Andrea Jaeger, Monica Seles, Martina Hingis, Lindsay Davenport and Venus Williams. The Bank of the West Classic is owned and operated by IMG.

ABOUT BANK OF THE WEST: Founded in 1874, \$55.6 billion-asset Bank of the West (www.bankofthewest.com) offers a full range of business, corporate, personal, trust and international banking services and currently operates more than 700 branch locations and commercial banking offices in 19 Western and Midwestern states.

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