

From Lyme disease to a Grand Slam final...



Lyme Disease Action

Saturday's French Open ladies tennis final will crown an incredible comeback from Lyme disease for Australian Sam Stosur. A late-blooming success, Stosur was struck down by the debilitating illness – which is caused by the bite of an infected tick and can affect the joints, the heart and the nervous system - for ten months in 2007.

She's recovered though, to such an extent that after beating Serena Williams and Justine Henin en route, she's now the favourite to secure her first Grand Slam title against Italy's Francesca Schiavone.

Stosur's newfound fame should bring Lyme disease further into the limelight – with regular mention of the problem appearing in recent national newspapers and BBC news articles on the Australian. Says Stella Huyshe-Shires, the Chair of Lyme Disease Action: "This is a remarkable achievement for someone who was once so weakened by Lyme disease she could barely complete the most menial task."

Talking to the Press Association, Sam Stosur admits she never could have imagined she would reach a Grand Slam final when she was battling the Lyme disease, which could have ended her career. "When I was out, I never let myself doubt the fact that I would return. Obviously, I had no idea what was going to happen."

Stosur has come a long way since the illness gripped her three years ago but confesses "I'd never wish to go through any of that ever again. I think I'm pretty fortunate that I was able to come back and be healthy so quickly. It was a long time, but relatively quickly compared to a lot of other stories I have heard."

Lyme Disease Action (www.lymediseaseaction.org.uk) is a UK-registered charity striving for greater awareness of Lyme disease and associated tick-borne diseases.

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For more information, or to speak to Stella Huyshe-Shires, the Chair of Lyme Disease Action, please contact Sue Ockwell or Camilla Colley via email - press@lymediseaseaction.org.uk - or ring 020 8891 4440.

A Lyme disease poster, showing how to remove a tick correctly, and leaflets on Lyme disease, are available for publication if required or for readers to take to their own local GP or veterinary practice.