

By James Reid

HARRIET DART revealed she is revelling in her favourite time of the year as she progressed to the quarter-finals of the LTA's Rothesay Classic Birmingham.

Dart beat fifth seed Anhelina Kalinina 6-3 3-6 6-1, the second time she has beaten the world No.26 in a week, having also defeated the Ukrainian at the Rothesay Open Nottingham last week. The British world No.134 showed no signs of her quick turnaround affecting her, having beaten compatriot Jodie Burrage in the first round late on Tuesday, and Dart admitted she is loving playing as many matches as possible in front of a home crowd.

"I love playing on grass and I love playing on the home ground so I especially enjoy these couple of weeks of the year," she said. "It is great to be back on centre court, I always love being back in Birmingham."

Dart made a dream start, taking the first set 6-3 before Kalinina levelled the score after converting the only break point the Briton conceded all match.

But the 26-year-old bounced back in style to dominate the decider and reach a second-successive WTA quarter-final for the first time in her career.

And Dart reflected that she was happy with the way she was able to step up once again against a higher-ranked opponent.

She added: "I played great last week and I knew this week she would raise her level and the courts are a bit quicker here so I would have to adjust a little bit more but I am really pleased to see it through.

"She was serving really good and it was just one break, on grass it can go away pretty quick but I knew if I could hang in there and focus on my own service game and I was very focused to take it away."

Elsewhere in Birmingham, former French Open champion and top seed Barbora Krejčíková progressed to the second round with a 6-3 6-3 win over Spanish qualifier Cristina Bucsa.

But third seed Magda Linette was comfortably beaten 6-3 6-0 by Lin Zhu, while American sixth seed Bernarda Pera lost to Linda Fruhvirtová 6-1 7-6(3).

However, there were better fortunes for Pera's compatriot, qualifier Emina Bektas, who took just over an hour to pull off an upset against seventh seed Shuai Zhang.

Bektas ranked 150th in the world, was a comfortable 6-4 6-3 winner against the world No.36, converting all three break points on offer to set up a second-round match against Rebecca Marino, who beat Xiyu Wang 7-6(5) 5-7 6-3.