

Youngest Wimbledon qualifier is 16

At 16, Russian Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova became the youngest player to qualify for the 2008 Wimbledon Championships.

The beaming youngster, who disposed of German Kathrin Woerle 6-3, 6-0, sprinted to her family and supporters to celebrate her victory as soon as the final ball had been struck Thursday.

Amidst the kisses and hugs, autograph hunters clamoured for the Russian's attention as did children who gathered to have their photograph taken with the rising star.

'Wimbledon is something special, the grass is something unusual. Wimbledon has charm and tradition,' Anastasia said.

Indeed, Pavlyuchenkova is becoming good at this qualifying lark, having made the second round at Roland Garros earlier this year -- a tournament she describes as her favourite, simply because of her breakthrough performance there.

The 2006 junior world champion, who was handed a wild card into the Wimbledon main draw last year, has no qualms about being the youngest player to qualify this year.

'It doesn't matter if I am the youngest, it's always good to play and I am happy I qualified here.'

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