



Ho double puts England into semis

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Two wins for Tin-Tin Ho helped see off Canada and put England into a Commonwealth Games semi-final against India.

The England No 1 took both her singles matches and Kelly Sibley & Maria Tsaptsinos won a crucial doubles as England moved through 3-1 and are one win from a medal.

The other semi-final sees Australia meet top seeds Singapore. Tomorrow's session begins with that match at 12.30am UK time, followed by England's semi-final. The bronze medal match is at 7am UK time and the gold medal match at 9.30am.

World No 26 Mo Zhang is the class act of the Canadian line-up and took the first four points of the opening match against Kelly Sibley before the English No 2 asserted some authority of her own, moving Zhang around the table well and securing runs of five and then six points to take the first game 11-5.

The second was tighter but, at 8-7 to Sibley, the tide began to turn and Zhang took the next three points to level the match. The momentum shift continued in the third as the Canadian went 8-1 up on her way to taking it 11-4.

Zhang, the second highest-ranked player in the women's tournament, held the edge in the fourth and Sibley took her timeout at 5-3 down. It helped her to find some intensity and Zhang called her own timeout shortly afterwards at 7-6 up. It succeeded in arresting any momentum that Sibley was building and Zhang was able to close it out 11-8.



GOLD COAST, AUSTRALIA – APRIL 07: Tin-Tin Ho reacts to a big point (Photo by Hannah Peters/Getty Images)

The world rankings were in England's favour in the second match as Tin-Tin Ho took on fellow teenager Alicia Cote and the first game went with that ranking as Ho pulled away from 7-7 to take it 11-8.

Cote built an 8-3 lead in the next but Ho dominated the next four points, prompting the Canadian timeout. It did the trick as Cote took three in a row to level up the match.

Ho moved back in front by winning the third 11-6 and at 9-8 up was within touching distance of victory. However, Cote was aided by an outrageous slice of luck as a defensive lob clipped the back edge of the table, launching her on a run of three points to level the match.

Ho was quickly into stride in the decider, opening up 5-1 and 7-2 leads before being forced into a timeout as Cote took the next three. Whatever coach Marcus Gustafson said, he found the right words as Ho finally put away her stubborn opponent with the next four points and England were level.

Cote was back on court alongside Justina Yeung for the doubles, but Sibley & Maria Tsaptsinos have built up a good understanding, winning the women's doubles at the PG Mutual Nationals last month, and they continued in that vein by taking the first 11-6.



Kelly Sibley and Maria Tsaptsinos celebrate winning the doubles (Photo by Hannah Peters/Getty Images)

There were few nervous moments in the second, which England took 11-4, but the third game exemplified the power of the timeout as, from 1-4 down, Canada launched on a run of seven points and went on to win the game 11-7. And the turnaround continued as the Canadians took the fourth 11-5, making it 21 points to 8 since the timeout.

But the English pair re-imposed themselves in the decider, and the celebration at 11-4 showed just how pivotal the result could be.

Ho was heavy favourite to overcome Yeung, who is ranked outside the world's top 500, and it looked likely to go with ranking as Ho won the first 11-4.

Yeung upped her game and levelled, but Ho showed a brilliant reaction as she opened up a 6-0 lead in the third. She went on to take it 11-3 to move England one game from the semi-finals.

And one was all it needed as, despite Yeung going for her shots, Ho had the class to put England through.

Afterwards, Sibley said: "I thought I played the right way and we tried to keep the momentum going, we spoke about leaving everything on the court. I was fighting and giving it my all and I think that helped Tin-Tin to help step on to the court and it was just a great result to come through such a tight match.

"India next and we are trying to take it match by match and we know them quite well. I don't think we need to tweak anything and we go in with nothing to lose. They're the favourites so we'll go in to it fully prepared."

Results

England 3 Canada 1

Mo Zhang bt Kelly Sibley 3-1 (5-11, 11-8, 11-4, 11-9)

Tin-Tin Ho bt Alicia Cote 3-2 (11-8, 7-11, 11-6, 9-11, 11-5)

Sibley & Maria Tsaptsinos bt Cote & Justina Yeung 3-2 (11-6, 11-4, 7-11, 5-11, 11-4)

Ho bt Yeung 3-1 (11-4, 8-11, 11-3, 11-8)

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