



England to go for bronze after India defeat

Author: Paul Stimpson

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England will have to silence the home crowd and beat Australia if they are to win bronze in the women's team event at the Commonwealth Games.

A 3-0 defeat to India in the semi-finals – though England took a game in every match – means it is bronze at best, and they face the hosts at 7am UK time today.

India, with all three players ranked higher than their English counterparts, always had the upper hand against England as the match went with seeding.

It started well for England when, as she had in the quarter-final against Canada, Kelly Sibley took the first game against a higher-ranked opponent.

Facing world No 58 Manika Batra, the Leamington player moved ahead by an 11-9 scoreline, but her opponent began to get the measure of her and came back to take the next three.

Tin-Tin Ho versus Madhurika Patkar was the closest match-up on paper, the Indian at No 112 ranked just two places above the English girl.

It was characterised by high-speed rallies with both players up close to the table but the Indian always had the edge in the first game, which she took to seven.

Ho hung in during a crucial second game and managed to engineer two game points at 10-9 and 11-10, but her opponent saved both and took her own first opportunity to move 2-0 ahead.

Ho opened up a 6-2 lead in the third but three points for Patkar prompted the English timeout. It remained close but Patkar brought up a match point at 10-9, saved by Ho with a blistering backhand topspin. A crunching forehand saw Ho register a game point, which she took when Patkar netted after another high-speed rally.

It was a timeout repeat in the fourth as Patkar took hers when Ho clawed back from 6-2 to 6-5. It did the trick as

she got herself into a 10-7 lead and although she missed the first match point, Ho went long on the second.

Mouma Das, world ranked 88, joined Patkar for the doubles against Sibley & Maria Tsaptsinos and four successive points from 6-6 set up the first game for the Indian pair. But England levelled up, Sibley's emphatic backhand smash sealing the second.

But that was as close as England got, India taking the third and, with the writing on the wall, opening up a 6-0 lead in the fourth. With the confidence flowing, they kept their foot on the gas and won the game 11-1 to take their place in the gold medal match.

There, they will face top seeds Singapore, who beat hosts Australia 3-0 without dropping a game.

Results

India 3 England 0

Manika Batra bt Kelly Sibley 3-1 (9-11, 11-7, 11-5, 11-7)

Madhurika Patkar bt Tin-Tin Ho 3-1 (11-7, 13-11, 10-12, 11-8)

Patkar & Mouma Das bt Sibley & Maria Tsaptsinos 3-1 (11-7, 8-11, 11-7, 11-1)

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