



Brilliant England bounce back with bronze

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Posted On: April 09, 2018

It was secondary mission accomplished for England as they put their semi-final disappointment behind them to make sure they will bring back a team medal from Australia.

It was bronze for the squad of Paul Drinkhall, Liam Pitchford, Sam Walker and David McBeath to add to the women's bronze from yesterday.

They sunk Singapore 3-0 in the play-off in Gold Coast – and the medal meant Liam Pitchford joined Andrew Baggaley at the top of England's Commonwealth Games medal list on six medals overall.

After the draining semi-final against Nigeria, McBeath came into the line-up in place of Walker, but it was Drinkhall who led off against Glasgow 2014 singles silver medallist Gao Ning, now ranked 47 in the world.

Any suggestion of England not being able to get themselves together after the Nigeria loss were soon dispelled as Drinkhall started positively.

Gao saved two game points in the first and then missed one of his own, but once Drinkhall had secured the game with an unreturnable forehand, he went on to take a stranglehold and took the next two 5 and 9 to put England ahead.



Pitchford was also in no mood to relinquish a bronze as he took on world No 234 Poh Shao Feng Ethan, quickly opening up a 2-0 lead.

Poh took a timeout at 4-1 down in the third, stringing together a succession of points to lead 9-4 and closing it out 11-7. But Pitchford stepped it up and clinched the fourth set 11-3 with a barrage which Poh could simply not stand up to.

McBeath and Drinkhall honed their doubles partnership at the PG Mutual Nationals, where they won the title, but have not played a huge amount together.

They lost the first 11-6 to Poh & Pang Xue Jie but led the second 9-7 and 11-10 before losing it 13-11. However, that was a sign of England building momentum and they raced through the next 11-4, before levelling up the match as two blistering McBeath forehands took them from 9-9 to 11-9 in the fourth.



Paul Drinkhall and David McBeath in doubles action against Singapore (Photo by Robert Cianflone/Getty Images)

It looked as if Pitchford would be called upon to win another singles match when England trailed the doubles decider 10-6, but they fought their way back through a combination of positive play and nervous Singaporeans to save all four match points and bring up one of their own at 11-10.

That was an amazing point as three of the four players ended up on the floor, Pang lunging to return a net cord and then virtually crawling under the table to get out of the way for Poh to play a winner.

What a way to save match point!

Table tennis is pure carnage. [#GC2018](#) [#bbcgoldcoast](#) pic.twitter.com/IshVrSJUrN

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Once everyone, including the baying spectators, had settled down, England brought up another chance, and McBeath's unreturnable forehand put them on the podium.

India took the gold with a 3-0 victory over Nigeria.

Results

England 3 Singapore 0

Paul Drinkhall bt Gao Ning 3-0 (13-11, 11-5, 11-9)

Liam Pitchford bt Poh Shao Feng Ethan 3-1 (11-9, 11-7, 7-11, 11-3)

Drinkhall & David McBeath bt Poh & Pang Xue Jie 3-2 (6-11, 11-13, 11-4, 11-9, 13-11)

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