



It's GOLD for Liam and Paul!

Author: Paul Stimpson

Posted On: April 14, 2018

Paul Drinkhall & Liam Pitchford are the Commonwealth Games men's doubles champions.

The top English pair defeated India's Sharath Achanta & Sathiyam Gnanasekaran in five tense games to take the gold in Gold Coast, the final score 3-2 (11-5, 10-12, 9-11, 11-6, 11-8).

It was a second Commonwealth Gold for Drinkhall following his mixed doubles victory with wife Jo in Glasgow four years ago.

Pitchford became England's record Commonwealth Games medal-winner, moving on to seven, one ahead of Andrew Baggaley, but it was a first gold for the Chesterfield man.

The English pair made a characteristic fast start, playing aggressively and trying to finish rallies quickly, and it worked as they built a lead and took their third game point to win it 11-5.

The second was tighter, but India took an early timeout when England won three in a row to lead 9-8. They won the next point too, but three big points by Achanta and a Drinkhall error saw India pinch it 12-10.

England continued to stay on the front foot, but from 9-5 up they lost six points in a row and India led and stood one game from gold.

The fourth again saw Drinkhall & Pitchford build a lead, but this time India could not force their way back in and with an 11-6 scoreline, England levelled it up.

More of the same in the decider as 4-1 became 9-4, only for India to reduce that lead to 9-8. But any nerves were banished as England brought up to match points and Drinkhall's forehand winner put them on the top step of the podium.



The men's doubles podium (Photo by Matt Roberts/Getty Images)

Pitchford said: "We just tried to play our game and stop them. Kamal (Achanta) has got a lot of big shots in his locker and we tried to stop him from playing them and keep it tight and get in first. There were a few loose moments in the match but at the end we did what we needed to do.

"We were 2-1 down but felt like we'd won the three sets so we knew if we carried on playing we could still win the match."

Drinkhall said: "It's a fantastic achievement. From a very young age you watch a big event like this. We were planning on coming here and winning a lot of medals but to get the gold round our neck is great. We would have wanted it before now but that happens and everybody's played a great tournament here and it's great to get ours now."

He added that support from the crowd and team-mates had been a big help: "It's great having your own team there. For me, I just like atmosphere but it's been great support from the Team England guys and the other Home Nation guys.

"Marcus in the corner kept us confident and we kept ourselves confident."



Paul Drinkhall and Liam Pitchford in action in the final (Photo by Matt Roberts/Getty Images)

In the bronze medal match, Harmeet Desai & Sanil Shetty of India put in a dominant display to defeat Pang Yew En Koen & Poh Shao Feng Ethan of Singapore 3-0 (11-5, 11-6, 12-10).

India's Manika Batra beat Yu Mengyu of Singapore 4-0 in the women's singles final, with Feng Tianwei winning the bronze 4-2 against Canada's Mo Zhang.

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