



Silver for Liam and Tin-Tin; Sam misses out

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England's Commonwealth Games campaign finished with two defeats in Australia today, as Liam Pitchford & Tin-Tin Ho had to settle for mixed doubles silver and Sam Walker missed out on singles bronze.

It was a case of fine margins as Pitchford & Ho were edged out by Gao Ning & Yu Mengyu of Singapore in the gold medal match.

The English pair, who won the same medal behind Paul & Jo Drinkhall four years ago in Glasgow, had game points in each of the first two sets but could not capitalise as they were beaten 3-0 (12-10, 12-10, 11-9).

In both those games, England opened up early 4-1 leads, but the Singaporeans came back to level and it remained tight for the rest of the match.

England led 10-9 in the first and 10-8 in the second but on each occasion Singapore put together a mini run of points when it mattered to steal the game.



Tin-Tin Ho and Liam Pitchford in action (Photo by Matt Roberts/Getty Images)

Pitchford & Ho led 7-5 in the third but another run of four put Gao & Yu on the cusp on gold. They brought up two match points and, after Pitchford saved the first with a forehand winner and Singapore called a timeout, they took their second opportunity.

Pitchford said: "Obviously proud and happy to get a silver medal but tinged with a little bit of disappointment, you never want to lose a final.

"It was a close match. The first two sets we had set points and if we'd taken one of them maybe it would have been a different match.

"At 2-0 they could relax a little bit. We knew the pressure was on us but I thought we performed well throughout the whole tournament. We weren't seeded to get to the final so it is a big achievement to come away with a silver medal.

Ho added: "I think we did the right things. We had a really good chance. We played pretty well in that match to be fair, just a few set points we couldn't quite get.

"Really happy but of course a bit disappointed, but looking back it's been a good tournament and I'm happy with two medals."

In the bronze medal match, Sathiyar Gnanasekaran & Manika Batra of India beat compatriots Sharath Achanta & Mouma Das 3-0 (11-6, 11-2, 11-4).

Achanta was back on court in the bronze medal play-off against Walker. The Indian has won eight Commonwealth Games medals down the years, four of them gold, and he started with a purpose to make it nine.

He won the first four points and was never behind in the game, though Walker closed up to 7-7 before the Indian won the final four points too.



Sam Walker (Photo by Matt Roberts/Getty Images)

Achanta repeated the big finish at the business end of the second, winning two points from 9-9 to put the pressure on Walker.

The third looked as if it was following the same pattern as Achanta led 9-7, but coach Alan Cooke called a timeout and whatever was said worked as Walker reeled off four points to put himself back in the match.

But Achanta responded, again reeling off a run of points when it mattered at the end of a game to take the fourth 11-6.

In what could be his last Commonwealth Games match at the age of 35, Achanta was in no mood to let Walker back in again and he kept up his level in the fifth. A few nerves crept in as Walker closed from 9-5 to 9-9 and then saved a match point, but Achanta took his second opportunity – and his celebration showed how much it meant. The final scoreline was 4-1 (11-7, 11-9, 9-11, 11-6, 12-10).

Walker said: "A tough match, same as yesterday really. I don't think I managed to get myself into it. He played well, to be fair. He played tactically quite well and I don't think I was on top of my game and my movement. I was a little bit passive.

"I know I got further than my ranking, but I wanted to win it. Hopefully next time it will be better. I've just got to learn from the whole experience and hopefully in four years' time I can do a lot better."

In the gold medal match, Gao Ning made it a golden double on the day as he beat Nigeria's Quadri Aruna 4-2 (11-7, 11-8, 5-11, 3-11, 11-9, 11-5) to finally get his hands on the singles title after losing in the finals in Delhi 2010 and Glasgow 2014.

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