



England fall to surprise defeat in Serbia

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England suffered a surprise 3-0 defeat away to Serbia in their European Championships Team Stage 1 tie last night.

The match was closer than the scoreline suggests as both Paul Drinkhall and Liam Pitchford lost in five and Sam Walker in four, though all to opponents ranked considerably lower than them.

Set in the context of the hectic competition and travel schedule the team has had in recent weeks, with the Commonwealth Games swiftly followed by equally intense matches at the World Team Championships, the result is perhaps less surprising.

Drinkhall led off against Aleksandar Karakasevic, ranked 235, and twice came from behind to level before losing the decider. Pitchford twice led against Zsolt Peto, ranked 411, but also lost in five close games. Walker battled hard in another tight match, against world No 511 Marko Petkov, but went down in four to seal the defeat.

The return match is on November 20 at a venue to be confirmed.

Results

Serbia 3 England 0

Aleksandar Karakasevic bt Paul Drinkhall 3-2 (11-9, 6-11, 9-11, 11-7, 11-3)

Zsolt Peto bt Liam Pitchford 3-2 (12-14, 11-9, 4-11, 12-10, 11-9)

Marko Petkov bt Sam Walker 3-1 (11-9, 11-8, 12-14, 14-12)

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