



No repeat title, but Liam is MVP again

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Posted On: July 01, 2018

Liam Pitchford's Falcons were beaten in the final of the Ultimate Table Tennis league but the English No 1 was named the series' Most Valuable Player for the second year running.

Falcons went down 11-7 to Dabang Smashers in Kolkata, despite Pitchford winning his match to finish the tournament with only one defeat.

Smashers set down an early marker when Manika Batra beat Matilda Ekholm 3-0 (11-8, 11-10, 11-9) and went on to win the first three matches by a combined 7-2 margin.

Falcons captain Pitchford stopped the rot in Match 4 as he did what England's footballers could not at the World Cup by beating Belgium – in this case Cedric Nuytinck – 2-1 (11-9, 5-11, 11-7).

Bernadette Szocs then won 2-1 against Adriana Diaz to pull it back to 9-6 but when Sathiyam Gnanasekaran defeated Alvaro Robles 2-1 in Match 6, Smashers had an unassailable 11-7 lead.

Pitchford did at least have the consolation of being named Most Valuable Player (Male) to repeat his feat from last year.

Unfortunately we lost the final tonight but it's been a great season and a great fight from the team! Happy I was awarded the MVP of the league again ☺ Thanks to ulttabletennis for putting... <https://t.co/siUKAw3Npo>

– Liam Pitchford (@liampitchford) [July 1, 2018](#)

In the semi-finals, Pitchford had lost his only match of the series as he was edged out by Sweden's World No 18 Mattias Karlsson 2-1 (11-10, 9-11, 10-11).

But Falcons recovered to beat RP-SG Mavericks 11-10 when Ekholm beat Ayhika Mukherjee 3-0 in the final match.

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