



Boll ends Pitchford's European dream

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Top seed Timo Boll ended Liam Pitchford's hopes of a European Championships medal at the last 16 stage, beating the England No 1 4-2 in a high-class match.

There was nothing to choose between the players in the first three games, all won by the minimum of two points, the first in favour of Pitchford and the second and third for the German.

Boll pulled out a 9-1 lead in the next, either side of Pitchford's timeout at 4-1, and duly completed an 11-4 scoreline to move to within a game of the last eight.

But Pitchford, who was going for a hat-trick of wins over recent world No 1s after beating Ma Long and Dimitrij Ovtcharov, opened up his own lead in the sixth, moving out to 5-1 and always keeping at least two points in front to take it 11-8.

The sixth was close throughout, with Boll and coach Jorg Rosskopf worried enough to take a timeout at 9-7 in their favour. Pitchford won the next two points but drifted long on the next to hand the German a match point. And when Pitchford netted at the end of a fierce rally, it was all over.

Meanwhile, Sam Walker's bid for European success came up short in the quarter-finals today as he and partner Tobias Rasmussen were beaten by the third seeds from Germany.

Walker was the first English player to reach the Men's Doubles quarters since 1990, when Des Douglas & Alan Cooke did so, but he and Dane Rasmussen were quickly on the back foot against Ruwen Filus & Ricardo Walther.

Walther & Filus, who is going for a second title having already won the Mixed Doubles alongside compatriot Han Ying, opened up a 3-0 lead with few alarms, but the underdog pair fought back in the fourth.

They opened a 4-1 lead and kept their noses in front all the way to earn game points at 10-9 and 11-10. Both were saved before the Germans had a match point opportunity themselves. That too was spurned and Walker & Rasmussen took their next chance to end the game at 14-12.

The fifth was close up to 6-6 but the Germans then went on a run of five in a row to seal their semi-final place.

Results

Men's Singles

Round of 16

Timo Boll (GER) bt Liam Pitchford 4-2 (9-11, 12-10, 11-9, 11-4, 8-11, 11-9)

Men's Doubles

Quarter-final

Ruwen Filus & Ricardo Walther (GER) bt Sam Walker & Tobias Rasmussen (DEN) 4-1 (11-5, 11-3, 11-7, 12-14, 11-6)

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