



Pitchford & Groth exit World doubles

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Liam Pitchford's run at the ITTF World Championships was ended in the last 16 of the men's doubles by the seventh seeds.

Pitchford and partner Jonathan Groth of Denmark, seeded 15, lost 4-1 to Romania's Ovidiu Ionescu & Alvaro Robles of Spain.

After taking an early lead in the first game, Pitchford and Groth eventually lost 7-11, followed by a 6-11 defeat in the second.

The third game saw a point-by-point battle commence between the pairs until the score was even at 9-9. Their opponents then took the next two points to take a 3-0 lead.

In the fourth, Ionescu & Robles led for the majority of the game, until Pitchford and Groth pulled back to level the score at 9-9, before taking the game 11-9 to make the match score 3-1.

Ionescu & Robles then turned up the pressure and took a 10-5 lead.

Pitchford and Groth fought back to save two match points, before their opponents called a time out.

They then saved another match point to make the score 8-10, but it wasn't enough as Ionescu & Robles took the next point, winning the game 11-8 and taking the match.

[Click here to watch Pitchford & Groth vs Ionescu & Robles](#)

The pair had progressed into the last 16 thanks to a 4-1 victory over Robin Devos & Cedric Nuytinck of Belgium.

[Click here to watch Pitchford & Groth v Devos & Nuytinck](#)

English involvement in the singles ended on Tuesday, when all six players were eliminated.

Liam Pitchford and Paul Drinkhall both went out in the last 64, while Sam Walker, Tom Jarvis, Tin-Tin Ho and Maria Tsapsinos were knocked out in the last 128.

World No 57 Wang Yang of Slovakia was the man who beat Pitchford, while Drinkhall was defeated by eighth seed Koki Niwa of Japan.

Wang's defensive style was always going to be tricky to counter, but Pitchford had done so before in a European play-off tie in Preston two years ago, when he won 3-2.

This time was different as Wang took the first game 11-3 and added the next two on deuce to stand on the threshold of the last 32. And there was no way back for Pitchford despite saving two match points before Wang took the fourth 11-6.

Meanwhile, Drinkhall was beaten by eighth seed Niwa, the Japanese left-hander taking a match which arguably hinged on a lengthy second game.

Having lost the first 11-4, the Englishman recovered from 5-0 down in the second to bring up match points at 10-9, 11-10, 12-11 and 13-12, only for Niwa to take it 15-13 and Paul to earn a yellow card for hitting the ball out of court.

Niwa forced home his advantage, though Drinkhall did save three match points before Niwa won the fourth game 11-9 to seal his place in the last 32.

[Click here to watch Drinkhall v Niwa](#)

In the round of 128, Pitchford had seen a dogged Brian Afanador three times come from a set down to level the match, before the Englishman eventually won the decider 12-10. Afanador, from Puerto Rico, is ranked 104 places below Pitchford at 119 in the world, but took advantage of a patchy show by the 15th seed to stay in the game to the end.

It was ultimately Pitchford's self-belief that carried him over the line, even when his opponent closed from 7-9 to 9-9 and then saved a match point at 9-10 in the seventh. Pitchford's bellow upon winning may have been partly relief but was also a recognition that he had chiselled out an important win.

[Click here to watch Pitchford v Afanador](#)

In his last-128 tie, Drinkhall had beaten the higher-ranked Alvaro Robles of Spain in six, recovering from the loss of two match points in the fourth game.

Drinkhall, ranked at 105, won the opening two games on deuce and pulled ahead further to lead the fourth 10-8 against the world No 51. However, his opponent clawed back that game and the next, before Drinkhall closed it out in the sixth.

Also in the last 128, Jarvis could not repeat his heroics from yesterday, when he won two matches against higher-ranked opponents, as he went down to world No 50 Kazuhiro Yoshimura of Japan. Jarvis did level at 1-1, but his opponent pulled away to win 4-1.

[Click here to watch Jarvis v Yoshimura](#)

Walker also went out, losing 4-2 to world No 70 Jon Persson of Sweden, ranked 16 places above him. Persson opened a 3-0 lead – including taking the first game 11-1 – but Walker appeared to have reversed the momentum as he took the next two. However, Persson edged the sixth 11-9 to go through.

In the Women's Singles, Ho put up a good display against Lin Ye of Singapore, ranked 74 places above her at No 52 in the world. Twice Ho came from a game down to level, before bowing out in six.

Tsapsinos had an even bigger rankings deficit to make up, giving away 130 places to world No 72 Lily Zhang of the USA. It proved too much to ask as Zhang won in four straight.

In the Men's Doubles, Pitchford & Jonathan Groth of Denmark, seeded 15, are into the last 16 thanks to a 4-1

victory over Robin Devos & Cedric Nuytinck of Belgium.

[Click here to watch Pitchford & Groth v Devos & Nuytinck](#)

Two other Home Countries players reached the singles round of 128. Scotland's Gavin Rumgay came close to upsetting world No 32 Kristian Karlsson of Sweden, three times leading before Karlsson came through 4-3 (11-7, 8-11, 11-6, 5-11, 11-8, 6-11, 4-11).

In the women's event, Charlotte Carey also went the distance, against world No 76 Lee Zion of South Korea, before exiting 4-3 (8-11, 8-11, 11-9, 13-11, 11-7, 5-11, 11-9).

Re-watch the preliminary rounds:

[Sam Walker vs Amir Hossein Hodaei](#)

[Tom Jarvis v Amalraj Anthony](#)

[Paul Drinkhall v Mattia Berardia](#)

[Sam Walker v Arturs Reinholds](#)

[Walker & Drinkhall v Freitas & Apolonia](#)

[Sam Walker & Tin-Tin Ho vs Santoo Shrestha & Nabita Shrestha](#)

Results

Men's Singles

Round of 128

Liam Pitchford bt Brian Afanador (PUR) 4-3 (12-10, 5-11, 11-5, 5-11, 11-6, 9-11, 12-10)

Paul Drinkhall bt Alvaro Robles (ESP) 4-2 (13-11, 12-10, 11-6, 11-13, 7-11, 11-7)

Kazuhiro Yoshimura (JPN) bt Tom Jarvis 4-1 (11-5, 8-11, 11-7, 11-4, 11-5)

Jon Persson (SWE) bt Sam Walker 4-2 (11-1, 11-9, 11-9, 3-11, 8-11, 11-9)

Round of 64

Koki Niwa (JPN) bt Drinkhall 4-0 (11-4, 15-13, 11-5, 11-9)

Wang Yang (SVK) bt Pitchford 4-0 (11-3, 13-11, 12-10, 11-6)

Women's Singles

Round of 128

Lily Zhang (USA) bt Maria Tsaptsinos 4-0 (11-7, 11-9, 11-5, 11-3)

Lin Ye (SGP) bt Tin-Tin Ho 4-2 (11-3, 9-11, 12-10, 5-11, 11-7, 11-4)

Men's Doubles

Round of 32

Liam Pitchford (ENG) & Jonathan Groth (DEN) bt Robin Devos & Cedric Nuytinck (BEL) 4-1 (9-11, 11-9, 11-8, 11-7, 11-7)

Round of 16

Ovidiu Ionescu (ROM) & Alvaro Robles (ESP) bt Liam Pitchford (ENG) & Jonathan Groth (DEN) 4-1 (11-7, 11-6, 11-9, 9-11, 11-8)

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