

Portugal end GB's European Games bid

Author: Paul Stimpson

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Great Britain went out of the European Games in Minsk as they were beaten 3-1 by Portugal in the quarter-finals.

Liam Pitchford gave them hope as he overturned a 2-1 deficit to beat Tiago Apolonia 3-2 in the third match, but it could not stem the tide as Portugal set up a semi-final against Germany.

Pitchford & Paul Drinkhall were beaten 3-1 in the opening doubles by Apolonia & Joao Monteiro, and it was also 3-1 in the second match, Marcos Freitas recovering from losing the opening game to defeat Sam Walker in a close match.

Pitchford got Team GB back in it, and when Walker took the first game against Monteiro, the fightback began to look on.

But Walker was edged out 14-12 in the second and Freitas won the next two in equally close fashion – 9 and 9 – to seal the overall victory.

Afterwards, Pitchford said: "It's disappointing. We had chances in every match, we tried a different order of play and tried to get a good start in doubles. It didn't quite work out for us but we were still in the match – Sam had his chances in both matches and I managed to win."

Reflecting on the close nature of Walker's defeats, Pitchford added: "With a little bit more experience, maybe he would have taken the chances, but he played against two very good players with a lot of experience. He played well all tournament and that will give him a lot of confidence even after the defeats – it's a good learning curve."

Result

Portugal 3 Great Britain 1

Joao Monteiro & Tiago Apolonia bt Liam Pitchford & Paul Drinkhall 3-1 (11-7, 11-6, 4-11, 11-8)

Marcos Freitas bt Sam Walker 3-1 (8-11, 11-9, 11-8, 11-8)

Pitchford bt Apolonia 3-2 (11-8, 6-11, 8-11, 11-3, 11-7)

Monteiro bt Walker 3-1 (5-11, 14-12, 11-9, 11-9)

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