

Chinese Stars progress to the final

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18 year-old Chinese sensation Liu Shiwen, a member of the Chinese National team since 2004 had to show all of her battling qualities to get the better of 23 year-old Feng Tianwei (Singapore) in a fast and furious Ladies Singles Semi-Final. Liu Shiwen sneaked home in the first game 11-9 and looked to be in control in the second end leading 8-5 despite having made a poor start. Her opponent had other ideas and following her best prolonged spell of play the Singapore ace, the World no. seven, not only won the second game but took the third end as well. An upset was on the cards. The Chinese girl was having none of it, blessed with deceptive power which belies her 1.59 metres / 5 foot 1" height and 46 KGs frame she can launch herself into even the widest placed shots with vigour. She gives the impression that she expects to get her bat to everything that is thrown at her. The fourth game was closely fought, perhaps the most compelling of the whole match, but, after losing it Feng Tianwei's challenge never reached the same heights. Game to Liu Shiwen 11-9, 8-11, 11-13, 11-8, 11-6, 11-2.

Liu Shiwen will be joined in the Final by her team-mate and the no. two seed Guo Yan. The 25 year-old, a nine times winner on the Pro-Tour had to take the patient approach against 32 year-old Kim Kyung Ah (Korea) whose defensive play and concentration has captivated the audience over the last three days. You might have expected the Korean ace to have gradually ground down the Chinese attacker (after all that is the script you used to expect in these type of matches), but, no, you suspect the Chinese players have spent hours working on their tactics and technique for such an occasion. The composed Guo Yan shaded the fifth game 11-8, a game Kim Kyung Ah will feel she had to take. Suddenly, Guo Yan had the look and the bounce of a Finalist and as hard as the gallant Kim Kyung Ah tried she had no answer in the sixth end. Guo Yan won 11-9, 9-11, 9-11, 11-9, 11-8, 11-1.

Image: Liu Shiwen, courtesy tabletennisphotos.com

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