

An Englishman Abroad!

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The Pro Tour Grand Finals are a prestigious event and for the first time it is one that an English player is appearing in, Paul Drinkhall qualified with his win in Poland, placing him within the top 8 of the Pro Tour standings for players that have competed in 4 events in at least two continents. Just reaching this event is quite a landmark in this young players career, to top it off he was the only player in the U21 Boys that didn't come from the Far East!

These top 8 qualifiers are split into two groups, the top two of which qualify to go straight into the semi-finals.

Unfortunately for Paul he didn't make it out of the group stage. His first opponent was Kenji Matsudaira from Japan, who had taken him to 2-1, before eventually succumbing.

"I played Paul three or four years ago on the ITTF Pro Tour, it was the first time I'd played on the ITTF Pro Tour and I lost", said kenji Matsudaira. "Today I felt much more confident than last time we met; I've been playing in the German League, so I think that's helped every part of my game."

Kenji Matsudaira (JPN) bt Paul Drinkhall (ENG) 4-2 (11-5, 9-11, 10-12, 11-4, 13-11, 11-6)

Paul then faced Chen Chien-An from Chinese Taipei, whom after a close first set then proceeding to take the next three and the overall win 4-0.

Chen Chien-An (TPE) bt. Paul Drinkhall (ENG) 4-0 (11-9, 11-1, 11-6, 11-5)

His final group stage opponent was the Korean Kim Min Seok, this battle proved to be another close confrontation, with both sides swapping the lead until at 3-2 up Drinkhall was unable to reply, 4-2 to Kim Min Seok.

Kim Min Seok (KOR) bt Paul Drinkhall (ENG) 4-2 (12-10, 4-11, 11-5, 6-11, 13-11, 11-9)

The overall title, look so many do, went home to China when Lin Gaoyuan bt. Seo Hyun Deok 4-3.

Lin Gaoyuan (CHN) bt. Seo Hyun Deok (KOR) 4-3 (15-13, 9-11, 11-8, 5-11, 11-3, 6-11, 5-11)

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