



Brilliant England blow away hosts Japan

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Posted On: November 06, 2019

England caused a sensation on the opening day of the ZEN-NOH ITTF Team World Cup as they beat hosts Japan 3-1.

Liam Pitchford led the way with two brilliant victories over world No 5 and Japanese poster boy Tomokazu Harimoto and world No 11 Koki Niwa to seal the victory.

Pitchford's first win saw him repeat his victories over Harimoto in the same event in London last year and also in last year's World Team Championships, though in contrast to those 3-0 scorelines this one went the distance as Pitchford took it 3-2 (6-11, 11-7, 11-8, 9-11, 11-8).

That made the score 1-1 after the opening doubles had seen Paul Drinkhall & Tom Jarvis beaten in three straight by Niwa & Maharu Yoshimura.

Drinkhall then recovered from 2-1 down to Yoshimura (WR 48) to take the decider 11-9 and put England in front, and Pitchford brought it home with a superb 3-0 (8, 10, 5) victory over Niwa.

After [#TeamEngland](#) shocked [#TeamJapan](#), we got the full lowdown of what happened through the [#CiscoJapan](#) at [#Tokyo2019](#) [@Cisco_Japan](#) [#ITTFWorldCup](#) [pic.twitter.com/L2pmxfIMoe](#)

— ITTF World (@ittfworld) [November 6, 2019](#)

Afterwards, Pitchford told the ITTF website: "We showed again today that we are a good team and we can beat any player in the singles but we just need to work on our doubles.

"It was a good feeling winning against Japan in such a beautiful hall. We have learnt to stay together and also have fun together and this has made us stronger as a team."

Jarvis added: "I have been part of the team for quite some years and so I am very happy being part of the victory.

"For me as long as I play more matches, I think I will continue to improve and also help the team."

England play their second and final group match against Austria at 1am UK time on Thursday, with Japan versus Austria taking place this morning.

Elsewhere in the tournament, the other top seeds in their groups – China, Germany and South Korea – all started with 3-0 victories over Nigeria, Australia and USA respectively.

Watch the matches

Click on the links below to watch the matches on iTTV (registration required)

[Drinkhall & Jarvis v Niwa & Yoshimura](#)

[Pitchford v Harimoto](#)

[Drinkhall v Yoshimura](#)

[Pitchford v Niwa](#)

Result

Group B

England 3 Japan 1

Koki Niwa & Maharu Yoshimura bt Paul Drinkhall & Tom Jarvis 3-0 (11-7, 11-6, 11-7)

Liam Pitchford bt Tomokazu Harimoto 3-2 (6-11, 11-7, 11-8, 9-11, 11-8)

Drinkhall bt Yoshimura 3-2 (11-2, 4-11, 7-11, 11-3, 11-9)

Pitchford bt Niwa 3-0 (11-8, 12-10, 11-5)

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