



GB men's Olympic team dreams are over

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Great Britain's dreams of qualifying a men's team for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics were ended tonight after Hungary defeated them at the qualifying tournament in Portugal.

Having lost to Croatia on Friday – when victory would have seen them qualify – the men's squad of Liam Pitchford, Paul Drinkhall, Sam Walker and Tom Jarvis knew their only chance was to win three more matches in the second stage of the competition.

But Great Britain, seeded seventh in the tournament, were beaten 3-1 by Hungary, who were ranked 17th.

The GB team were put under pressure early on when Hungary's Nandor Ecseki & Adam Szudi found themselves with a 10-5 lead in the first game. GB showed some fight, saving three game points before losing 8-11.

Fortunes were reversed in the second as the English pair took a swift 11-6 win, equalling the score at 1-1.

GB continued to pull ahead in the third, leading all the way until 9-6. However the Hungarian duo didn't drop a point after that and pulled ahead 2-1 with an 11-9 win.

In the fourth, Drinkhall and Walker once again led for the majority of the game. But soon Hungary levelled the score once more – this time at 8-8 – and then took the next three consecutive points to secure a 3-1 victory.

Next up was Liam Pitchford against world ranked 59 Bence Majoros.

The first game was tight, with the pair battling point by point from 9-9, but eventually Pitchford pulled through to win it 13-11. He then took the second set swiftly with an 11-6 win, followed up with an 11-9 win in the third and final set to give GB a 3-0 win, and even the match score at 1-1.

It was then down to Drinkhall to play Adam Szudi. Drinkhall struggled to get a foothold in the first game, losing 11-6, but then turned the tables by taking the second 11-8. Szudi then took the lead 2-1 in the third, despite Drinkhall saving two game points, quickly followed by an 11-3 win to take the game and make it 2-1 to Hungary.

Next up was Pitchford against Ecseki, who has a world ranking of 139. The Hungarian took a strong lead in the first, and soon found himself 10-5 up. Pitchford saved three game points, but it wasn't enough, and Ecseki took an early 1-0 lead.

The Englishman then fought back in the second to take it 11-6. He continued his lead in the third and was 9-6 up, but Ecseki then took the next five consecutive points to win the game.

The fourth was closely fought, and there was all to play for as the score sat at 8-8, but once more Hungary didn't drop a point and went on to win 11-8, sealing victory and ending Great Britain's chances of qualifying a team for Tokyo 2020.

However, not all hope is gone yet – individual British players could still secure a spot at the Olympics through the singles qualification tournaments which take place in April and May.

Watch the matches

[Drinkhall & Walker vs Szudi & Ecseki](#)

[Pitchford vs Majoros](#)

[Drinkhall vs Szudi](#)

[Pitchford vs Ecseki](#)

Results

Hungary 3 Great Britain 1

Nandor Ecseki & Adam Szudi bt Paul Drinkhall & Sam Walker 3-1 (9-11, 11-7, 5-11, 7-11)

Liam Pitchford bt Bence Majoros 3-0 (13-11, 11-6, 11-9)

Szudi bt Drinkhall 3-1 (11-6, 8-11, 11-9, 11-3)

Ecseki bt Pitchford 3-1 (11-8, 6-11, 11-9, 11-8)

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