

Doran & Howieson lead the way in U21's

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Garry Dodd

Chris Doran and Craig Howieson qualified as Group winners in the Under 21 Mens Singles. Chris Doran (globally ranked no. 500) wasn't unduly pushed beating Mohammed Al-Saadi (the Qatar World no. 915) 11-2, 11-9, 11-8 and Daniel O'Connell (Wales' top Junior) 11-9, 11-4, 11-5. The vastly improved O'Connell came close to causing an upset, leading Al-Saadi 2-1 before missing out 11-8, 7-11, 11-6, 4-11, 7-11. Doran will face World no. 342 Philipp Floritz (Germany) in the first round of the Competition, to be played tonight at 19.00 hours.

Scottish no. two Craig Howieson was also a group winner, although his progress was rather more checkered. His win over England no. ten David McBeath (World no. 578) couldn't have been much closer. World no. 566 Howieson sneaked home 11-2, 11-5, 9-11, 10-12, 17-15. It wasn't that much easier against Gavin Maguire (Ireland) either. This time Craig came out on top 11-13, 12-10, 9-11, 11-8, 11-5. Craig clinched qualification by beating Lewis Williams (Wales) 10-12, 11-2, 11-3, 11-5. Craig plays Jeremy Petiot (France) the World no 346 tonight whilst David McBeath takes on Mattias Karlsson (Sweden) the World no. 196.

Another British player to make it through to the Competition Proper was Garry Dodd (Guernsey/ World no. 995)) a superb five game winner against England no. 11 Richard Andrews. Hard-hitting left-hander Dodd played magnificently in the fourth and fifth ends to win 6-11, 13-11, 4-11, 11-6, 11-5. Dodd's opponent in the Competition Proper will be England's top player – World no. 88 Paul Drinkhall.

Lewis Gray, England's no. six Junior made it safely through as a Group Runner-Up. He beat Sean Doherty (Scotland and World ranked no. 942) 11-8, 11-7, 11-6 to ensure he progressed. He will face the mighty Lee Sang Su (Korea, the World no. 66).

All-action Damien Nicholls, a 3-1 loser to Endika Diez (Spain) the World no. 524 made no mistake against Calum Main (Scotland's World no. 1472) and he won 12-10, 5-11, 11-2, 11-7. Damien can expect an open and furious confrontation in the Competition proper. He will face Seo Hyun Deok, the winner of this event in 2009 and a 4-2 victor yesterday against Chris Doran. Deok is currently ranked no. 83 globally.

Samuel Walker, one of England's brightest prospects, and like Lewis Gray, playing in his first ever English Open has also made it out of the Qualifying Groups. The England no. six Junior (World ranked no. 1189) scored a magnificent 3-2 win over World no. 768 Rodrigo Gilaberto (Argentina) 11-7, 11-7, 9-11, 8-11, 11-8. Sam's reward is a crack against top seed – World no. 38 Young Sik Jung.

Matthew Ware (England no. seven / World no. 689) missed out against World no. 657 Diogo Cravalho (Portugal) but he qualified with comfortable wins in his other two games. Matt made no mistake against Scott Barton (Scotland / World ranked no. 1568) winning 11-3, 11-2, 12-10 and against England no. 17 – Tom Maynard, cruising home 11-4, 11-7, 11-3. Matt takes on World no. 173 – Ma Liang (Singapore) who beat England no. three Danny Reed (World no. 247) 4-1 this morning.

Steve Kerns

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