

# English players find it hard going

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English players found it hard going on Friday 28 January 2011 as the pace moved up several gears in the English Open. As many of the Superstars of World Table Tennis (Wang Hao / Ma Lin / Gue Yan / Guo Yue / Liu Shiwen / Feng Tianwei) entered the arena so the English players made their departures.

A lot of hopes rested with Paul Drinkhall, an ITTF Pro Tour Champion in the Under 21 Singles on two previous occasions. This wasn't one of Paul's best days. Paul met an inspired opponent in the tall and powerful Patryk Chojnowski (Poland / World no. 274) and it didn't help Paul that he made a slow start. Although he fought back very strongly to level at 2-2 Paul was always behind in the decider. Chojnowski went through 11-7, 11-8, 4-11, 1-11, 11-4.

Darius Knight faced an even tougher second round opponent in the Under 21 Singles – second seed Kim Min Seok (Korea / World ranked no. 88). Darius played well but was unable to take an end. He lost 11-13, 5-11, 9-11.

Korea are dominating the Under 21 Mens Singles although the top seed Jung Young Sik (World no. 38) was defeated, and heavily as well. He was no match for Wong Chung Ting (Hong Kong / World no. 467) who stormed through 11-2, 11-5, 11-2. The other Korean seeds fared better. World no. 83 Seo Hyun Deok beat Honor Szocs (Romania / World no. 310) 11-5, 14-12, 11-9 whilst World no. 66 Lee Sang Su progressed 11-4, 11-7, 11-3 at the expense of Jeremy Petiot (France / World no. 346).

Second seed Kim Mim Seok, the winner against Darius Knight will meet Ma Liang (Singapore) in the Quarter-Final. Liang gave little away as he hammered Philipp Floritz (Germany) 11-6, 11-3, 11-2.

Liam Pitchford met his match in the Mens Singles against experienced campaigner Chen Weizing (Austria) still ranked no. 25 in the World and at one time an elite member of the World's top ten. Liam found Chen's defence virtually impregnable and at times he must have wondered what he had to do to win a long rally. Chen won pretty convincingly 11-7, 11-4, 11-3, 11-4.

There was no joy for Jo Parker either in the Ladies Singles. She faced the 2004 and 2008 Paralympic Champion, Poland's Natalia Partyka (World ranked no. 94). Jo fought hard but she was defeated in straight sets 6-11, 4-11, 12-14, 8-11.

Darius Knight made his departure from the Mens Singles at the hands of World no. 37 Par Gerrell (Sweden). After a breath-taking match, full of amazing away from the table rallies it was Par who went through 4-1 (11-5, 11-9, 8-11, 11-3, 12-10).

Steve Kerns

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