

Stunning Win For Thomas Konecny

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Thomas Konecny

The biggest shock of the 66th English Open so far took place in round two of the Mens Singles, when the World no. four / no. two seed Zhang Jike (China) – many people's tip to win the Mens Singles – lost to the World ranked no. 134 Thomas Konecny (Czech Republic) 4-2 (11-6, 3-11, 9-11, 11-7, 6-11, 9-11) – a result of stunning proportions. Konecny, whose current World ranking of 134 is a career-high can surely never have dreamed of this result. His previous best performance was reaching the last 32 in the Mens Singles in the 2003 Paris World Championships.

It was the end of the road for England's Paul Drinkhall and Andrew Baggaley as well. Both met the top stars and it was Paul Drinkhall who fared best. He took the second game off World no. nine / no. five seed Xu Xin (China) before losing 4-11, 11-6, 5-11, 5-11, 3-11. Paul hit some shots which had the crowd in raptures but his supremely athletic left-handed opponent hit some equally memorable winners.

Baggaley's opponent – Ryu Seung Min (Korea) has hit the heights in the Sport. As the 2004 Olympic Champion his place in the Sport's records is assured. His magnificent forehand looked as potent as ever as he blasted his way past Andrew 11-5, 11-7, 11-6, 11-3.

Elsewhere, the top players progressed to round three but not without problems. Three times World Singles Champion Wang Liqin (China) had to pull out all the stops to get the better of He Zhe Wen (Spain), the evergreen 49 year old Veteran whose tactics seemed to be crystal clear – "if you can get in before I kill the ball past you – you deserve to win". A somewhat bemused looking Wang Liqin, the 2001 English Open Champion won a remarkable match 6-11, 11-9, 13-11, 12-14, 11-9, 11-7.

1995 English Open Champion Damien Eloi (France) is now ranked no. 68 in the World. However, the diminutive French star produced some sparkling play against World no. 25 Chen Weixing (Austria). Some of the rallies were amazing. However, the Austrian defender is made of stern stuff. Weixing won 14-16, 11-6, 11-8, 11-7, 11-8.

Giant Greek defender Gionis Panagiotis is a remarkable retriever as well. He was clearly on good form in round one, disposing of Danish star Allan Bentsen 4-0 and he really made a game of it against World no. 13 – Oh Sang Eun (Korea). Gionios made a real charge for glory winning games three, four and five) but he couldn't maintain the momentum. Oh Sang Eun won 11-5, 11-7, 6-11, 9-11, 11-5, 11-6.

Number eight seed / World no. 14 Chen Qi (China) progressed, but he required seven games to do so. Gavlas Antonin (Czech Republic) World ranked no. 233, came close to pulling off another major shock (what would have been one of the most surprising wins in Pro Tour history) . He led 3-1 before eventually missing out 6-11, 11-7, 11-7, 11-8, 4-11, 6-11, 8-11.

Top seed Wang Hao looked a little jaded as well, against Cho Eon Rae (Korea). He wasn't at his brilliant best although he upped the ante considerably in the fifth and sixth games after making slow starts in both. Wang Hao beat the World no. 47 by a none too convincing 11-9, 9-11, 11-7, 6-11, 11-9, 11-7 margin.

2008 Olympic Champion and no. three seed Ma Lin fared better. He did not drop a game in disposing of Ko Lai Chak (Hong King), the World no. 42 – 11-8, 11-7, 11-5, 11-9.

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