

Chinese Monopoly in Mens Singles

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The big question that was being asked at the Mens Singles Quarter Final stage was could anyone prevent China having all four Semi-Finalists ?.

Korea's 2004 Olympic Mens Singles Champion Ryu Seung Min failed. He has only beaten Ma Lin once in 15 occasions, and he never came close in this match. 2008 Olympic Champion Ma Lin had things pretty much his own way. He won much easier than he might have expected : (4-1) 11-4, 11-4, 6-11, 11-1, 11-5.

He will be joined in the Semi-finals by Wang Hao. The World no. three and the 2009 World Singles Champion had a much harder test against World no. 13 Oh Sang Eun but he pulled through. A close second game held the key to the match and Wang Hao shaded it. He was on his way. Wang Hao won (4-1) 12-14, 12-10, 11-4, 11-8, 11-6.

The all-Chinese affair between one of the new stars of World Table Tennis – World no. nine Xu Xin, 21, and the 32 year-old three times World Champion Wang Liqin produced some of the most ferocious play ever seen in an English Open. A fantastic open encounter between one of the great players of the first ten years of the twenty first century and a player who will surely make it to the very top. Shades of that marvellous encounter between Jun Mizutani (Japan) and the Champion Ma Long in 2009 and going back further to that all-action encounter in the late 1980s between World no. one Jiang Jia Liang and a young Jorgen Persson . Wang Liqin, who holds the record of being the ITTF World no. one for the longest period (25 successive months from August 2000 to September 2002) was on great form. He had to be. He harried his lightning-quick opponent throughout, he matched his opponent's power with numerous rockets of his own and he won most of the away from the table rallies when Xu Xin attempted to lob him off (shades of a young Jan Ove Waldner perhaps). Write Wang Liqin off at your peril. The Chinese "Veteran", the 2001 English Open Mens Singles Champion won a truly marvellous spectacle 4-3, fighting back from 3-1 down to win 11-7, 13-15, 9-11, 8-11, 11-2, 13-11, 12-10.

Making it four Chinese players in the Semi-Final we have 26 year-old Chen Qi, the World no. 14 and a member of the Chinese National squad for 11 years. He showed all his experience by defeating Gao Ning (Singapore), the World no. 24. Not as explosive as his team-mates Chen Qi is nevertheless still a fantastic player with some amazing counter-topspin strokes. Chen Qi had the answers against Gao Ning when they were called for. Chen Qi won 4-1 (11-7, 11-5, 4-11, 11-8, 13-11).

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