

Ma Lin & Chen Qi Through To Mens Final

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Ma Lin

The players were greeted with cheers which you would more usually associate with the arrival of Rock-stars into the arena by the 500 strong Chinese contingent in the audience. Shades of the 2003 World Table Tennis Championships in Paris when the Chinese players had to be escorted along the stadium concourse by Police to keep the huge predominantly Chinese crowd at bay.

The expected fireworks never materialised in the first Mens Singles Semi-Final between Ma Lin and Wang Hao and although the game was compelling and reached the heights in the sixth end it wasn't a classic like their clash in the 2008 Olympic Singles Final. It had none of the unforgettable drama that yesterday evening's clash between Xu Xin and Wang Liqin provided. Ma Lin led 3-1 and although Wang Hao levelled at 3-3 the final set proved to be something of an anti-climax. The scores were tied at 5-5 but Wang Hao didn't produce the finish he was looking for. He lost 11-5 to give the 2008 Olympic Champion – Ma Lin a 6-11, 12-10, 11-5, 11-6, 9-11, 13-15, 11-5 victory.



Chen Qi

Ma Lin's opponent in the Final will be 26 year-old Chen Qi, the World no. 13 and no. eight seed who prevailed after seven hard fought games against the three times World Singles Champion Wang Liqin. Again, the game featured some amazing rallies although it lacked sustained ferocity. Chen Qi, perhaps the forgotten man of Chinese Table Tennis despite having won an Olympic Mens Doubles Gold medal in the 2004 Olympics as well as two World Championship Mens Doubles Gold medals finally emerged as the Winner of a marathon match 4-3 (11-13, 11-7, 11-8, 11-7, 9-11, 4-11, 12-10). Despite seeing Wang Liqin pull back a three point deficit to 10-10 in the deciding set Chen Qi kept his nerve magnificently executing chopped blocks on both deuce points to force errors from his opponent.

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