



Calderano up first for Pitchford at ITTF Finals

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Liam Pitchford will face Brazil's Hugo Calderano in the first round of the Bank of Communications 2020 ITTF Finals in China tomorrow – with a likely meeting against World No 1 Fan Zhendong waiting for the winner.

Pitchford, seeded No 12, will meet the sixth-ranked Calderano at 12.40pm UK time – details of how to watch are below. Top seed Fan faces No 11 seed Jeoung Youngsik of South Korea earlier tomorrow.

The England No 1 said of the draw: "It could have been worse – I've avoided the Chinese in the first round, so that's a bonus, and hopefully I can get through and challenge them in the second round.

"I've beaten Calderano the last couple of times I've played him, but he's No 6 in the world for a reason and is a great player, so I'll have to play well to have a chance.

"Every match is tough, the top players in the world are playing, so I've got to go out and be on my game every point. It can go either way, but I'm going in confident I can win."

Pitchford has a 3-0 head-to-head record against Calderano, beating him 4-2 at the Swedish Open in 2016 and then twice in 2018 – 3-0 at the Copper Box as England hosted the ITTF Team World Cup and 4-1 in the last 32 of the China Open.



Hugo Calderano (serving) in action at the ITTF Team World Cup in England in 2018, where he lost to Liam Pitchford

How to watch

The match will be streamed live on the [itTV website](https://www.itv.com) (registration required) and is scheduled to start at 12.40pm UK time on Thursday.

It will also be shown live on Eurosport, with coverage beginning at 12.40pm. FreeSports also has live coverage, beginning at 11am UK time.

Pitchford said: "It's better for people watching in Europe, so that's always a bonus."

The Chesterfield man experienced the other side of the TV cameras during the Men's World Cup last week, when he was asked to be co-commentator on FreeSports' coverage of the semi-finals and medal matches.

He said: "They asked me if I was interested before the tournament and then I spoke to them again the day before and I said I would give it a go.

"I was a bit nervous but hopefully it sounded all right. I was backing up the main commentator and giving some insight into what the players would be thinking.

"I've had a few messages saying it was all right, and that it was good to get a bit of insight from a top player. I would do it again – but hopefully I won't be able to because I'm still in the tournament."

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