



## Pitchford into Champions League quarters

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Liam Pitchford's double put his UMMC team into the Champions League quarter-finals thanks to a 3-1 overall victory against Sporting Clube de Portugal.

Having won their first match with ease yesterday against Enfireex Ostrava from the Czech Republic, a tougher match was expected against the Portuguese, and so it proved.

Jonathan Groth gave Russian side UMMC the lead in a match which literally went down to 'next point wins' at 5-5 in the fifth set – deciding sets being played on a first to six points basis. Groth, who had been 2-0 down in sets, took the golden point against Diogo Carvalho to put the first victory on the board.

Pitchford then made it 2-0, also in a decider, though it was a less dramatic 6-1 in that final set against Thiago Monteiro. The final scoreboard showed 3-2 (13-11, 7-11, 11-8, 5-11, 6-1) in favour of the Englishman.

UMMC had to wait for victory as Bode Abiodun reduced the arrears with a 3-2 win over Tomislav Pucar, but Pitchford started like a rocket against Carvalho and, although he missed three match points in losing the third, made no mistake in the next set to complete a 3-1 (11-2, 11-6, 10-12, 11-4) victory.

It means UMMC are guaranteed to top their group and go through to the knockout stage, which starts on Tuesday.

Sam Walker's Hennebont team, who won their first match, were defeated 3-0 in their second against highly-fancied Borussia Dusseldorf.

Walker again did not feature as his team-mates Anders Lind, Cedric Nuytinck and Omar Assar were beaten by Kristian Karlsson, Timo Boll and Anton Kallberg respectively – though Lind and Assar both went to a deciding set, with Assar beaten 6-5 on a 'golden point'.

But Hennebont will go through to the quarter-finals if they defeat Netherlands side De Boer Taverzo – who have lost their previous two matches – in their final tie at 4pm UK time on Sunday. Watch live on [ETTU TV](#).

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