



Pitchford victory puts UMMC into last four

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Liam Pitchford chiselled out the vital victory as his UMMC side reached the last four of the Champions League with a 3-1 victory over Bogoria Mazowiecki of Poland – but Sam Walker’s Hennebont went out in the quarter-finals.

Pitchford, while not at his fluent best, had enough in the tank to defeat Marek Badowski 3-1 (11-6, 11-8, 5-11, 11-9) in the fourth tie of the match to seal victory for the Russian side.

Earlier, Pitchford had missed chances in the opening match of the tie, against Pavel Sirucek of the Czech Republic. Having lost the first 11-6 to the world No 51, Pitchford led 10-7 in the second, only to see Sirucek take it 13-11.

The Englishman reduced the arrears by taking the next 11-6, and he led the fourth 5-0 and 9-6 – but again Sirucek came back to win, despite serving off on his first match point at 10-9. The final score was 3-1 (11-6, 13-11, 6-11, 12-10) to the Czech.

Jonathan Groth levelled the match with a 3-1 (11-7, 11-2, 9-11, 11-7) win over Badowski and Tomislav Pucar put UMMC ahead as he came from behind to defeat Milosz Redzimski 3-1 (8-11, 11-8, 11-9, 11-6).

Sam Walker’s Hennebont did not make it through, despite a heroic performance against Saarbrucken. Walker did not feature but saw his team-mates win the first two matches, Cedric Nuytinck beating Patrick Franziska in four and Omar Assar overcoming Shang Kun in three.

But Saarbrucken turned it around as the next three matches all went to deciding sets. Darko Jorgic started the comeback with a 3-2 (14-12, 5-11, 15-13, 10-12, 6-3) victory over Anders Lind and Kun then came from 2-0 down to defeat Nuytinck 3-2 (6-11, 6-11, 11-6, 11-6, 6-4).

It all came down to Franziska versus Assar for a place in the last four, and this time it was the Hennebont player who fought back from 2-0 down to level. However, the German shaded the sudden-death set to complete a 3-2 (14-12, 11-9, 7-11, 9-11, 6-4) victory.

It means Thursday's semi-finals are both between German and Russian clubs – UMMC take on Borussia Dusseldorf at 4pm UK time, followed at 7.30pm by Orenburg versus Saarbrucken.

You can watch the action live on [ETTU TV](#).

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