



## Pitchford's Champions League campaign is over

**Author:** Paul Stimpson

**Posted On:** December 17, 2020

Liam Pitchford's Champions League dream will have to wait for another year at least as his UMMC team were defeated in the semi-finals by Borussia Dusseldorf.

The English No 1 was only No 3 in the line-up, perhaps the result of some inconsistent form, and he went into his match with the tie poised at 1-1 – Jonathan Groth putting UMMC in front by beating Kristian Karlsson 3-0 (11-8, 11-8, 11-3) and Timo Boll levelling by seeing off Tomislav Pucar 3-0 (11-6, 11-8, 11-6).

Pitchford continued his up-and-down tournament as he took on Anton Kallberg, exemplified in the first game as he came from 1-5 and 6-9 down to win 12-10. However, that did not prove to be the kick-start he needed as the Swede took the next two.

Pitchford came back to take the fourth 13-11 – he did not face any match points – but never recovered from going 2-0 down in the short decider, which he lost 6-3 to complete a 3-2 (10-12, 11-7, 11-5, 11-13, 6-3) scoreline in Kallberg's favour.

The fourth match was a thriller as Groth took on Boll, the two left-handers both refusing to buckle as they came under pressure in turns. That was no more evident that in the fourth as Groth, who was trailing 2-1 in games, finally took his ninth game point, after also saving four Boll match points. Boll serving off produced an anti-climactic end to the set, the score an 'old-school' 21-19.

Given what had gone before, it was therefore something of a surprise when Groth took the decider 6-0 – the final score was 3-2 (11-5, 10-12, 6-11, 21-19, 6-0).

So it came down to Pucar v Karlsson for a place in the final and with both having lost their first match, something had to give. It was the Swede Karlsson who stepped up, winning the first and coming from behind to win a pivotal second game 11-9.

Pucar flung his bat in frustration at the end of that game and was a spent force thereafter, Karlsson wrapping up a 3-0 (11-9, 11-9, 11-2) victory for the German side.

Dusseldorf will face Saarbrücken in an all-German final after Saarbrücken defeated Orenburg 3-1 in the other semi-final. Shang Kun and Patrick Franziska both beat Marcos Freitas and Kun defeated Vladimir Samsonov for the Germans, who have never before reached the final. Dimitrij Ovtcharov put Orenburg on the board in the third match, overcoming Darko Jorgic.

**Downloaded From:**

<https://newsarchive.tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/archived/pitchfords-champions-league-campaign-is-over/>