



## Olympic reflections: Paul Drinkhall

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Paul Drinkhall was the most successful of the athletes, [beating Iran's Nima Alamian](#) and then – for the first time in his career – [Austria's Robert Gardos](#), before exiting in the third round at the hands of No 9 seed Jang Woojin, against whom he won the first game and had a chance to take a 2-0 lead.

He said: "I'm disappointed, obviously. I feel I'm in a good place, in good shape and playing well, and mentally good. I feel I had the chance not to take a huge lead, but at 1-0 and 9-7 I felt in control at that moment. I don't necessarily think I did anything wrong, I just didn't take full advantage of that situation and he did.

"Once it went to 1-1, it was more of a 50-50 match and on too many occasions I was chasing it even though I was still in it.

"But he's a very good player and he made it very difficult for me even when I was controlling it. He doesn't make any easy mistakes and everything you get from him, you have to work for.

"I was 5-1 up and again, without me doing much wrong, he went on a run and went 6-5 up. It was two players playing to the best of their games, and that's going to happen.

"Results aside, the way I performed and the consistency at that level is something I've been working on and I think I'm getting somewhere with it. I still believe I can go a lot further and higher but it's a positive that I'm consistently pushing the top guys and if I keep training well and training smarter, I can keep improving.

"It's only three years to the next Olympics in Paris and that's a good thing. I'm on a path which I'm happy with. If I keep doing the work and get there in a good place, it should be really exciting.

"There's also the Commonwealth Games next year – there's a lot of big competitions before then, but Birmingham and Paris are the two big targets. Sports events are getting spectators back in, so next year should be a really good Games."

The three-time Olympian said the atmosphere in the Olympic Village was still great, despite the covid

restrictions.

"You come here to compete in a table tennis tournament at the end of the day, but it's great to be part of Team GB," said Drinkhall. "They've done a great job keeping it safe for everyone and keeping a team spirit.

"There's no spectators and not really much fun in the team village and mealtimes are more of a hassle, but we are where we are and it's been fantastic to get out there, even though it's straight out and off after the competition.

"Thanks to everybody for their support, it's been really good across social media and through Team GB, and thanks to Team GB for putting on a great Games for everybody."

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