



Ma Long completes golden double

Author: [Paul Stimpson](#)

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Ma Long became the first man to defend his Olympic Men's Singles table tennis title as he beat compatriot and top seed Fan Zhendong 4-2 (11-4, 10-12, 11-8, 11-9, 3-11, 11-7) in Tokyo.

The Rio 2016 champion, seeded two, triumphed in the all-Chinese final and said afterwards: "I think both Fan Zhendong and myself achieved our goal of making it an All-China final. We are now determined to get the gold medal again for the Team's event.

"I was enjoying myself and did not put too much pressure on myself today. You have just got to go out there and do your best. If your opponent makes a mistake, you take advantage of it. I managed to do all of that today.

"When you play against a quality player like Fan, you must be in top form and cannot afford to make too many mistakes. I guess I have the experience of winning on the biggest stage, including the Olympics, and that probably gave me the edge over him today.

"It's nice to see all the compliments about me. I want to continue playing table tennis for as long as I can. I like to thank my team and my family for their support and encouragement all these years."

Germany's Dimitrij Ovtcharov won the bronze medal, saving four match points against Chinese Taipei's Lin Yun-Ju, en route to a 4-3 (13-11, 9-11, 6-11, 11-4, 4-11, 15-13, 11-7) victory. It was his second men's singles bronze after London 2012.

China continued their domination of the table tennis medals as Ma Long's triumph added to Chen Meng's Women's Singles success in another all-Chinese final against Sun Yingsha, the top seed winning 4-2 (9-11, 11-6, 11-4, 5-11, 11-4, 11-9) against the No 2 seed.



Chen Meng reacts to her victory (ITTF photo)

Chen Meng said: "I can finally laugh now because it has been pretty intense the last few days. I was very nervous during the match because both Sun and myself really wanted to fulfil our personal goal of winning the gold medal. We matched each other well but I believe what gave me the edge was probably my experience.

"We have got two days of rest before we go again with the Team's event. I want to bring home the gold medal for China in the Team's event again. All I want to do is to admire my gold medal now."

Japan's Mima Ito took bronze by beating Singapore's Yu Mengyu across five games (6-11, 11-8, 11-7, 11-7, 11-6).

It was a second medal of the event for Ito, who combined with Jun Mizutani as second seeds to win a sensational Mixed Doubles gold, defeating top seeds Xu Xin & Liu Shiwen 4-3 (5-11, 7-11, 11-8, 11-9, 11-9, 6-11, 11-6) – Japan's first ever table tennis gold.

Mizutani said: "I'm just so proud. We knew the Chinese pair were very strong, and we knew we would have to give 150%! Even then, we weren't sure if we would have enough to overcome them.

"I really feel the Olympic Games is a special occasion. At the last Olympics in Rio, I won against Xu Xin, and now today I have enjoyed a second miracle."

Ito added: "I'm just so, so happy! 0-2 was very tough, but I switched my mindset, and after that, I was able to play more to my style. I really thought I shouldn't be mentally defeated. I felt a great deal of pressure at 0-2, but I knew I could overcome it with my partner.

"I just enjoy the Olympic Games so much because there are lots of unpredictable elements."

The bronze went to Chinese Taipei's Lin Yun-Ju and Cheng I-Ching, the No 3 seeds, with a 4-0 win over France's Emmanuel Lebesson and Yuan Jia Nan, seeded eighth (11-8, 11-7, 11-8, 11-5).



Jun Mizutani and Mima Ito (ITTF photo)

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