

Shock exit for Ma Lin

Author: Paul Stimpson

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Surprise victor Alexey Liventsov

The China Open has started with a bang as China's Ma Lin has been knocked out in the first round of his home tournament after a 4-3 defeat to Alexey Liventsov.

The world number 3 Lin was hoping for a successful run at the Harmony 2011 China Open but came up against the inspired Liventsov, who defied his world ranking of 120 to pull off a dramatic victory.

The reigning Olympic champion fell 2-0 down and 3-1 down before fighting back to take it to a final game, however, Liventsov held strong and took the decider 11-7 to seal the greatest win of his career.

Dong Wang, the ITTF Media Consultant, told how the Russian was ruining his luck when the draw was announced. The Russian said: "When I saw the draw, I felt so unlucky as I would face Ma Lin. Then I told myself I have nothing to lose."

Liventsov, who was still walking on cloud nine, added: "To me, the victory is like a dream come true, I am really proud of my performance today. I need to digest the fact that I actually won over the reigning Olympic champion here."

Lin meanwhile, was pushed to the limit to level the scores after trailing but he fell apart in the seventh. He attributed his defeat to his bad training schedule and was clearly dejected after his first round loss: "I am not training systematically. Today, I simply dared not use my backhand very often, which gave my opponent a chance to attack back easily."

Alexey Liventsov bt Ma Lin 4-3 (11-5, 11-2, 7-11, 11-9, 3-11, 9-11, 11-7)

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