

Darius drops out of U21s with fighting spirit

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Darius Knight just misses out on a big win

DARIUS DROPS SECOND UNDER 21 SINGLES MATCH AFTER A GOOD START

Twenty-one year old Darius Knight will be disappointed to have lost his second under 21 men's singles group match at the ITTF Pro Tour Finals being held at the ExCel Arena, London. He was within a point of taking a three games to one lead over penholder Hung Tzu-Hsiang of Chinese Taipei, who he had beaten on their previous encounter.

Darius was on fine form as he grabbed the first two games, both 11-7, with good serves, and strong forehand loops, particularly to Hung's backhand, supported by solid backhands of his own. Unfortunately, he lost his rhythm in the third game, losing the first 6 points and then going down 2-11.

The Englishman came back to be leading 11-10 in the fourth game, and so nearly took the game point. After Hung's time-out call, Darius used his serve to set-up at a forehand topspin but just missed the follow-up off Hung's blocked return. Unfortunately, Knight then lost to next two points and the game. With Hung growing in confidence and also causing problems with his short serve, Knight was unable to get back in full contention and was beaten 11-7, 11-7, 2-11, 11-13, 6-11, 7-11.

He next plays the rising Korean super star Kim Min Seok, the top seed, who was surprisingly taken to a deciding game by Chen Feng (Singapore) after Chen saved four match points in the sixth game. But Kim, who has similarities to a young Jan Ove Waldner, particularly in how he parries back from the table with his backhand, made no mistake in the seventh game to triumph 8-11, 11-9, 11-7, 11-3, 4-11, 13-15, 11-6.

Ken Muhr

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