

Knight holds head high at Grand Finals

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Darius Knights fights at the ExCeL

Darius Knight may have been knocked out in the under-21s event at the ITTF Pro Tour Grand Finals with three successive defeats but with his short preparation time before the competition he can be pleased with his efforts.

None of his matches were by any means a walkover as he took games off all three of his opponents: Kim Min Seok, Chen Feng and Hung Tzu-Hsiang.

In fact, in his second match against the lively Hung he led 2-0 in games after taking the first two games 11-7. He had the seventh seed worried when he led 11-10 in the fourth game, which could have seen him take a 3-1 lead and quite probably the match. However, the Chinese Taipei player cleverly used a timeout and saved the game – eventually taking it 13-11, and thus, the balance of power had shifted.

Despite being outplayed in his final game, Knight still managed to fight back and take a game off the first seed Min Seok from Korea, who has a world ranking of 28.

It was Knight's fighting spirit that endeared the home crowd behind him and despite his defeats he was still applauded off the playing area.

Next up for Britain will be Paul Drinkhall and Joanna Parker who will have huge tasks on their hands when they face respective tough Chinese opponents.

Drinkhall will face Wang Hao in the men's singles first round while Parker will play Ding Ning in the women's draw. If either player manages an upset then it will surely go down as the greatest upset in the history of the ITTF Pro Tour Grand Finals. Both players real ambitions will be to take as many games off their Asian counterparts as they can.

By Russell Moore

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