Guo Yan progresses in epic

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Guo Yan thoroughly tested in a classic game

Guo Yan wins classic attack versus defender clash

Those spectators who love a classic no nonsense battle between the orthodox attacker and a defender of the highest class will have loved the first round of
Ladies singles matches in the ITTF Pro Tour Finals. They were treated to close to an hour of pulsating and at times breath-taking table tennis. Top seed Guo Yan (China) the current World no. three prevailed over six games but how well the Korean defender Park Mi Young (the World no. 24) played. A spell-bound audience would have loved to have seen the game go to a decider. Guo Yan had other ideas and she retrieved a 4-1 deficit in the sixth game to win 11-5, 6-11, 11-5, 11-8, 10-12, 11-9.

'Definitely' through to the next round (to use an increasingly common expression on British television) are former World no. one and 2011 Ladies Singles semi-finalist in the World Championships – Liu Shiwen (China). Liu Shiwen barely put a foot wrong as she powered her way past World no. 15 Sayaka Hirano (Japan) 11-4, 11-8, 11-4, 11-2.

The third Chinese player through is the 2007 World Champion and 2008 Olympic Bronze medallist Guo Yue. A Pro Tour Ladies Doubles winner at the age of 13 she defeated another former child prodigy, the current World no. eight – Ai Fukuhara over seven fluctuating games of lightning counter-hitting. Fukuhara levelled at 3-3 but it was Yue who always looked the more likely winner in the decider. She triumphed 7-11, 11-3, 11-7, 9-11, 11-7, 7-11, 11-5.

The final game was an all Singapore affair and it went in accordance with the current World rankings. World no. nine and no. seven seed Wang Yuegu defeated her team-mate, the fourth-placer in both the 2004 and 2008 Ladies Singles in the Olympic Games – Li Jiawei, the current World no. 18 – 11-6, 11-2, 11-8, 11-9.

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