

Friday morning session review

Author: Paul Stimpson

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Number one seed Kim Min Seok reached under-21s final

Under 21 Singles Finalists decided

Kazumi Ishikawa (Japan) and Jeon Ji Hee (Korea) became the first two Finalists in the ITTF Pro Tour Finals at the Excel Arena. Ishikawa, the 18 year-old top seed finished strongly to beat Lee Ho Chiang (Hong Kong) 4-1 after having trailed 2-1. She will meet Jeon Ji Hee (Korea) in the Final of the Under 21 Ladies Singles. Jeon Ji Hee, the World no. 33 beat Ng Wing Nam (Hong Kong) 4-1.

The crowd-pleasing and supremely athletic Kim Min Seok (Korea), the top seed finished strongly to beat Chen Chien An (Chinese Taipei) 4-2 in the Under 21 Mens Singles. Seok is happy to back off from the table and his style has in some quarters been likened to a young Jan-Ove Waldner.

He certainly moves incredibly well and his games have been some of the most aesthetically pleasing so far. Seok will face Chen Feng (Singapore) in the Final. Feng, aged 17 and the World no. 158 "hit the Jackpot" by defeating World no. 31 – Lee Sang Su (Korea) 4-2 – the biggest upset in the tournament to date.

The Mens Doubles lacked some of the passion evident in the Singles. Doubles is no longer part of the Olympic Games except as part of the Team event. The English pairing – Andrew Baggaley / Liam Pitchford took the first game against the Chinese top seeds – Ma Lin / Zhang Jike but they weren't able to build on it. The Chinese aces prevailed 4-1. They will meet the Doubles Specialists – Daniel Habesohn / Robert Gardos (Austria) who beat Chuang Chih-Yuan / Wu Chih-Chi (Chinese Taipei) 14-12, 11-9, 11-7, 11-7.

In the bottom half of the draw the power-horse Chinese partnership of Wang Hao and Ma Long (can anyone think of a more explosive partnership?) were locked at 2-2 with the free-flowing Portuguese aces – Joao Monteiro / Tiago Apolonia. Time to move up a gear! The Chinese pair won 9-11, 11-4, 10-12, 12-10, 11-4, 11-2.

They will meet the the third seeds in the Semi-Final. Yang Zi and Zhan Jian (Singapore) fought back from 3-1 behind to overcome Tianyi Jiang / Peng Teng (Hong Kong) 11-1, 9-11, 7-11, 7-11, 11-9, 14-12, 12-10 – the closest game of the Tournament so far.

Steve Kerns

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