

Ma Lin and Zhang Jike win classic doubles final

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Ma Lin and Zhang Jike beat their Chinese compatriots in the final

Chinese doubles superstars made it two major titles in a row when Ma Lin and Jike Zhang, the No 1 seeds took the doubles title at the ITTF Pro Tour Grand Finals event at the Excel Arena tonight.

Earlier in the year they beat the same two players Ma Long and Wang Lao at the All Chinese Championships and they did it again here in London.

But it was mighty close and went all the way with the Chinese top seeds eventually winning 4-3 in a match lasting just over an hour.

It was Long and Wang who swept into a 3-1 lead and for a time it looked as if Lin and Zhang would be unable to repeat of their earlier success.

Slowly they pulled their opponents back with some superb attacking that left the audience spellbound by the athleticism of all four players.

Ma Lin, as laid back as usual, was in spectacular form as they closed the gap to level at 3-3.

This was exciting stuff even though world champion Zhang Jike seemed to be struggling with a knee injury, but with the help of Ma Lin they managed to pull through to win the seventh game and the match.

This was table tennis of the very highest quality but left a question mark about Zhang's fitness for his singles final tomorrow.

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