

Liu Shiwen triumphant in womens' singles

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Champion Liu Shiwen won 4-0 in the final against compatriot Ding Ning

Brilliant Liu Shiwen captures Ladies Pro Tour Crown

20 year-old Liu Shiwen, a four times ITTF Pro Tour Champion and the 2009 Ladies World Cup winner belied her current World no. 5 ranking to capture the 2011 ITTF Pro Tour Grand Finals Ladies Singles crown with some of the speediest all-out attacking table tennis ever seen in this country.

Some of the changes of direction in a fantastic match against World no. one Ding Ning had to be seen to be believed. Liu Shiwen, a runner-up in the 2009 English Pro Tour in Sheffield appeared to have added an extra ingredient of power to her play as well as an ability to retrieve the impossible shot an extra couple of yards off the table. Ding Ning is the ultimate relentless attacker of the highest class – on this occasion the five foot two inch Chinese rocket matched her shot for shot.

Liu Shiwen raced away with the first two ends: 11-5, 11-3 – it was clear she had peaked at the right time. The pace picked up even more in the third end. It was 'do or die' for Ding Ning. She led 9-7 in the third end but the time-out favoured her opponent. Liu Shiwen won four superb points in a row to pinch the game 11-9. The fourth end was just as dramatic and again Ding Ning led 9-7. It wasn't enough. This was Liu Shiwen's day. Growing in confidence and sensing victory she blitzed the last four points to win a truly wonderful match 11-5, 11-3, 11-9, 11-9.

Afterwards Liu Shiwen, clearly delighted with her victory paid tribute to her semi-final opponent – Wang Yuegu (Singapore) who "I had to play so well to beat" and she admitted "I played so well in the Final I never wanted this to end."

Steve Kerns

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