

English players cling to Slovenian dreams

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Drinkhall is the sole surviving male player in the singles while he will also be in doubles action tomorrow

In the longest and busiest day of the Slovenian Open there were ups and downs for the English players with the lasting impression one of mixed emotions.

The day began well in the singles with Paul Drinkhall, Andrew Baggaley, Liam Pitchford and Darius Knight all advancing to the men's knock-out round. Knight, in particular, with an excellent 4-2 win over Mattias Karlsson (SWE) who is ranked 164 in the world.

However, it all fell apart in the next round. Knight and Baggaley were beaten in five games while Pitchford suffered an agonising deciding game defeat to Mikhail Paykov despite leading 10-9 in the seventh game.

Drinkhall did advance in his match after beating Tse Ka Chun (HKG) 4-3 but he was then drawn against China's Xu Xin, the player who beat Baggaley just last week in Hungary.

Joanna Parker is the sole English female involved but she made round one despite her 4-2 defeat to Kim Min Gyung. Gyung had earlier been disqualified from her previous match which allowed Parker to go through. However, the English number one will face tough opposition from Korean Lee Eun Hee (29).

Things were better in the under-21s as Chris Doran, coming back from three months out with a ligament injury, advanced through his group with relative ease. He also nearly pulled off a massive shock result in the men's singles groups later in the day.

The world number 452 faced Brazilian Gustavo Tsuboi (world number 88) and fell 3-0 behind before fighting back to 3-3 with three monster games (15-13, 14-12, 11-9). It was not to be though as Tsuboi finally clinched the match at the end with an 11-8 deciding game.

Doran will play Belgian Cedric Nuytinck in the under-21s where the seeded Pitchford will enter the competition to play Hungary's Mate Moricz. Pitchford will be looking to atone for his men's singles defeat.

With the day looking as though it would end disappointingly the doubles competitions began and England never looked back.

Although Doran/Ben Ari were beaten by the superb French pairing of youngsters Simon Gauzy and Quentin Robinot (under-21 favourites), the other three pairings all progressed through two rounds to reach the final qualifying round tomorrow.

Baggaley and Pitchford beat Andersson/Svensson (3-0) and Barabanov/Platonov (3-0) to lead the hunt while Knight and Reed beat Hinse/Ho (3-2) and Bobocica/Stoyanov (3-1) to also reach that stage.

Drinkhall and Ukrainian partner Lei Kou also progressed although their first match was a walkover before they beat Kosiba/Zwickl (3-1).

With a feast of games still to look forward to tomorrow perhaps this cloud has a silver lining for the English players after all. It may come in a different form than we are used to though as our best hopes lie in the doubles and the boy's under-21s.

Don't forget to keep an eye on our [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) for regular updates while also watching [itTV](#) for live streamed games. Of the fixtures listed below the Reed/Knight vs Fertikowski/Wang match at 10:30 is due to be live on table two in Slovenia.

Fixtures

09:00 Doran vs Nuytinck

09:30 Pitchford vs Moricz

10:00 Parker/Postoaca vs Polcanova/Solja

10:30 Baggaley/Pitchford vs Fegerl/Feng

10:30 Drinkhall/Kou vs Flore/Lebesson

10:30 Reed/Knight vs Fertikowski/Wang

11:00 Parker vs Lee Eun Hee

15:30 Drinkhall vs Xu Xin

Results

Men's Singles

Drinkhall bt Horvat 4-0 (11-5, 11-9, 11-8, 11-8)

Baggaley bt Jean 4-2 (11-8, 11-6, 9-11, 7-11, 11-6, 12-10)

Jancarik bt Reed 4-1 (11-9, 11-3, 11-9, 9-11, 11-8)

Knight bt Karlsson 4-2 (11-4, 11-4, 8-11, 11-6, 9-11, 11-8)

Pitchford bt Zubcic 4-3 (11-7, 8-11, 11-5, 9-11, 11-5, 6-11, 11-9)

Tsuboi bt Doran 4-3 (11-7, 11-3, 11-8, 13-15, 12-14, 9-11, 11-8)

Drinkhall bt Ka Chun 4-3 (11-7, 4-11, 11-5, 4-11, 12-10, 5-11, 12-10)

Sheng-Sheng bt Knight 4-1 (4-11, 11-4, 11-4, 11-6, 11-8)

Paykov bt Pitchford 4-3 (4-11, 8-11, 11-8, 11-7, 12-10, 8-11, 12-10)

Tosic bt Baggaley (11-8, 14-12, 11-5, 9-11, 11-7)

Women's Singles

Gyung bt Parker 4-2 (8-11, 11-6, 11-8, 11-3, 6-11, 12-10)

Women's Doubles

Parker/Postoaca bt Shiwen/Xiaoxia (walkover)

Men's Doubles

Gauzy/Robinot bt Doran/Ben Ari 3-1 (11-5, 11-6, 6-11, 11-6)

Baggaley/Pitchford bt Andersson/Svensson 3-0 (11-4, 11-6, 15-13)

Drinkhall/Kou bt Mersi/Manna (walkover)

Reed/Knight bt Hinse/Ho 3-2 (7-11, 11-8, 7-11, 11-8, 11-3)

Drinkhall/Kou bt Kosiba/Zwickl 3-1 (11-9, 11-9, 6-11, 11-8)

Baggaley/Pitchford bt Barabanov/Platonov 3-0 (11-6, 11-7, 11-4)

Reed/Knight bt Bobocica/Stoyanov 3-1 (13-11, 11-8, 5-11, 11-9)

Boy's Under-21s Singles

Doran bt Jelic 3-0 (11-2, 11-6, 12-10)

Doran bt Kulpa 3-1 (11-8, 11-9, 3-11, 13-11)

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