

# English dreams dashed in Slovenia

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Liam Pitchford was last man standing in Slovenia

Liam Pitchford's straight games defeat to Frenchman Simon Gauzy in the boy's under-21s round of 16 signalled the end to a disappointing English campaign at the Slovenia Open.

Pitchford was the last man standing in Slovenia after all of his compatriots had lost their respective matches on a troublesome day for the Olympic host nation.

The day began with the under-21s first round for which the Derbyshire player was seeded ninth and where he was joined by Nottingham Trent University star Chris Doran.

Doran, who was given special dispensation from his university to play, had progressed to round one after advancing through the qualifying stage with two competent group wins. However, in the first round he met Belgian Cedric Nuytinck who put an end to Doran's bid with a tightly fought 3-1 win – two of the games went to deuce.

England then boasted an excellent total of four doubles pairings in action. The male players were in the final qualifying round (technically round of 32) while Joanna Parker and Romanian partner Camelia Postoaca were in the women's first round.

However, all the optimism of the high number of entrants was broken in the space of under an hour. While Parker and Postoaca lost 3-1 to Solja and Polcanova, the three men's doubles all suffered agonising defeats.

Firstly, Paul Drinkhall and his Ukranian partner Lei Kou were beaten by the young French pair of Tristan Flore and Emmanuel Lebesson 3-0 before Pitchford, alongside the experienced Andrew Baggaley, fell to a tight 3-2 (8-11, 11-6, 8-11, 11-7, 11-7) loss against Austria's Fegerl and Feng.

That left just Daniel Reed and Darius Knight to fly the English doubles flag and, although they were blown away 11-2 in their first game, they fought back to level against Poles Fertikowski and Wang. Just as it seemed the Englishmen were on top, the Polish pair scraped an evenly-contested third game 11-9 which proved crucial as, from then on, the match was wrapped up in quick fashion.

If the players wanted respite in the singles then there was none to be given as Parker, drawn against world number 29, was comfortably demolished by Korea's Lee Eun Hee while Drinkhall, who faced the world number five, could only manage to win one game in his defeat to China's Xu Xin.

With Pitchford's defeat late in the evening confirmed it will be left to the players and coaches to begin the post-mortem on what was an inconspicuous tournament for the English players.

## Results

### Men's Singles

Xu Xin bt Drinkhall 4-1 (11-4, 8-11, 11-6, 11-8, 11-4)

### Women's Singles

Eun Hee bt Parker 4-0 (11-2, 11-2, 11-2, 11-6)

### Women's Doubles

Polcanova/Solja bt Parker/Postoaca 3-1 (12-10, 11-6, 7-11, 11-3)

**Men's Doubles**

Flore/Lebesson bt Drinkhall/Kou 3-0 (11-9, 11-7, 11-4)

Fegerl/Feng bt Baggaley/Pitchford 3-2 (8-11, 11-6, 8-11, 11-7, 11-7)

Fertikowski/Wang bt Reed/Knight 3-1 (11-2, 9-11, 11-9, 11-4)

**Boy's Under-21s Singles**

Nuytinck bt Doran 3-1 (11-8, 11-13, 11-5, 13-11)

Pitchford bt Moricz 3-0 (11-7, 11-7, 11-9)

Gauzy bt Pitchford 3-0 (12-10, 11-8, 11-4)

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