

Downing shocks Cullen in Under-21s

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Downing secured the big shock of the first session

George Downing caused the big shock of the men's under-21s qualifying groups by knocking-out his group's top seed Sean Cullen in five outstanding games of table tennis.

Downing, from the Isle of Wight but now playing at Bournemouth Sports Academy, beat the recent University Champion, Cullen, in a dramatic 3-2 encounter.

Cullen had come off the back of his University Championships win for Nottingham Trent University but was shocked by Downing's fast start as he raced ahead to take game one.

When Downing shot out of the blocks again in the second game and led 7-4 he cried "allez" as the tide turned in his favour. At 2-0 up Cullen received advice from top seed Liam Pitchford, who had earlier won both his matches 3-0.

It worked as Cullen charged back and took both the third and fourth games to level matters, during which, Downing had been yellow carded.

In the tense decider it swung one way before the other as it settled at 6-6 – anyone's game. But Downing took the honours 11-8 to cause the shock – and cause Cullen to lose his temper as he too was yellow carded.



Sean Cullen is yellow carded – after Downing had been earlier

Downing said after his win: "It was good, I felt good. I think I can go far."

Apart from that shock all the other seeds progressed. Pitchford won 3-0 twice as did Sam Walker and Lewis Gray while they were joined by Chris Doran, Emran Hussain, Gavin Evans, Richard Andrews, Garth Kinlocke, Will Maybanks, Matt Ware, Tom Maynard and David McBeath.



Liam Pitchford giving old club-mate Sean Cullen advice

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