

Evans downs Pitchford in semi-final

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Gavin Evans provided the biggest shock of the first day's play at Ponds Forge with an exceptional semi-final victory against the heavy favourite Liam Pitchford in the under-21s.

Throughout the match Evans looked the sharper and raced into the first game with Pitchford constantly looking at his bat with his usually consistent backhand letting him down.

Evans powered 1-0 ahead with an 11-3 first game which gave him a heap of confidence. The second game would be crucial to maintain momentum but with Pitchford still struggling, Evans didn't let up and the 2008 European Youth Olympic Champion went 2-0 ahead with an 11-7 second game.

Pitchford wasn't going to make it easy for the Buckinghamshire player as the English number one from Derbyshire crawled back into the match, battling against his problems, to win the third game 11-7.

The fourth game proved to be tight throughout with Pitchford finding some form to take it to 9-9. However, Evans found the right shots at the right time and forced Pitchford to loop long on match-point to reach the final.



Evans celebrates his win

Evans said of his win: "I thought I struggled. I haven't played matches for a long time but when I played I had no pressure at all."

He added: "I think he was shocked a bit so I just fought for every point."

There he will face David McBeath who beat Garth Kinlocke with consummate ease 3-0 (11-7, 11-2, 11-5). McBeath had previously beaten Lewis Gray and Matt Ware to reach the final for which he will be a big underdog.

Evans didn't mind who he met in the title-decider. He said: "No matter who you play in the final it's going to be difficult. I'll see what happens."



A devastated Liam Pitchford shows his anguish

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