

Walker/Gray reach shock doubles semi

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Posted On: March 04, 2012



Sam Walker and Lewis Gray reached the men's doubles semi-final after an excellent run of afternoon results saw them book their place against favourites Paul Drinkhall and Liam Pitchford – a challenge they will relish.

Walker and Gray began the campaign with a magnificent victory over the seeded pair of Matt Ware and Emran Hussain who took them all the way to five games before the youngsters held their nerve expertly to win 3-2 (9-11, 11-8, 6-11, 13-11, 11-7) – in the process they saved a match-point against the pre-match favourites.

They followed this up with a last 16 victory over Sam Perry and Shaun Marples 4-1 (9-11, 11-3, 11-8, 11-4). It was unfortunate for Marples who again found himself the victim of players much, much younger than himself.

In the quarter-finals Walker and Gray faced Damien Nicholls and David Meads and again came into the game as the underdogs. However, the young pair, who have played together already in international tournaments, were showing their great form and rapport together by holding their nerve despite losing the first game 11-7.

In the end they came back to win three straight games and seal their semi-final place 7-11, 11-5, 11-7, 11-4.

They will play Pitchford and Drinkhall in the last four who have so far proved unstoppable in their run to the semi-finals. It's a daunting prospect as the English numbers one and two have won all three of their matches in straight games; 11-4, 11-3, 11-7 against Matthew Dodds and Mark Short, 11-3, 11-4, 11-3 against Chris Lewis and Reece Placid before beating Mike Marsden and Mark Simpson 3-0 (11-5, 11-7, 11-4) in the quarter-finals.

In the other half of the draw Darius Knight and Danny Reed will meet Gavin Evans and David McBeath.

Evans continues his excellent Championships as he and partner McBeath won their first two matches against Nutland/Ward and Knowles/Giles comfortably before winning a tighter match in the quarter-finals against Richard Andrews and Sean Cullen.

Cullen and Andrews took the first game 11-6 but Evans and McBeath fought back in three very tight games to win 3-1 (6-11, 12-10, 11-9, 13-11).

Knight and Reed meanwhile also continue their progress after two 3-0 wins over Kinlocke/Beck and Gilmour/Slater respectively before beating Alim Hirji and Will Maybanks 3-1 in the last eight. Hirji, who had just lost to Knight in the singles, was probably sick at the sight of the man from Battersea as again Knight proved on top form.



Knight/Reed eventually winning 3-1 (11-7, 11-5, 5-11, 11-7).



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