

Pitchford advances to semi-finals

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Liam Pitchford beat Andrew Baggaley 4-1 in the pick of the men's singles quarter-finals at Ponds Forge this morning.

The England number one took the first five points of the match but Baggaley replied to take the next eight and eventually the game 11-8. A mis-firing Pitchford showed his anger at himself frequently as he couldn't get into the game.

A tight second game that he won 11-9 helped to change that momentum – and more importantly, helped him to start connecting with his dangerous backhand.

The signs were ominous from there on in as Pitchford's backhand down the line began reaping points on a regular basis as the experienced Baggaley couldn't keep up. The 18-year-old from Derbyshire went 2-1 ahead with another tight 11-9 game but after that the final two games were Pitchford dominated as he won them 11-8, 11-6.

He will meet Daniel Reed in the first semi-final after the number four seed comfortably beat Matt Ware in another professional performance.

Reed was excellent throughout and played with a high level of consistency to grind Ware down game by game. Reed raced ahead in the first 8-2 before eventually sealing a 1-0 lead 11-5. It was no way back from there for Ware despite all his efforts as Reed showed no signs of weakness – holding his nerve to take the second and third games 11-9 and 11-8 as well.

In the fourth game Reed led 9-6 but Ware fought back to earn himself a game point at 10-9. However, Reed didn't let his grip slip on the match and he came back to win 12-10.

In the other half of the draw Paul Drinkhall and Darius Knight will meet after both players won their quarter-finals 4-0.



Knight had a tough looking fixture against under-21s Champion Gavin Evans but he showed all the form he will need to win the title with an excellent display of powerful forehand striking.

The left-hander was 8-5 behind in the first but won six straight points to claim the game 11-8. He followed that up with an ever-improving performance as Evans was blown away in the second 11-6 and then in the third 11-3. Evans fought back in the fourth to gain a game point but like Reed had done earlier – Knight fought back and sealed a 4-0 win with a 12-10 conclusion.

Drinkhall will meet him in the semi-final after he came through against Chris Doran. The England number two started sharply and took the first game at a canter 11-4. He then found himself in trouble in the second 7-4 down but led 10-8 before Doran found a lucky edge to level 10-10. Drinkhall then also received a lucky edge to level 11-11 before going 2-0 ahead with an 13-11 game.

From there on Drinkhall was dominant and duly sealed his semi-final place with an 11-7 and 11-5 third and fourth games respectively.

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