

Reed and Knight upset odds for doubles win

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Danny Reed and Darius Knight upset the odds in the men's doubles final to beat Liam Pitchford and Paul Drinkhall 3-1.

Reed repeated his shock win of 2011 when he partnered Chris Doran to victory by again defeating the favourites in the final after a series of exceptional table tennis shots powered them home to the trophy. Before the match, the favourites had not even dropped a game in their four previous matches.

The first game was nip and tuck all the way to the end with both pairings knowing a quick start would be important in a five-game match.

Reed and Knight went 4-2 ahead but fell 6-4 behind to the top seeds. However, when Reed forced a 9-8 lead with a sumptuous cross-table backhand it seemed they would make the crucial breakthrough. It wasn't to be though as Pitchford and Drinkhall held their nerve to win the first game in a tight 11-9.

In the second game it was the underdogs again who started well – forcing a 5-2 lead with more positive play against the favourites. With Pitchford and Drinkhall fighting back into the game it took some expert table tennis from both Reed and Knight to keep their heads above water, Knight's top diving effort superbly finished off by a strong Reed forehand gave the pair a 7-5 cushion.

Then when Knight fired a backhand long to level at 8-8, the game was back in the balance. After saving a game point at 10-9, Knight and Reed forced their own at 11-10 only to see that snuffed out by a powerful Pitchford backhand. When they received a second chance later on at 12-11 they took it with both hands to level the match 1-1.

As was the pattern in the first two games, Reed and Knight were first out of the blocks to claim a 6-1 lead when first Pitchford, and then Drinkhall, went long with their shots. They kept up the momentum as well with Knight winning a superb point for 8-3 when he was practically on the floor.

This time they held their game more comfortably 11-6 to claim an important 2-1 lead.

For the first time in the match Drinkhall and Pitchford started quicker in the fourth game by leading both 3-1 and then 6-3. However, things turned around from there as the pair began to miss the table, losing four straight points before calling a time-out at 7-6 down. At 9-9 a big point arose which we thought had been won by Drinkhall/Pitchford after Reed went wide but, it turned out the ball had clipped the net on serve after some lengthy discussions. In the replay of the point, Reed hit the winner to claim a match-point and they took it at the first time of asking 11-9.

That was a great response from the pair who had both respectively lost to their opponents in the semi-finals of the singles competition only a few hours earlier. For Pitchford and Drinkhall it was a second final defeat in successive years after Reed and Doran had shocked them in 2011.

Their minds would be racing with the singles final coming next for the losing pair.

Reed/Knight bt Pitchford/Drinkhall 3-1 (9-11, 13-11, 11-6, 11-9)

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