

# Promotion dream dashed at WTTTC

**Author:** Jask Creative

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Paul Drinkhall couldn't prevent Achanta from leading India home

England men's dreams of promotion were shattered when they lost to India on Friday afternoon at the Liebherr 2012 World Team Table Tennis Championships.

India were one of the hardest draws England could have received and it proved the case as Sharath Kamal Achanta's (75) double-win sent England to defeat.

It was almost a different story as two matches in particular proved crucial. The opening fixture saw Achanta play Liam Pitchford who fought back from 2-1 down to level after a 13-11 fourth game. If Pitchford could have beaten him in the first match then surely England would have gone on to win but, alas, it was not to be as the Indian raced home 11-2 in the deciding game.

It mattered little as Paul Drinkhall levelled affairs after beating Amalraj Anthony (248) 3-1 providing Andrew Baggaley with the opportunity to give the team the lead. As it turned out, this match would prove pivotal.

Four tight games ensued with Baggaley narrowly going 11-9 down to Soumyajit Ghosh (255) in both of the opening games before he won an epic third 18-16. The fourth proved just as close but, agonisingly for England, it was won 13-11 by Ghosh.

This meant that Drinkhall now had to defeat Achanta. Again the games were close but again England ended up on the losers' side. Achanta eventually won 3-0 but not before enduring two tense 12-10 and 13-11 games respectively.

They were boosted at the end of the day with a victory over Italy in the 29-32 play-off. This means they will now face Egypt again, who earlier beat Nigeria.

The win was secured with two Drinkhall wins while there was an excellent comeback victory for Daniel Reed. In only his second appearance in Dortmund he fell 2-0 behind to Stefano Tomasi before roaring back to win the next three games: 11-2, 11-3, 11-5.

The women made steady progress on Friday as they avoided relegation comfortably with two five-end wins over first Malaysia, and then Egypt to secure their Division Two status.

While Kelly Sibley's two wins were instrumental in beating Malaysia, Joanna Parker's double against Egypt meant the women kept up their victorious run. Parker held her nerve in the final fixture of both matches as the English girls quietly progressed.

Their final fixture tomorrow will see them play Slovenia for 37<sup>th</sup> place in the overall rankings.

## Men

### England 1-3 India

Sharath Kamal Achanta (75) bt L Pitchford 3-2 (11-7, 4-11, 11-4, 11-13, 11-2)

P Drinkhall bt Amalraj Anthony (248) 3-1 (11-8, 11-7, 6-11, 11-4)

Soumyajit Ghosh (255) bt A Baggaley 3-1 (11-9, 11-9, 16-18, 13-11)

Sharath Kamal Achanta bt P Drinkhall 3-0 (11-6, 12-10, 13-11)

### **England 3-1 Italy**

P Drinkhall bt Marco Rech Daldosso (340) 3-0 (11-7, 15-13, 11-7)

Niagol Stoyanov (235) bt L Pitchford 3-0 (11-5, 11-6, 13-11)

D Reed bt Stefano Tomasi (277) 3-2 (5-11, 7-11, 11-2, 11-3, 11-5)

P Drinkhall bt Niagol Stoyanov 3-1 (9-11, 11-9, 11-9, 11-4)

### **Women**

#### **England 3-2 Malaysia**

NG Sock Khim (u/r) bt J Parker 3-0 (12-10, 11-5, 11-9)

K Sibley bt Chiu Soo Jiin (351) 3-0 (11-8, 11-5, 11-6)

Lee Rou You (u/r) bt H Hicks 3-0 (11-8, 11-8, 11-8)

K Sibley bt NG Sock Khim 3-0 (11-6, 11-5, 11-5)

J Parker bt Chiu Soo Jiin 3-1 (11-7, 9-11, 11-4, 11-7)

#### **England 3-2 Egypt**

K Sibley bt Nadeen El-Dawlatly (261) 3-1 (13-11, 11-13, 11-4, 11-9)

J Parker bt Dina Meshref (199) 3-0 (11-6, 12-10, 11-7)

Reem El-Shobary (635) bt J Dawson 3-0 (11-4, 11-9, 11-4)

Dina Meshref bt K Sibley 3-0 (11-9, 11-6, 12-10)

J Parker bt Nadeen El-Dawlatly 3-0 (11-1, 11-9, 11-9)

By Russell Moore



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