

# Three progress in Olympic Qualifiers

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**Posted On:** April 12, 2012



Jo Parker survived a very tight final match to keep her dream alive

Joanna Parker held her nerve in a dramatic seven-game thriller to secure a third place in the main stages of the European Olympic Qualification Tournament in Luxembourg.

Parker beat Asya Kasabova (BUL, 274) ([watch here](#)) to join her male team-mates Liam Pitchford and Paul Drinkhall in successful progression to the later stages of the competition.

With half of the British contingent still in contention for the weekend we could still see the trio qualify for their own place at London 2012.

Parker was the last player to secure her place after her match with her Bulgarian counterpart went the full distance. After leading 3-1, the English number 1 was pegged back to 3-3 by her plucky opponent.

It was all to play for in the seventh game with a frustrated Parker trailing 5-3 when coach Alan Cooke called a timeout. It had an immediate effect with the girl from Surrey claiming the next three points.

Eventually this led to Parker creating the first match point at 10-9 but Kasabova ensured she couldn't take it. That was the beginning of the drama with match point chances switching hands several times. After saving two match points from Kasabova, Parker eventually sealed the win 15-13 and a place in the main groups.

Drinkhall and Pitchford has less tumultuous passages to the next round. [Drinkhall lost to Czech Petr Korbel \(76\)](#) but returned to beat Yannick Vostes (BEL, 215) 4-2 to advance as group winner, while Pitchford beat Josef Simoncik (CZE, 131) 4-1 to ease through.

All three players will now have three days play to secure one of the 22 places (11 men/11 women) on offer in Luxembourg.

In the first group stage Parker will face Renata Strbikova (CZE, 84) first while Pitchford will face Carlos Machado (SPN, 84) and Drinkhall will face Yaroslav Zhmudenko (UKR, 98).

Unfortunately, for the other three British players their dream of personal qualification ended today.

Andrew Baggaley's tough group proved just too large an obstacle to overcome as he fell narrowly 4-3 to young French star Quentin Robinot.

Kelly Sibley similarly had a tricky group and her defeat to Yuan Tian (AUT, 139) meant that she will have to hope to be picked by the selectors in May. Liu Na will face the same fate after her 4-1 defeat to Amelie Solja (FRA, 125).

The days results are listed below as well as the fixtures and links to televised matches.

## Results

### Men

[Petr Korbel \(CZE, 76\) bt Paul Drinkhall 4-2](#) (11-8, 11-8, 11-7, 9-11, 6-11, 12-10)

Liam Pitchford bt Josef Simoncik (CZE, 131) 4-1 (11-5, 5-11, 11-5, 11-8, 11-8)

Quentin Robinot (FRA, 151) bt Andrew Baggaley 4-3 (11-6, 11-3, 6-11, 5-11, 5-11, 11-8, 11-7)

Paul Drinkhall bt Yannick Vostes (BEL, 215) 4-2 (14-16, 12-10, 11-8, 11-7, 7-11, 11-5)

## Women

Petra Lovas (HUN, 73) bt Joanna Parker 4-0 (11-7, 11-7, 11-7, 11-7)

Yuan Tian (CRO, 139) bt Kelly Sibley 4-1 (9-11, 11-7, 11-8, 11-7, 11-6)

[Joanna Parker bt Asya Kasabova \(BUL, 274\) 4-3](#) (11-8, 11-7, 3-11, 11-7, 9-11, 4-11, 15-13)

Amelie Solja (AUT, 125) bt Na Liu 4-1 (11-3, 8-11, 11-6, 11-6, 11-4)

## Fixtures

09:00 Joanna Parker vs Renata Strbikova (CZE, 84)

10:30 Liam Pitchford vs Carlos Machado (SPN, 84)

10:30 Paul Drinkhall vs Yaroslav Zhmudenko (UKR, 98)

[Click here to see full men's draw](#)

[Click here to see full women's draw](#)

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