

Olympic Qualifiers end in defeat

Author: Paul Stimpson

Posted On: April 15, 2012



The last two English hopes of automatic Olympic qualification were snuffed out in Luxembourg after succumbing to tough draws on the final day at the European Olympic Qualification Tournament.

Paul Drinkhall's 4-2 defeat to Portugal's Tiago Apolonia (49) and Joanna Parker's 4-0 defeat at the hands of Austria's Li Qiangbing (71) sealed the fate of the English dreams before the Olympics.

Although all the British players involved at the weekend could still play in London if selected for the host nation places, the players were hoping to qualify by their own right to seal a singles place.

In the end for the final two of Drinkhall and Parker it was defeats to much higher ranked opponents that cost them their keen expectations.

Drinkhall had a big battle with Apolonia – levelling 2-2 at one stage, before the class of the Portuguese star finally shone through to claim a dramatic win. Parker, meanwhile couldn't build on her victory over Yana Noskova in her 4-0 loss to Qiangbing.

After that the pair fought to finish in the top 10 and both began well. Drinkhall benefitted from a walkover against Frenchman Quentin Robinot while Parker beat Poland's world number 101 Katarzyna Grzybowska 4-2.

In the next round Drinkhall once again was the beneficiary of a walkover against Daniel Kosiba (HUN) but Parker's run came to an end against Barbora Balazova (SVK, 112).

Eventually Drinkhall did have a final match against Polish player Bartosz Such in the battle for tenth and eleventh places. It was won by the Pole 4-1, however much of the drama had been taken away earlier in the day.

Results

Men:

Tiago Apolonia (POR, 49) bt Paul Drinkhall 4-2 (8-11, 11-7, 11-4, 9-11, 11-7, 11-7)

Paul Drinkhall bt Quentin Robinot (FRA, 151) walkover

Paul Drinkhall bt Daniel Kosiba (HUN, 212) walkover

Bartosz Such (POL, 111) bt Paul Drinkhall 4-1 (11-9, 10-12, 11-6, 11-9, 11-7)

Women:

Li Qiangbing (AUT, 71) bt Joanna Parker 4-0 (11-3, 11-8, 11-4, 11-5)

Joanna Parker bt Katarzyna Grzybowska (POL, 101) 4-2 (11-4, 11-9, 11-4, 9-11, 6-11, 12-10)

Barbora Balazova (SVK, 112) bt Joanna Parker 4-2 (10-12, 11-1, 11-6, 11-3, 7-11, 12-10)

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