

# Progress on day two in Doha

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Joanna Parker won a tense 4-3 match against Shamini Kumaresan

Five out of the six Brits in action in Doha qualified for the knock-out stages of the Final World Olympic Qualification Tournament. However, after Joanna Parker's defeat late in the day only Liam Pitchford, Paul Drinkhall, Andrew Baggaley and Na Liu remain.

Drinkhall, in particular, was in imperious form during his 4-1 victory over Romanian Constantin Cioti as he booked his place in the knock-out stages of the tournament.

After his loss to Vitaly Nekhvedovich he needed to beat Cioti convincingly to be sure of his progress – and he did just that. In his defeat to the Belarussian Nekhvedovich yesterday he fell 2-0 behind but this time he was quick out of the blocks.

Taking the game to Cioti from the first point (where he smashed the ball past Cioti's back without the Romanian managing to raise his arm) Drinkhall was supreme across the court.

A series of powerful blows, incorporating energetic movement helped the four-times National Champion to dominate the opening game – sealing it 11-3 when he forced the world number 132 to hit wide off the net.

The second game started in a similar manner. Drinkhall's powerful forehand winner established himself on the first point and, despite Cioti being awoken by a lucky edge at 3-2, Drinkhall remained ahead throughout the game. His powerful forehand off Cioti's serve gave him three game points and he took them first time with an awesome point showing off his new athleticism to race around the table and force Cioti to hit long.

The Cleveland-born player's dominance was impressive as he raced into another 5-1 lead at the start of game three with one of the points of the match. With more power-play and a few pumps of the fist, he secured a 3-0 lead with an 11-4 masterclass.

Everything seemed to be going to plan in game four as Drinkhall led 9-7 but a momentary lapse of concentration allowed Cioti in to steal the game 11-9 after Drinkhall hit the net. When the English number two hit the net again in game five to trail 4-2 it looked as though the tide was turning.

However, Drinkhall fired once more and turned up the heat on Cioti who could only hang his head as he fell 8-5 behind – he looked a beaten man. Although he then conceded a point to the best rally of the match, a serve and smash down the line, followed by an unreturned hit to Cioti's backhand, secured the victory and a place in round two.

Andrew Baggaley, Na Liu and Joanna Parker joined Drinkhall in the next stage at the same time but with very different performances. Parker held on to a tense 4-3 win against Shamini Kumaresa, Liu won another fantastic match against Katarzyna Grzybowska 4-2 to top her group while Baggaley defeated Jan Zibrat 4-2.

Liu fell 2-0 behind but came back from 9-8 down in the third to win 12-10. That glimmer of hope turned into a burning beacon of promise as the Irish girl won a tight fourth game 11-9 before blasting away in the fifth game to take a 3-2 lead.

From 2-2 she stormed 10-2 ahead and took the game 11-4 to send out a message to her Polish opponent. It seemed Grzybowska had retaliated in the sixth when she led 8-4 but Liu fought back to level 8-8 and then win the game 11-9 and the match 4-2.

Parker, equally fell behind in her first game but stormed back to establish a 3-1 lead, helped by leading 6-0 at one point in the third game.

With two match points at 10-8 in game five, however, she wobbled and allowed her Indian opponent to steal the game 12-10. Things went from bad to worse in the sixth game as Kumaresan blew 6-0 ahead en-route to levelling the match 3-3 with an 11-6 game.

In the decider, Parker settled her nerves to take a 5-0 lead. However, they returned at 9-5 up. From there Kumaresan closed to 9-7 and again at 10-9 before the English number one finally took her fifth match point at 11-9.

Unfortunately for Parker, she was then beaten in the last 32 by Ana-Maria Erdelji to end her qualification hopes. Despite being 2-1 up at one stage the English number one could not hold on to her higher ranked opponent and will now have to wait to see if she is selected by the BTTF for the host nation allocation.

Andrew Baggaley meanwhile found his passage much easier into the next round with a straightforward 4-2 win against Jan Zibrat.

Ranked higher than his opponent, Baggaley won the first 11-9 before securing a tight second 14-12. He assumed full control of the match by moving from 3-3 to 10-3 up in an 11-4 third game.

Although Zibrat fought back to win the next two games, a 6-1 lead in game six was converted by Baggaley 11-6 to secure passage to the knock-out stages.

Liam Pitchford, who had already qualified from his group, fell to a topsy-turvy 4-3 defeat to Mexican Marcos Madrid.

Involving games finishing 15-13, 14-12 and 12-10 the match fluctuated along towards a deciding seventh game. That was nonetheless exciting with the outcome only coming on the 26<sup>th</sup> point with Madrid beating Pitchford 14-12.

While not terminal to his hopes, it will be a blow to Pitchford who now finishes as the runner-up in the group to Bartosz Such.

It was not such good news for Welsh girl Naomi Owen who became the only British player to be eliminated after her 4-1 loss to Yana Noskova. She was heavily under-ranked and the gap proved too much as her campaign closed in Doha.

The next two days will be crucial for the British hopes. Looking at the draw Drinkhall has a great chance of making it while Pitchford will need to beat Tiago Apolonia (POR, 48) by the looks of it but time will tell.

Keep an eye on the [ETTA Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages for regular updates and the main website for a full round-up at the end of the day's play. Also watch the action live from [tables 1 and 2 on itTV](#) with all three of the men's first games LIVE.

[Watch Paul Drinkhall versus Constantin Cioti here](#)

[Watch Naomi Owen versus Yana Noskova here](#)

## Results:

### Men's Singles Groups

#### Group 7:

Andrew Baggaley bt Jan Zibrat (SLO, 215) 4-2 (11-9, 14-12, 11-4, 9-11, 7-11, 11-6)

#### Group 10:

Marcos Madrid (MEX, 217) bt Liam Pitchford 4-3 (12-10, 12-14, 7-11, 11-8, 15-13, 8-11, 14-12)

#### Group 12:

Paul Drinkhall bt Constantin Cioti (ROU, 132) 4-1 (11-3, 11-7, 11-4, 9-11, 11-8)

Paul Drinkhall bt Mounaim Tirselt (MAR, 370) walkover

### **Women's Singles Groups**

#### **Group 6:**

Na Liu bt Katarzyna Grzybowska (POL, 117) 4-2 (5-11, 10-12, 11-9, 11-4, 12-10, 11-9)

#### **Group 8:**

Joanna Parker bt Shamini Kumaresan (IND, 235) 4-3 (10-12, 11-9, 11-6, 11-7, 10-12, 6-11, 11-9)

#### **Group 12:**

Yana Noskova (RUS, 105) bt Naomi Owen 4-1 (11-7, 11-6, 11-8, 9-11, 11-7)

### **Women's Singles Round of 32:**

Ana-Maria Erdelji (SRB, 102) bt Joanna Parker 4-2 (6-11, 11-7, 12-14, 14-12, 11-9, 11-1)

### **Fixtures**

#### **Men's Singles Round of 32:**

Paul Drinkhall vs Niagol Stoyanov (ITA, 160)

Liam Pitchford vs Mihai Bobocica (ITA, 99)

Andrew Baggaley vs Petr Korbel (CZE, 87)

#### **Women's Singles Round of 16:**

Na Liu vs Sara Ramirez (ESP, 113)

[View the full men's draw here](#)

[View the full women's draw here](#)

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