

Tough draws for Brits in China

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Posted On: May 24, 2012



All four of the recently announced Team GB representatives reached the knock-out stages on Thursday at the China Open in Shanghai. However, Friday could prove to be a difficult day for the squad, as all four will have to face players in the world's top 20.

Joining Andrew Baggaley, who qualified on Wednesday, Liam Pitchford, Joanna Parker and Liu Na will all take their place in the respective men's and women's round of 64 as the battle in China heats up.

It won't be easy for the players though as each has an extremely tough match. Baggaley will face Japanese youngster Koki Niwa (17) while Pitchford faces reigning Olympic Champion Ma Lin (CHN, 5). Joanna Parker must face ITTF Pro Tour Grand Finals Under-21 Champion Kasumi Ishikawa (JPN, 6) while Na Liu will face Li Xiaoxia (CHN, 4) who comes from the same region in northern China as the Team GB star.

Pitchford and Parker eased into the knock-out rounds with respective comfortable 4-0 victories over their opponents. The Derbyshire 18-year-old beat Wally Green (USA) – conceding only 16 points in the process while Parker beat Suzanne Dieker (NED, 515) – conceding just 18 points en-route.

Na Liu had a much more tense affair to progress after losing 4-3 to Mima Ito (JPN, 156) but progressing on games ratio. After the Irish girls superb victory over Iveta Vacenovska yesterday she needed to claim three game off Ito to qualify.

She managed it by the skin of her teeth. In game six – at 3-2 down, she seemingly had control of the vital third game she needed to progress at 9-4 up. However, Ito fought back to 9-8 before Liu had two game points at 10-8. She failed to take them and went on to save three match points before she could finally seal a dramatic 15-13 game.

The seventh game mattered little as Ito won the match but lost out on games ratio: Vacenovska topping the group on 7-6, Liu second on 7-7 and Ito third on 6-7.

Next came the doubles for the British pairs but it would end in disappointment. While Parker and Liu were beaten 3-0 by Jeon Jihee and Seok Hajung (KOR), Pitchford and Baggaley missed opportunities against Cho Eonrae and Seo Junghwa as they lost 3-1.

After fighting back from 7-10 down in the first game to level at 10-10 a net apiece from the English pair gave the Koreans the first game 12-10.

The opponents then shared dominant games. The English duo winning the first 11-5 after leading both 4-0 and 9-2 while the Koreans re-established a 2-1 lead after an 11-4 game – racing from 5-4 up to take six consecutive points.

The fourth game was crucial but from 5-2 up the English pair lost control to trail 5-6. Once more, however, the pairs were level at 10-10 but again, disappointingly, a double net from Pitchford gifted the Koreans a 12-10 game and the match 3-1.

The 18-year-old can at least set his sights on the under-21s tomorrow where he begins in the last 16 against North Korean Pak Sin Hyok. Meanwhile, all four players will still have to battle out their mountainous singles ties on a tricky-looking third day in Shanghai.

[Watch Na Liu vs Mima Ito here](#)

[Watch Joanna Parker vs Suzanne Dieker here](#)

[Watch Andrew Baggaley/Liam Pitchford vs Cho Eonrae/Seo Junghwa here](#)

Results:

Men's Singles Qualifying Groups:

Group 15:

Liam Pitchford bt Wally Green (USA, u/r) 4-0 (11-4, 11-2, 11-5, 11-5)

Women's Singles Qualifying Groups:

Group 2:

Mima Ito (JPN, 156) bt Na Liu 4-3 (11-6, 5-11, 7-11, 11-8, 11-7, 13-15, 11-7)

Group 12:

Joanna Parker bt Suzanne Dieker (NED, 515) 4-0 (11-6, 11-3, 11-5, 11-4)

Men's Doubles:

Cho Eonrae/Seo Junghwa (KOR) bt Liam Pitchford/Andrew Baggaley 3-1 (12-10, 5-11, 11-4, 12-10)

Women's Doubles:

Jeon Jihee/Seok Hajung (KOR) bt Na Liu/Joanna Parker 3-0 (11-4, 11-5, 11-4)

Fixtures:

Men's Singles Round of 64:

06:00 Andrew Baggaley vs Koki Niwa (JPN, 17)

07:30 Liam Pitchford vs Ma Lin (CHN, 5)

Women's Singles Round of 64:

03:45 Na Liu vs Li Xiaoxia (CHN, 4)

04:30 Joanna Parker vs Kasumi Ishikawa (JPN, 6) – table 1 itTV

Boy's Under 21s Round of 16:

02:30 Liam Pitchford vs Pak Sin Hyok (PRK, u/r)

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