

Zhang Jike triumphs in Olympic final

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Zhang Jike became the new men's singles Olympic Champion with a comprehensive 4-1 victory over Chinese compatriot Wang Hao at the ExCeL.

The pair had met in two world finals last year with Zhang Jike victorious 4-2 in both at the World Table Tennis Championships in Rotterdam, Netherlands and at the Men's World Cup in Paris, France.

The Olympic Games was no different as the young Zhang Jike came through in confident fashion to pick up a gold medal on his Olympic debut while Wang Hao has to suffer with a third consecutive men's final defeat.

The first game was by far the best of the match with some superb table tennis between the Chinese pair, who will hope to win the team gold next week as well alongside Ma Long.

Zhang Jike led game one 10-6 but missed four game points as Wang Hao fought back. Wang Hao then missed three game points of his own before Zhang Jike called time out at 17-16 up.

It was his eighth game point and finally he sealed it with a backhand down the line for a 1-0 lead.

The next two games were a procession for the World Champion who cruised 3-0 ahead after 11-5 and 11-6 games to put himself within touching distance of the big prize.

Wang Hao did give himself some hope when he took the fourth game 12-10 but, after missing a game point chance in the fifth game at 10-9, Zhang Jike stole the game and the match 13-11.

Zhang Jike celebrated his win by jumping the barriers and kissing the podium – not ripping his shirt off as he is sometimes accustomed to do.

The match was a bit of an anti-climax after the high expectations were set by Dimitrij Ovtcharov and Chuang Chih-Yuan in the bronze medal play-off with a fantastic encounter, which saw the German seal the bronze medal.

However, nothing will be taken away from Zhang Jike who now holds the World Championship, Men's World Cup and Olympic titles.

Zhang Jike (CHN) bt Wang Hao (CHN) 4-1 (18-16, 11-5, 11-6, 10-12, 13-11)

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