

Pitchford draws Samsonov in MWC Draw

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Liam Pitchford faces a repeat of his career-best victory against Vladimir Samsonov when the pair will meet again on Friday.

Pitchford, ranked 269th at the time, beat the Belarussian in the European Championships last October to inflict one of the biggest defeats on the world no. 9 last season.

They will now face each other in Group B of the Liebherr Men's World Cup after the draw on Thursday evening. Also in Group B will be strong left-handed Chinese seed Xu Xin and Portuguese player Marcos Freitas.

The 19-year-old acknowledges the chance he has been presented with. Pitchford said: "I'm lucky to have the chance to be playing here. He's number three in the world now so I'm just going to go out there and test my game to see how I can play against the top in the world."

He added: "I think I can learn what level I need to train at and be in matches at. They're so consistent and so powerful in all their shots – I think that's where the Europeans struggle."

His match against Samsonov is the stand-out contest for the English youngster and he's quietly confident he can perform once again.

He said: "It's a totally different tournament, maybe he'll be nervous. Back then I didn't feel I played that well against him. So hopefully this time I'll play a bit better and win. I'm the total underdog so I've got nothing to lose."

English number 1 Paul Drinkhall was also presented with an interesting draw in Group A of the Liebherr Men's World Cup.

Alongside number one seed Ma Long, Drinkhall will also have to face his Bundesliga teammates from SV Werder Bremen in Chuang Chih-Yuan and Adrian Crisan.

Drinkhall sees this as a positive. He said: "I think it's a benefit for me, obviously I've still got nothing to lose but we train together so we know each other's games.

I've beaten Crisan in the German league before and been close to them in practice matches so it's just a good opportunity for me to try and get some big wins."

After the four-time National Champion's successful Olympic Games, he hopes the home crowd can provide him with another massive boost.

He said: "I think the Arena's amazing. In England especially after the Olympics has finished I think both venues have been really good. The crowd at the Olympics were amazing and hopefully it will be the same here."

View the full draw at the link below:

[Liebherr Men's World Cup Full Draw](#)

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