

Ma Long makes last 4 in Liverpool

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Ma Long beat Michael Maze after a supremely comprehensive straight games win saw him reach the semi-finals with the minimum fuss despite the interesting nature of the draw against the former European Champion.

Ma Long started in confident fashion. After his disappointing defeat to Chuang Chih-Yuan in the group stages he waltzed past England's Paul Drinkhall and raced to the opening game against Maze 11-4.

Clearly Ma Long was on a mission and his play showed no signs of weakness with consistently well-directed attacking strokes peppering his Danish opponent in the first game.

This was present again in the second game as Ma Long sealed a 2-0 lead with his use of lightning-fast reflexes to power the ball past Maze without the Dane moving a muscle. That was 11-5 to the Chinese favourite and his form suggested he could go all the way.

This continued into the third game with another confident performance from Ma Long who cruised into a 3-0 lead, seemingly without breaking sweat. The only positive from Maze's point of view was that he was getting closer in each game; 4, 5 and 7.

It appeared as though all that effort to close the gap was fruitless for Maze when he trailed 6-0 in the fourth game but a spirited display saw him close the gap to just 7-6 down.

In the end it wasn't enough as the world number 2 won it 11-7 and secured a last four place. Ma Long will now have to wait and see if he faces Chinese teammate Xu Xin in the semi-final.

Ma Long (CHN) bt Michael Maze (DEN) 4-0 (11-4, 11-5, 11-7, 11-7)

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