

Xu Xin makes all-China semi-final

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Xu Xin wasted no time in ensuring there was an all-China semi-final on Sunday morning at the Liebherr Men's World Cup in Liverpool's Echo Arena.

Hong Kong's Jiang Tianyi had no reply for the supreme footwork and forehand play of the Chinese superstar and world number three as he progressed with minimum fuss on the last match on Saturday evening.

Xu Xin began as he meant to carry on with a comfortable 11-5 opening game. When he took the second game 11-6 it appeared as though he would quietly progress to the next stage with Jiang simply unable to content with Xu Xin's work around the court. It appeared as though the world number 3 was on a different planet at times with his strokeplay.

The third game was secured in even more dominant fashion as a rapid lead from point one was maintained until the game, and a 3-0 lead, was sealed at 11-2.

The fourth, and eventually final game, was at least more pleasant reading for the Hong Kong player as he led 7-4 at one stage. But, with the slightest sniff of a game upset in the air, Xu Xin stepped up another gear to return immediately 8-7 up.

He forced a match point at 10-9 – which was saved by Jiang when Xu Xin netted. But shortly after the Chinese player earned and converted a second match point to complete the match in as confident a style as he had begun it.

The semi-final tomorrow morning with teammate Ma Long now looks to be set for one of the greatest table tennis matches in recent history with both players displaying outstanding form on Saturday evening.

Xu Xin (CHN) bt Jiang Tianyi (HKG) 4-0 (11-5, 11-6, 11-2, 12-10)

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