

Duo blown away at Austrian Open

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England's remaining pair of Paul Drinkhall and Joanna Parker were blown away by their higher ranked opposition on day three of the ITTF World Tour Austrian Open as the English challenge in Wels expired.

Drinkhall, who was facing Emmanuel Lebesson (76) from France, never got into his stride as his left-handed opponent confidently strolled into the last 32.

After a one-sided opening game with Lebesson targeting the Drinkhall backhand down the line, the Englishman recovered to 6-6 in the second game. After losing both points on his serve he called an early timeout – and it worked.

From 8-6 down he led 9-8 with successive brilliant forehand fades down the line away to the Frenchman's outstretched left hand. A big net for Drinkhall of his defence then gave him his first game point but a lightning-fast forehand from Lebesson kept him in the game.

Next it was the world number 76 to take the lead after Drinkhall served into the net, but the four-times English Champion rallied brilliantly with a backhand double, one to the backhand side and one to the forehand, for 11-11.

The pair then traded game points before the crucial mistake was made by the English no. 1 as he pushed long for 13-14. Lebesson secured the next point soon after and with it, a commanding 2-0 lead.

There was little to cheer about after that for the Englishman as games three and four went in a flash. A 7-1 lead for Lebesson in the third resulted in an 11-3 game – Drinkhall's tame push into the net summing up the game, while the 23-year-old cut a dejected figure in the fourth game as his campaign in Austria closed unceremoniously.

His partner Parker meanwhile was unable to make any inroads in her womens' singles match against Czech star Iveta Vacenovska (world rank 26) as her campaign also came to an end early on Friday morning.

It was always likely to be a tall task and it got even harder when the Czech girl blitzed the first game 11-3.

The English number 1 fought back in games two and three to close the deficits but both times found herself narrowly edged out by her more illustrious opponent. At 3-0 down the match was all but over and it proved the case soon after with Vacenovska winning the fourth 11-6 and advancing to the last 32.

Parker will now have to look ahead to the important [European Championships Qualification](#) match with Spain on Tuesday in Gateshead to pick up a positive result.

Meanwhile, you can watch Parker's match with Vacenovska, plus a selection of other English players in action, on the [itTV archive for the Austrian Open here](#).

ITTF World Tour Austrian Open (Wels, Jan 23-27th) Results

Mens' Singles Round of 64:

Emmanuel Lebesson (FRA, 76) bt Paul Drinkhall 4-0 (11-6, 15-13, 11-3, 11-6)

Womens' Singles Round of 64:

Iveta Vacenovska (CZE, 26) bt Joanna Parker 4-0 (11-3, 14-12, 12-10, 11-6)

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