

Pitchford makes under-21 QF in China

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Posted On: June 14, 2013



Liam Pitchford was the sole Englishman on duty at the ITTF China Open with a self-funded entry to the super series event in Changchun.

His week began with disappointment after failing to emerge from his Men's Singles qualification group after losing to Singapore's Yang Zi.

It was an unusually difficult qualification stage for this event with players such as Tiago Apolonia (POR), Kirill Skachkov (RUS) and Alexey Smirnov (RUS) all forced to qualify from their groups.

Pitchford was second seed in group 15 and had successfully managed two 4-0 wins over Masahiro Otsuka (JPN) and Omer Avi-Tal (PAN) respectively, but he was ultimately no match for Yang Zi in the final, decisive encounter.

His campaign in the under-21s was more successful after receiving a bye to the first round. There he beat Korea's Park Chan-Hyeok in three comfortable games before missing out on a semi-final place in a close 4-2 defeat to Germany's Patrick Franziska.

With China's Fan Zhendong and Yan An awaiting in the semi-finals it would have been a tough last four tie.

ITTF China Open Selected Results

Men's Singles

Group 15

Liam Pitchford bt Masahiro Otsuka (JPN, 543) 4-2 (12-10, 10-12, 11-9, 12-10, 7-11, 11-5)

Liam Pitchford bt Omer Avi-Tal (PAN, unr) 4-0 (11-4, 11-4, 11-4, 11-6)

Yang Zi (SIN, 107) bt Liam Pitchford 4-0 (11-2, 11-8, 11-9, 11-6)

Men's Under-21s

Last 16

Liam Pitchford bt Park Chan-Hyeok (KOR, 347) 3-0 (11-4, 11-5, 11-7)

Quarter-Final

Patrick Franziska (GER, 61) bt Liam Pitchford 4-2 (13-11, 11-5, 6-11, 10-12, 11-7, 11-8)

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