

Silver linings in European triple for Tin-Tin

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England's cadet star Tin-Tin Ho was unable to secure a first gold medal from the European Youth Championships but still returned with a trio of awards from Ostrava, Czech Republic.

After securing a silver medal alongside the host nation's Tomas Polansky on Saturday in the Mixed Doubles, she added to her haul with another silver medal in the Girls' Doubles alongside Maria Malanina (RUS) and a bronze in the Girls' Singles.

At the start of the day the former European Cadet No. 1 was hoping to become the first-ever English girl to win the Cadet Singles and the first girl to win gold since Lisa Bellinger & Jean Parker's Junior Girls' Doubles title from Malmo (SWE) in 1983.

The closest she came to success was in the Girls' Doubles finals where she comfortably partnered Russian defender Malanina into the final of the competition.

Malanina's defence control allowed Tin-Tin's aggressive style of play to be utilised and the pair comfortably brushed aside Romanians Andreea Dragoman and Mihaela Plaeasu.

However, when they got to the final, the more consistent attacking pair of Adina Diaconu and Andreea Clapa, colleagues of Tin-Tin's in the European squad from Romania, were no match for the English/Russian duo.

The final was decided in three straight games as Tin-Tin and Maria were unable to prevent the Romanian second seeds from taking control.

Earlier she was agonisingly beaten in the Cadet Girls' Singles semi-final by Diaconu as she had to settle for the bronze medal that she earned from reaching the last four yesterday.

Tin-Tin, a traditionally slow starter, fell 5-1 behind in the first game and, despite a brief fightback, eventually lost it 11-9.

The English girl flew out of the blocks in the second game in a much-improved performance to lead 7-2 en route to an 11-7 game. However, two weaker games soon followed which meant Diaconu was able to capitalise and establish a commanding 3-1 lead.

At 6-4 down in the fifth game it seemed everything was done and dusted but the English No. 1 dug deep to win seven consecutive points and create a lifeline at 3-2.

That opening was quickly converted into a full-blown chance as a rapid 11-4 sixth game for the Paddington girl

brought her back level and forced a deciding game for a place in the final.

Despite the momentum seemingly with the English girl, it was the Romanian second seed who was able to take control in the end by winning 11-5 to secure a nervy place in the final.

Tin-Tin was left to settle for a second consecutive Cadet Girls' Singles bronze from the European Youth Championships.

56th European Youth Championships (12-21st July 2013) Ostrava, Czech Republic

Singles Results

Semi-Final:

Adina Diaconu (ROU) bt Tin-Tin Ho 4-3 (11-9, 7-11, 11-4, 11-8, 6-11, 4-11, 11-5)

Cadet Girls' Doubles:

Semi-Final:

Tin-Tin Ho/Maria Malanina (RUS) bt Andreea Dragoman/Mihaela Plaeasu (ROU) 3-1 (9-11, 11-4, 11-7, 11-5)

Final:

Adina Diaconu/Andreea Clapa (ROU) bt Tin-Tin Ho/Maria Malanina (RUS) 3-0 (11-8, 11-7, 11-3)

Written by Russell Moore (July 21, 2013)

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