

2014 World Team Championships day 3

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Liam Pitchford saved 2 match points against Thomas Keinath (Courtesy of ITTF)

England's men and women remain on course to top their groups despite fluctuating fortunes on the third day of the ZEN-NOH 2014 World Team Championships in Tokyo.

Both squads faced their toughest tests so far in the Far East as the top seeds met the second seeds in the respective groups to decide who will receive a bye into the quarter-finals of the promotion knock-out phase.

The process will be straightforward for the men's team who brushed aside their closest challenger, Slovakia, with a comprehensive 3-0 victory in Tokyo. Paul Drinkhall opened the account with a 3-1 win over Lubomir Pistej (world rank 138) – continuing his form from yesterday, before Liam Pitchford shook off a gritty performance from Thomas Keinath.

The world no. 101 from Slovakia opened up a 2-1 lead after a tight 13-11 third game but England's no.1, ranked 59th, fought back to save two match points in the fourth game from 8-10 down before securing a 2-0 lead for England with an 11-8 deciding end.

Daniel Reed, who had struggled with an injury earlier in the season, continued to shrug off any fitness fears with his fourth consecutive victory to seal the win and maintain the men's perfect record to the 2014 World Team Championships after defeating Peter Sereda (163) 3-0.

The women's team, also pushing for the Championships Division, were however dealt a blow to their campaign when they were beaten for the first time in Japan by Group F second seeds, Lithuania. Despite Joanna Drinkhall winning the first fixture, a double for Lithuanian no. 1 Ruta Paskauskiene (95) saw the English women to a 3-1 defeat to pull them back into the mix.

As it stands, the women remain in control of Group F because of Lithuania's earlier loss to Malaysia. Should the three sides all win Thursday's encounters, England would top the group and receive a bye to the quarter-finals thanks to their greater head-to-head record (England 4-3, Lithuania 4-4, Malaysia 3-4).

Both the men and women face Israel on Thursday morning (women at 02:00 GMT and men at 05:00 GMT) in matches they will expect to win and hope to result in a place at the top of the qualifying groups. Once the group matches are complete attentions will turn to the other three groups in the Challenge Division to see which potential opponents stand in the way of one of the two spots available in the top flight for the victors at the end of the World Team Championships.

View the full report from the second day of the 2014 World Team Championships [here](#)

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Latest 2014 World Team Championships, Tokyo (JPN) Scores:

Men's Challenge Division Group G:

England 3-0 Slovakia

Paul Drinkhall bt Lubomir Pistej (138) 3-1 (9-11, 11-8, 11-6, 12-10)

Liam Pitchford bt Thomas Keinath (101) 3-2 (9-11, 11-5, 11-13, 12-10, 11-8)

Daniel Reed bt Peter Sereda (163) 3-0 (11-4, 11-7, 14-12)

Women's Challenge Division Group F

England 1-3 Lithuania

Joanna Drinkhall bt Ieva Venslaviciute (unranked) 3-1 (6-11, 11-7, 11-9, 11-5)

Ruta Paskauskiene (95) bt Kelly Sibley 3-2 (6-11, 9-11, 11-4, 11-5, 12-10)

Egle Stuckyte (242) bt Tin-Tin Ho 3-0 (11-9, 11-9, 11-2)

Ruta Paskauskiene bt Joanna Drinkhall 3-0 (15-13, 11-5, 11-9)

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