

Liam's sporting gesture – but was it really a let?

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Liam Pitchford in action in the Heritage Oil Open semi-final at the BT Sport studio. Picture by Michael Loveder

Viewers watching highlights of the Heritage Oil Open on BT Sport will have the chance to judge for themselves a controversial incident in Liam Pitchford's semi-final.

With the England top seed 2-1 ahead in his match against Enio Mendes, and the fourth game locked at 10-10, Mendes called for a let on Pitchford's serve.

Despite neither umpire having seen it, and having given the point to Pitchford, the England No 1 agreed to replay the point, drawing a round of applause from spectators.

Mendes won the replayed point and went on to take the game. He then won the fifth to go through to the final.

International umpire Neil Curtis, who was officiating, said: "Liam served, Mendes half-heartedly played the shot back and said 'let'

"I didn't see it touch the net. I looked at my assistant umpire and he didn't see it. I called the point to Liam, but he said it was a let if Mendes wanted a let.

"As the players both agreed, we had to agree with them and play the let – if the players had disagreed, it's the umpire's final decision."

Pitchford, who did not blame the end result on the incident, said: "I didn't see it was a let, but he stopped.

"Maybe that point could have changed things, but I should never have been in that position. He played well but I couldn't really get my rhythm. I was missing a lot of balls I should have got on the table. I didn't really play very well."

So did the ball touch the net? Tune in to BT Sport on Saturday between 9 and 11pm to see the slow-motion replays and find out whether it should have been a let.

The highlights show will be repeated at 1.15pm on Monday, 4am on Tuesday and 10am next Thursday.

By Paul Stimpson (July 11th, 2014)

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