

England prepare for medal assault after day 7

Author: Paul Stimpson

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The English players in action on Wednesday at the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games were busily working through their matches in Scotstoun with 12 hours of play including the first matches for the women's singles, men's doubles and mixed doubles.

While nothing can be won on day seven in Scotland, there was plenty to lose but the English squad fared well to set themselves up for a shot at more medal success following the men's team silver on Sunday.

The most impressive result of the day was Sam Walker and Karina Le Fevre's combined attempt in the mixed doubles to overcome India's Soumyajit Ghosh and Pouloumi Ghatak. Ranked below their opponents in the world, they trailed 2-1 at one stage only to fight back strongly in the fourth 11-1 before holding their nerve to secure a fantastic win 11-8 in the deciding fifth game.

The pair were joined in the mixed doubles last 16 by all of the other mixed doubles pairings following a successful day in Glasgow. Liam Pitchford/Tin-Tin Ho, Daniel Reed/Kelly Sibley and Paul Drinkhall/Joanna Drinkhall all won twice to book their places in tomorrow's proceedings. The much-awaited contest between Pitchford/Ho and Ryan Jenkins/Charlotte Carey (WAL) turned out to be a very comprehensive 3-0 win for the English duo, furthering claims that they may pinch a medal later in the week.

The only defeat of the day came for 15-year-old Tin-Tin in the women's singles second round when she came up against world no. 10 Yu Mengyu from Singapore. The second seed who won a singles silver in Delhi 2010 was a tough ask but was pushed hard by the English cadet who sealed a memorable second game 15-13 during her 4-1 defeat.

The other women's singles in action saw Drinkhall put in a fine performance to defeat Offiong Edem (NGR) 4-0 while Sibley was handed a walkover after Malaysian Ng Sock Khim, who beat her in the team event, pulled out.

The final action of the day took place in the men's doubles where Drinkhall/Pitchford and Reed/Walker both beat Ghanaian opponents to secure a spot in the next round.

Drinkhall was pleased with the progress he and 21-year-old Pitchford had made in their doubles partnership: "I feel like the extra doubles practice we have had is paying off and I feel like I am playing well.

"I think in the past I never really practiced doubles that much, I would turn up to tournaments and play with different partners but now Liam and I are fixed normally.

"It is quite difficult changing from mixed doubles to doubles with Liam because the movement is slightly different but it worked well there and it will have to throughout the tournament."

Walker, meanwhile was more pensive after being put through a tough match against Samuel Akayade and Emmanuel Commey: "Dan [Reed] and I played the first two sets against Ghana well, we were at the top of our game tactically and physically. But then perhaps due to me we lost a bit of concentration, my serves were drifting long, and it got a bit tense.

"We made it harder than we should have at times but it is good to get through it and we will just go out stronger and push on."

Results:

Mixed Doubles 2nd Round:

Liam Pitchford/Tin-Tin Ho bt Ham Lulu/Pareina Matariki (VAN) 3-0 (11-4, 11-3, 11-3)

Sam Walker/Karina Le Fevre bt Mark-Anthony Dowell/Anthonette Riley (BAR) 3-0 (11-7, 11-5, 11-8)

Daniel Reed/Kelly Sibley bt Akhilen Yogarajah/Widaad Gukhool (MRI) 3-0 (11-6, 11-1, 11-5)
Paul Drinkhall/Joanna Drinkhall bt Godfrey Sultan/Anniesa Benstrong (SEY) 3-1 (11-4, 11-6, 11-13, 11-0)

Mixed Doubles 3rd Round:

Liam Pitchford/Tin-Tin Ho bt Ryan Jenkins/Charlotte Carey (WAL) 3-0 (11-5, 11-7, 11-5)
Sam Walker/Karina Le Fevre bt Soumyajit Ghosh/Poulomi Ghatak (IND) 3-2 (9-11, 12-10, 8-11, 11-1, 11-8)
Daniel Reed/Kelly Sibley bt Niall Cameron/Gillian Edwards (SCO) 3-0 (11-7, 11-5, 11-3)
Paul Drinkhall/Joanna Drinkhall bt Chris Yan/Sally Zhang (AUS) 3-0 (11-8, 11-5, 12-10)

Women's Singles 2nd Round:

Kelly Sibley bt Ng Sock Khim (MAS) walkover
Joanna Drinkhall bt Offiong Edem (NGR) 4-0 (11-6, 11-8, 11-3, 11-8)
Yu Mengyu (SIN) bt Tin-Tin Ho 4-1 (11-7, 13-15, 11-1, 11-5, 11-2)

Men's Doubles 2nd Round:

Paul Drinkhall/Liam Pitchford bt Derek Abrefa/Felix Lartey (GHA) 3-0 (11-7, 11-6, 11-7)
Daniel Reed/Sam Walker bt Samuel Akayade/Emmanuel Commey (GHA) 3-1 (11-7, 11-7, 10-12, 11-9)

by Russell Moore (July 30, 2014)

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