

Mixed fortunes! Pairs assured of medals

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England's mixed doubles pairings are assured of a silver and bronze medal at worst – and a clean sweep of the medals at best – as three pairs made it through to Friday's semi-finals.

Paul and Joanna Drinkhall were impressive as they dispatched Singapore pair Gao Ning and Lin Ye, world ranked No 12 and No 41 respectively, in four – opening a 2-0 lead and then reasserting their authority after the Asian pair took the third.

Just as eye-catching was the manner of Daniel Reed and Kelly Sibley's victory over Indian pair SK Achanta and Shamini Kumaresan. The English pair saw their 2-0 lead eroded as the Indians levelled by taking a keenly fought fourth set 14-12. But Reed and Sibley were not fazed and turned up the power to take the decider 11-4.

Liam Pitchford and Tin-Tin Ho also needed five to see off Canada's Zhang Mo and Eugene Wang, twice being pegged back after taking the lead but nailing the crucial fifth 11-8.

It all means Reed and Sibley face the Drinkhalls for a place in the final, with the losing pair to battle for bronze. Pitchford and Ho face Singapore's Jian Zhan and Tianwei Feng – the world No 34 and No 4 respectively – in the other semi-final, with both matches at 1.40pm.

Pitchford and Drinkhall also have designs on a medal in the men's doubles, having reached the last four today with a stunning fightback against Quadri Aruna and Segun Toriola of Nigeria.

Finding themselves 2-1 down, despite taking the first end, a change of tactics swung it for Drinkhall and Pitchford in a match packed with scintillating forehand rallies, as they began taking the ball earlier to unsettle their opponents and hitting wide to Nigeria's forehand.

The famous victory sets up a high noon showdown with Gao Ning and Li Hu of Singapore for a place in the final and a guaranteed medal.

Afterwards, Pitchford said: "I don't really know what to say, it feels amazing to get to two semi-finals.

"It was a tough day but the best of my career results wise. I was feeling tired towards the end of my singles match but we work six hours every day for these tournaments so adrenalin gets you through if you keep winning."

Reed and Sam Walker were unable to join their compatriots, bowing out in the quarter-finals to India's SK Achanta and Anthony Amalraj.

Walker's verdict as his games came to an end was: "I didn't play well enough in that match, I started quite slow and I just think I took the ball quite late and didn't play with enough spin.

"It's disappointing but hopefully I will be able to come back in four years time and improve on this year. It's been a good experience for me with my first Commonwealth Games, I'm just disappointed not have done a bit better.

"I gave it everything I had and silver in the team is good. But I want more now."

In the women's doubles combinations, both English pairs advanced into the third round.

Joanna Drinkhall and Sibley face Sri Lanka's Ishara Madurangi and Erandi Warusawithana, having seen off Jamaica's Shenique Clare and Yvonne Foster, while Ho and Karina Le Fevre went through on a walkover against a pair from Guyana, setting up a clash against Jian Fang Lay and Miao Miao of Australia.

Pitchford, Paul Drinkhall and Andrew Baggaley are all safely through to the last 16 of the men's singles and will all be in action on Friday morning.

Baggaley, who beat Malaysia's Muhd Shakirin Ibrahim 4-0, said: "He's a good player so it's always good to win it 4-0. It was a strong performance, I didn't really look like losing a set, I felt confident and I played to my ability, so I'm happy."

However, Joanna Drinkhall and Sibley were both knocked out in the last 16 of the women's singles.

Results

Men's Singles last 32:

Liam Pitchford bt Paul McCreery (NIR) 4-0 (11-5, 11-5, 11-8, 11-7)

Paul Drinkhall bt Tengteng Liu (NZL) 4-1 (11-3, 11-4, 11-4, 3-11, 11-9)

Andrew Baggaley bt Muhd Shakirin Ibrahim (MAS) 4-0 (11-8, 11-5, 11-7, 11-6)

Women's Singles Last 16:

Lin Ye (SIN) bt Kelly Sibley 4-1 (11-4, 11-9, 5-11, 11-8, 11-3)

Naomi Owen (WAL) bt Joanna Drinkhall 4-1 (12-10, 8-11, 11-7, 11-7, 11-6)

Men's Doubles Last 16:

Paul Drinkhall/Liam Pitchford bt Heming Hu/Chris Yan (AUS) 3-1 (11-8, 6-11, 11-4, 11-2)

Sam Walker/Daniel Reed bt Niall Cameron/Sean Doherty (SCO) 3-0 (11-3, 12-10, 11-5)

Men's Doubles Quarter-Forms:

Paul Drinkhall/Liam Pitchford bt Quadri Aruna/Segun Toriola (NGR) 3-2 (11-7, 8-11, 6-11, 11-5, 11-7)

S.K. Achanta/Anthony Amalraj (IND) bt Daniel Reed/Sam Walker 3-1 (12-10, 11-6, 7-11, 11-8)

Women's Doubles 2nd Round:

Joanna Drinkhall/Kelly Sibley bt Shenique Clare/Yvonne Foster (JAM) 3-0 (11-7, 11-2, 12-10)

Tin-Tin Ho/Karina Le Fevre bt Jody-Ann Blake/Natalie Cummings (GUY) walkover

Mixed Doubles Last 16:

William Henzell/Miao Miao (AUS) bt Sam Walker/Karina Le Fevre 3-2 (4-11, 11-9, 11-7, 7-11, 11-9)

Liam Pitchford/Tin-Tin Ho bt Tengteng Liu/Karen Li (NZL) 3-0 (11-5, 11-9, 11-8)

Daniel Reed/Kelly Sibley bt Li Hu/Yu Mengyu (SIN) 3-0 (11-7, 11-8, 11-9)

Paul Drinkhall/Joanna Drinkhall bt Andre Ho/Anqi Luo (CAN) 3-2 (11-8, 11-4, 4-11, 7-11, 11-3)

Mixed Doubles Quarter-Finals:

Liam Pitchford/Tin-Tin Ho bt Zhang Mo/Eugene Wang (CAN) 3-2 (11-4, 5-11, 11-5, 8-11, 11-8)

Daniel Reed/Kelly Sibley bt S.K. Achanta/Shamini Kumaresan (IND) 3-2 (11-7, 11-9, 5-11, 12-14, 11-4)

Paul Drinkhall/Joanna Drinkhall bt Gao Ning/Lin Ye (SIN) 3-1 (11-9, 11-6, 8-11, 11-6)

By Paul Stimpson (July 31st, 2014)

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