

Helshan beaten by top seed in Bahrain

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Helshan Weerasinghe

Helshan Weerasinghe has been knocked out in the last four of the Junior Boys' Singles at the Bahrain Junior & Cadet Open.

The 17-year-old had to face the top seed Cristian Pletea, and he pushed the Romanian close in the opening set, holding two game points before eventually losing it 13-11.

Pletea took the second more easily but the third was again close, Helshan losing it by the narrowest two-point margin.

And although the fourth seed reduced the deficit by taking the fourth, Pletea closed out of 4-1 win (13-11, 11-4, 11-9, 3-11, 11-5).

Weerasinghe had been in good form on his run to the semis, beating Ahmed Meshref of Egypt 4-0 (11-5, 11-4, 12-10, 11-5) in the last 16 in Manama.

He then came from 1-0 down to beat Rashed Sanad of Bahrain 4-1 (3-11, 11-7, 11-6, 11-5, 11-8) in the last eight.

Weerasinghe had earlier won all three group matches 3-0. He first beat Abdulaziz Mohd of Qatar 11-2, 11-2, 11-2 and followed up by an almost as straightforward defeat of Saudi Arabia's Turki Almutairi (11-3, 11-4, 11-1).

His final match saw him complete a trio of whitewashes by beating Shaurya Tushar Pednekar of India 11-8, 11-5, 11-5.

That put him into the main draw, where he received a bye in the last 32, seeing him advance to the last-16 showdown with Meshref.

In the doubles, Helshan again fell foul of Pletea in the last four. He and partner Mudit Dani of India lost 3-1 to Pletea and fellow Romanian Rares Sipos, despite taking a titanic third set. The final margin was 4-11, 4-11, 16-14, 3-11.

They had earlier beaten Husain Alajmi and Saud Alqassimi of Bahrain 3-0 (11-4, 11-2, 12-10) in the quarter-finals.

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