

Stokes ups the ante to take WCPP thriller

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Ashley Stokes won the World Championship of Ping Pong qualification event at Batts in Harlow.

The Middlesex player defeated Lithuania's Egle Adomelyte in a pulsating five-set final.

The pattern of the match repeated over the first four sets as Adomelyte twice took the lead in close sets, only for Stokes to blitz through the level the score.

And it was Stokes who took the decider to complete a 3-2 (14-15, 15-3, 14-15, 15-1, 15-9) triumph.

Stokes came through his group with seven wins out of seven, though he had to come from a set down to beat both Tony West (SK) and Zoltan Koszu of Serbia, overcoming the former 10-15, 15-10, 15-9 and the latter 9-15, 15-8, 15-11.

Stokes was then relatively untroubled in the knockout stages, defeating Casey Mansfield (E) 15-7, 15-8 in the last 32, Keith Baker (ST) 15-1, 15-6 in the last 16 and Richard Hutchinson (SK) 15-7, 15-6 in the quarter-finals.

That set up a semi against Joe Kennedy (E), and Stokes continued his unblemished knockout record with another 2-0 victory (15-6, 15-9).

Adomelyte also notched a full house of seven victories in the group stages, although unlike Stokes she did not concede a set.

That theme continued in the last 32 as she beat Ian Herriott (HE) 15-8, 15-10, before her one three-setter came against Koszu in the last 16, the Lithuanian taking it 15-9, 10-15, 15-6.

Fred Dove (E) was beaten 9 and 12 in the quarter-finals and Chris Bartram of Kent 8 and 10 in the last four, before that thrilling final.

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