



Sweden hold off England after Liam's fast start

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England's first match back at the top level of men's world table tennis for 19 years ended in a 3-1 defeat by Sweden today – but there was victory for England women.

Liam Pitchford gave 18th-ranked England the perfect start in Kuala Lumpur by defeating Kristian Karlsson – ranked 20 places higher than him at No 44 in the world – 3-0.

But Paul Drinkhall could not repeat the feat against an opponent also ranked 20 places higher at No 52 as he was defeated 3-0 in a close match by Mattias Karlsson.

World No 85 Jon Persson was then too strong for No 159 Sam Walker and Kristian Karlsson finished the match for eighth seeds Sweden by beating Drinkhall in four games.

England next play ninth seeds France at 2am UK time tomorrow. France started their campaign with a 3-0 victory over hosts Malaysia, while Germany beat Denmark 3-1 in the other Group B match.

In the women's Second Division, Kelly Sibley's two victories saw 32nd-ranked England to a 3-1 victory over Turkey, the 42nd-ranked team.

They had to come from behind as Karina Le Fevre was first beaten by world No 291 Simay Kulakceken, but Sibley levelled by easily beating Kubra Tan (No 418).

Tin-Tin Ho put England in front by comfortably seeing off Gul Pembe Ozkaya, ranked 468, and Sibley completed victory in four games against Kulakceken.

Elsewhere in Group E, Canada beat New Zealand 3-0 and Serbia, the top ranked team in the group, defeated Belgium by the same score. England next face Belgium at 2am UK time on Monday.

Results

Men's Championship Division

Group B

Sweden 3 England 1

Liam Pitchford bt Kristian Karlsson 3-0 (11-7, 11-7, 11-7)

Mattias Karlsson bt Paul Drinkhall 3-0 (11-8, 13-11, 12-10)

Jon Persson bt Sam Walker 3-0 (11-8, 11-5, 11-7)

Kristian Karlsson bt Drinkhall 3-1 (11-9, 11-5, 8-11, 11-7)

Women's Second Division

Group E

England 3 Turkey 1

Simay Kulakceken bt Karina Le Fevre 3-0 (11-6, 12-10, 11-9)

Kelly Sibley bt Kubra Tan 3-0 (11-6, 11-2, 11-4)

Tin-Tin Ho bt Gul Pembe Ozkaya 3-0 (11-7, 11-4, 11-4)

Sibley bt Kulakceken 3-1 (11-8, 12-10, 6-11, 11-7)

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