



England through to quarters with dramatic win

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Posted On: March 03, 2016

Paul Drinkhall won a last-match decider as England today beat Poland 3-2 to reach the last eight of the World Team Championships in Kuala Lumpur.

England, who made it through the group stage at the expense of second seeds Germany, were in good heart for their clash against opponents ranked No 12 in the competition.

Winning moments for [#TeamEngland](#) who are through to Quarter Finals of [#ITTFWorlds2016](#) [@liampitchford](#) [@pdrinkhall](#) [pic.twitter.com/s515zl9eYz](#)

— ITTF World (@ittfworld) [March 3, 2016](#)

And they made a brilliant start when Drinkhall, ranked No 72 in the world, beat No 40 Zengyi Wang in four games.

Liam Pitchford doubled the advantage when he staved off a comeback by world No 82 Jakub Dyjas to win in five.

Sam Walker then had a cracking match against Daniel Gorak, at No 67 ranked almost 100 places higher than the 20-year-old Worksop player, who is the world No 159.

Having been edged out in two lengthy games, Walker came back to level the match at 2-2, only to fall short in the last.

Wang overcame No 64 Pitchford 3-1 to take the match into a decider and Drinkhall, having lost the opening game to Dyjas, levelled in style and then took the next two games on deuce to take the Leopards through to the quarter-finals for the first time since 1983.

"It was really tough again Dyjas; I think I won the match four times!" said Pitchford. "He just kept getting the ball back, time and time again but I won; yes I lost to Wang Zengyi but Paul won two and we won the match, just

really great.”

Drinkhall added: “We started badly, two defeats (against Sweden and France) but we are all playing better and better; we have a great spirit in the team. Now we are through to the quarter-finals and we all really believe we can beat them.

“First match today against Wang Zengyi was very difficult; pen-holder fast attacks, it is not a style you meet these days. Against Jakub I felt in control I was ahead in the first game and lost, in the fourth I was down 4-9 and won; I came through, we won; make no mistake he is a very good player, really tough match.”

England will face France at 11.30am UK time tomorrow – and the match will be shown live via the ITTF website. France beat England 3-0 in the group but in-form England will scent the chance of a revenge victory.

England’s women have also been in action today, and were defeated 3-2 by Puerto Rico in the first round of the play-offs for 25th to 36th positions.

Kelly Sibley won both her matches, including a superb 3-1 victory over world No 100 Adriana Diaz, but Tin-Tin Ho and Karina Le Fevre were unable to add to the score.

In the women’s play-offs for positions 49-60, Wales were beaten 3-1 by Venezuela. In the same bracket of the men’s event, Scotland were beaten 3-1 by Chile and Ireland lost by the same score to Finland.

Results

Men’s Championship Division

First play-off round

England 3 Poland 2

Paul Drinkhall bt Zengyi Wang 3-1 (11-7, 9-11, 11-8, 11-7)

Liam Pitchford bt Jakub Dyjas 3-2 (11-8, 11-7, 10-12, 9-11, 11-9)

Daniel Gorak bt Sam Walker 3-2 (16-14, 15-13, 6-11, 6-11, 11-4)

Wang bt Pitchford 3-1 (11-9, 5-11, 12-10, 11-7)

Drinkhall bt Dyjas 3-1 (11-13, 11-6, 14-12, 13-11)

Women’s Second Division

First play-off round

Puerto Rico 3 England 2

Kelly Sibley bt Melanie Diaz 3-0 (11-9, 11-4, 11-6)

Adriana Diaz bt Tin-Tin Ho 3-0 (11-9, 11-8, 11-5)

Carelyn Cordero bt Karina Le Fevre 3-2 (11-7, 3-11, 8-11, 11-9, 11-6)

Sibley bt Adriana Diaz 3-1 (8-11, 11-8, 11-9, 11-9)

Melanie Diaz bt Ho 3-1 (6-11, 11-8, 11-9, 12-10)

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