



## Paul's off to a winning start in Rio Qualification

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Paul Drinkhall has opened his Rio Olympic Qualification Event campaign with 4-3 victory over Florent Lambiet and 4-0 victory over Ibrahim Gunduz.

### Drinkhall v Lambiet

Representing Team GB, Drinkhall, who is ranked #68 in the world, made hard work of his first group stage match. His opponent, Belgium's Florent Lambiet, is ranked 133 places lower in the world rankings at #201.

Getting off to a slow start, Paul lost the first two sets 5-11 and 6-11 respectively.

However the 2016 National Champion managed to find good form in the third, fourth and fifth sets – 11-8, 11-5, 11-7 – to gain the lead in the match 3-2.

A tense sixth set saw Drinkhall save six game points, but he was unable to save the seventh, eventually losing it 11-13 and sending the match into a final deciding set.

Deuce in the final game was a nervous affair for any Team GB spectator, but fortunately it was Drinkhall who came out on top as he took the game 13-11.

Paul will be glad to get an opening victory under his belt, especially against an opponent who he has previously lost to in Sweden (2-4 at the 2014 Swedish Open).

Speaking to the ETTU, Paul said: "Two years ago Florent beat me at the Swedish open, but we played three or four matches at that time in Belgium's League."

"He is very tough adversary."

"Today I was on the top of the game most of the time. I gave him too many balls, by making easy mistakes, which is unusual for me. Although I was not afraid in the close situation, because I always felt that I was controlling the game."

## Watch the highlights

*Please note, this video uses flash player and therefore is only view-able on a desktop computer*

## Drinkhall v Gunduz

Paul faced Ibrahim Gunduz in his second match of the Rio 2016 Qualifying Event. In contrast to the opening match, Paul's second match of the day was a far more straight forward affair.

The GB player made light work of his Turkish opponent, who is ranked #302 in the world, defeating him in straight sets (11-4, 11-9, 11-6, 11-8).

It means Paul now leads his qualification group with two wins from two matches.

He will be looking to continue his 100% record tomorrow against Spanish opponent, Carlos Machado. Their match will be at 11.40am tomorrow (Tuesday) – UK time.

Another victory will guarantee him through to the main stages of the competition, where he will join fellow GB player Liam Pitchford – who automatically progressed through the group stages as he is seeded in the top #16 of the competition.

## As it stands:

2016 ITTF-European Olympic Qualification Tournament, Halmstad,  
SWE Apr 12 -Apr 16



Men's Singles (Qual Groups)

Group	Player	1	2	3	4	Wins	Losses	Points	Position
<b>Group 11</b>									
1	DRINKHALL Paul <b>ENG</b>			4-3	4-0	2	0	4	1
2	MACHADO Carlos <b>ESP</b>			2-4	4-1	1	1	3	2
3	LAMBIET Florent <b>BEL</b>	3-4	4-2			1	1	3	3
4	GUNDUZ Ibrahim <b>TUR</b>	0-4	1-4			0	2	2	4

Group 11

1	1	3	11:40 12/4/2016 <a href="#">Table 1</a>	DRINKHALL Paul <b>ENG</b>	vs	LAMBIET Florent <b>BEL</b>	5-11, 6-11, 11-8, 11-5, 11-7, 11-13, 13-11	4-3	DRINKHALL Paul
2	2	4	11:40 12/4/2016 <a href="#">Table 2</a>	MACHADO Carlos <b>ESP</b>	vs	GUNDUZ Ibrahim <b>TUR</b>	11-8, 5-11, 11-9, 14-12, 11-5, -, -	4-1	MACHADO Carlos
3	1	4	16:40 12/4/2016 <a href="#">Table 3</a>	DRINKHALL Paul <b>ENG</b>	vs	GUNDUZ Ibrahim <b>TUR</b>	11-4, 11-9, 11-6, 11-8, -, -, -	4-0	DRINKHALL Paul
4	2	3	16:40 12/4/2016 <a href="#">Table 4</a>	MACHADO Carlos <b>ESP</b>	vs	LAMBIET Florent <b>BEL</b>	11-2, 8-11, 12-14, 11-8, 13-15, 6-11, -	2-4	LAMBIET Florent
5	1	2	12:40 13/4/2016 <a href="#">Table 5</a>	DRINKHALL Paul <b>ENG</b>	vs	MACHADO Carlos <b>ESP</b>	-, -, -, -, -, -, -	-	
6	3	4	12:40 13/4/2016 <a href="#">Table 6</a>	LAMBIET Florent <b>BEL</b>	vs	GUNDUZ Ibrahim <b>TUR</b>	-, -, -, -, -, -, -	-	

As it stands (click to update)

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