



Ma stars as China complete clean sweep

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Singles champion Ma Long showed why he is the world's best player as his double helped China complete a clean sweep of gold medals after Japan had threatened an upset in the Olympic men's team final.

Ma gave the defending champions the ideal start by overcoming Koki Niwa in three straight (11-6, 11-9, 11-6), but world No 6 Jun Mizutani levelled for Japan with a scintillating victory over Xu Xin.

Mizutani moved into a two-game lead, but Xu's comeback saw him notch three match points in the fifth. But from 10-7 down, Mizutani reeled off five points to take it 3-2 (12-10, 11-9, 3-11, 7-11, 12-10).

When Japan took the first set of the doubles, an upset became more of a possibility, but Xu & Zhang Jike shut the door on Niwa & Maharu Yoshimura 3-1 (4-11, 11-6, 11-9, 11-5).

And it was left to Ma to finally snuff out Japan's hopes with a one-sided 11-1, 11-4, 11-4 victory over Yoshimura.

Germany won the bronze medal match for the second successive Games, beating South Korea 3-1.

Bastian Steger lost the first match to Youngsik Jeoung 3-2 (10-12, 11-6, 6-11, 11-6, 13-11) but Dimitrij Ovtcharov levelled 3-2 (11-5, 11-9, 8-11, 2-11, 11-6) against Saehyuk Joo.

Steger & Timo Boll needed five to overcome Jeoung & Sangsu Lee (9-11, 11-6, 11-7, 9-11, 11-9) in the doubles and Boll's three-straight victory over Joo (11-8, 11-9, 11-6) was enough for Germany.



The medallists on the podium (ITTF picture/Remy Gros)

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