



England's women defeated in Germany

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The England Leopards women's squad opened their 2017 European Championships qualification campaign with a 3-0 defeat to Germany.

Despite fielding a young team, the reigning European champions and Olympic silver medallists made their intentions felt from the start in Leipzig.

Tin-Tin Ho led the Leopards out against Germany's Ying Han (WR #7). The German No 1 made quick work of England's national champion, taking the match in just 18 minutes (11-8, 11-2, 11-7).

Matters were almost levelled in the second match when Kelly Sibley took confidently to the table. England's No 1 won her first two games 11-4 and 11-6. However her opponent, Nina Mittelham, who turned 20 last Friday, dug deep to take the third 11-6.

The fourth set proved a tighter affair, with chances for both players. Despite taking a 10-8 lead, Sibley was unable to convert three match points and lost the set 11-13. With the momentum now in Mittelham's favour, the world ranked #168 took the fifth 11-8, giving Germany a 2-0 lead.

Last up was Karina le Fevre who faced Yuan Wan (WR #193), ranked some 204 places above the girl from Cleveland.

Le Fevre made a strong start, winning the first game 11-6. However, her 20-year-old opponent stepped up a gear and took the second, third and fourth sets (11-2, 11-3 & 11-6).

It was not an unexpected defeat for England, with Germany ranked 25 places above them in the ITTF world rankings at No 8.

Speaking after the match, Tin-Tin said:

Unfortunately the result wasn't as we hoped for, but the girls played really well and had a good team spirit as usual.

It was a great opportunity to play against Han Ying as she is the highest ranked player I have competed against and it was a good insight for me to see how my game compares with the world's best.

Nevertheless we will keep fighting and hopefully do well in the next matches.

Karina added:

We expected a tough match going into it but we all remained positive and give it our best shot. The result was 3-0 but we had some chances which we couldn't convert into wins.

Personally, I felt I got a good start in my match and came out as the more aggressive player, but she played clever and chance the tactics which made it a different match.

As a team we can all take it as a positive that we made opportunities for ourselves and we will continue working hard and learning from this experience for the future.

Whilst Kelly said:

Going into the match we knew it was going to be tough. They are Olympic team silver medalists and have impressive strength and depth, so we knew whichever team they would play we would have to perform at our best level.

I thought as a team we performed well and gave ourselves some chance.

On a personal note, I am disappointed not to have taken my chances as I felt I got myself into a winning position in the match.

I need to try and look at this as a positive as I was playing at a high level and gave myself opportunities to win.

I can use this to focus on in training and take it into the next match against Slovenia.

The English girls will be relishing the prospect of a re-match on home soil for the second leg and you can be there to cheer them on! Tickets are now on sale for England vs Germany on December 13th, in Preston. [Click here to get your tickets.](#)

2017 European Championships Qualification Results

Women's Championship Division Group B

Germany 3-0 England

Ying Han bt Tin-Tin Ho 3-0 (11-8, 11-2, 11-7)

Nina Mittelham bt Kelly Sibley 3-2 (4-11, 5-11, 11-6, 13-11, 11-8)

Yuan Wan bt Karina le Fevre 3-1 (6-11, 11-2, 11-3, 11-6)

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