



Big wins for Walker, Ho and Pitchford

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Sam Walker and Tin-Tin Ho are safely through to the main draw of the singles and there was a brilliant comeback win for Ho & Liam Pitchford in the mixed doubles at the European Championships today.

The doubles triumph in Budapest was certainly memorable as the English pair overcame 14th seeds Joao Geraldo & Yu Fu of Portugal from 2-0 down, eventually winning it 11-8 in the fifth to move into the last 16.

There they will face seventh seeds Wang Yang (SVK) & Polina Mikhailova (RUS) at 9am UK time on Thursday.

Earlier, things were also not straightforward for Pitchford & Ho in the preliminary round as they were taken to 13-11 in a deciding set – battling back from 9-5 down in that set – by Czech pair Tomas Polansky & Renata Strbikova, having seen their opponents save two match points in the fourth.

In the singles, Walker was particularly impressive as he completed a perfect record of three 4-0 victories in the group stage, his latest victim Lars Ronneberg of Norway.

It put him straight into the last 64, where he will face 15th seed Lei Kou of Ukraine, at 5.30pm UK time on Thursday.

Liam Pitchford and Paul Drinkhall, seeded straight into the knockout stages, enter the fray on Thursday. Pitchford, ranked 22, will face Tomasz Lewandowski of Poland at 6.30pm, while 13th-ranked Drinkhall plays at 8pm against teenager Ioannis Sgouropoulos of Greece – who is in the squad for the team qualifying tie between England and Greece in Stoke on November 1.

Ho also signed off the group stage with a 4-0 victory, over Deng Simeng of Azerbaijan. She will have to silence the crowd in her last 64 tie as she faces Hungary's Georgina Pota, the world No 34, who is the eighth seed. The match is at 4.40pm UK time on Thursday.

As well as mixed doubles success, the Leopards had men's doubles success to report.

In the men's preliminaries, Walker again had an unblemished scoreline as, in partnership with Hunor Szocs of Romania, the pair saw off Greek pair Georgios Konstantinopoulos & Sgouropoulos in three straight.

Meanwhile, Charlotte Carey of Wales won two of her three group matches, losing 4-1 to Szandra Pergel (HUN) then beating Ivona Petric (MNE) 4-0 and Egle Stuckyte (LTU) 4-3 (11-9, 9-11, 7-11, 11-8, 6-11, 11-9, 13-11).

Unlike Ho, who went straight into the last 64, Carey had to play a further preliminary round tie, which she lost to Russia's Maria Malanina 4-1 (6, -9, -5, -10, -6).

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