



Fightbacks in vain for English duo

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Posted On: October 21, 2016

Liam Pitchford and Paul Drinkhall both came from 3-0 down to force deciders at the European Championships today, only to fall just short at the end.

And to take the symmetry one step further, both were defeated by Austrian players in their last-32 clashes in Budapest.

Pitchford was first on and could count himself unfortunate to be 3-0 down to seventh seed Stefan Fegerl in a close match, but once he shaded the fourth, the momentum turned.

Pitchford, seeded 22, went 5-0 and 10-2 up on his way to taking the fifth and then came from 8-5 down to seal the sixth.

But the world No 22 opened up a 4-0 lead and never looked back in the decider, pulling away to 10-2 and winning on his third match point.

Drinkhall also trailed 3-0 against Robert Gardos in another match, with the exception of the second set, which was decided by just a handful of points.

He also appeared to have the momentum, the more so when he led the decider 4-0. But Gardos, seeded 21 to Drinkhall's 13, gradually worked his way back. At 8-8, it was anybody's, but Gardos took the next three points to move into the last 16.

His opponent will be second seed Vladimir Samsonov, meaning Drinkhall misses the chance to avenge his last-16 defeat by the man from Belarus at the Olympics.

Meanwhile, there was a huge shock in the last 32 when top seed Dimitrij Ovtcharov of Germany was beaten 4-2 (13-11, 9-11, 11-4, 5-11, 8-11, 9-11) by Jakub Dyjas of Poland, seeded 19th.

Earlier, in the doubles, Drinkhall & Pitchford were eliminated by sixth seeds Dyjas & Daniel Gorak of Poland in their

last-16 clash, despite leading 1-0 and 2-1.

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