



Top seed Ovtcharov too strong for Pitchford

Author: Paul Stimpson

Posted On: November 19, 2016

Liam Pitchford's Swedish Open interest has been ended by top seed Dimitrij Ovtcharov in the quarter-finals.

Pitchford, having beaten world No 31 Hugo Calderano yesterday to reach the last 16, advanced further with a 4-2 win over Japan's Jin Ueda in his first match of the day.

Europe's top player awaited in the quarters and Pitchford lived with him throughout the first game before losing it 14-12. The second followed to the German, but the Englishman narrowed the gap by winning the third.

Ovtcharov blitzed the fourth but and then whittled away an early Pitchford lead in the fifth to arrive at 10-9 up. Pitchford saved that match point, missed a game point of his own and then saved a second match point with a contemptuous backhand flick receive.

Two more match points were saved, prompting the German to take a time-out at 15-14 up. And it did the trick as he finally took his fifth match point to advance to the last four.

While disappointed with the defeat, Pitchford took heart from a run which equalled his best finish at a World Tour event.

He said:

"I didn't really know what to expect. I had a match in France on Tuesday and came straight to Stockholm on Wednesday. I hadn't been in such good form but knew if I found form I could have a good tournament.

"The first game (against Harald Andersson) was important – I practise with him in Halmstad. I got through that and got a crack at Calderano, who I played with for two years in Ochsenhausen.

"That was a good win and then against the Japanese guy, he was playing well and took down Gauzy but I had a

plan and in the last two sets I sort of figured him out.

"I'm a little bit disappointed with how the match went against Ovtcharov. I had my chances in the first set and if I had taken them then who knows, it might have been different.

"I had chances in the last as well. So I'm disappointed but overall I'm happy to get to the quarter-finals."

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