



Pitchford and Drinkhall top groups in Germany

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Paul Drinkhall and Liam Pitchford both won their groups at the German Open to advance to the knockout stages.

Drinkhall opened with a 4-1 win over Brian Afanador of Puerto Rico, ranked world No 242, but his second match was rather less routine.

Up against Benjamin Brossier of France, ranked 136, he started by taking a straightforward opening game, only to then find himself 2-1 down after two close games.

He won the next two, but his opponent hit back to force the match into a decider, which went the distance before Drinkhall took it 12-10 on his second match point.

Pitchford saw his first opponent, young German Tobias Hippler (#342), take a surprise 2-1 lead, but the Englishman turned up the power to storm through the next three games.

Next up was Lam Siu Hang, the world No 104 from Hong Kong, and Pitchford kept up his impressive form, though he was edged out of a protracted second game.

Pitchford next plays Jon Persson of Sweden in the preliminary round on Thursday morning, while Drinkhall has a bye into the second preliminary round, where he will face Ricardo Walther of Germany.

However, Sam Walker was unable to add to his win on the opening day as he was defeated in his second group match by world No 30 Bastian Steger of Germany.

Results

Men's Singles

Qualifying Group 8

Bastian Steger (GER) bt Sam Walker 4-0 (11-3, 11-6, 12-10, 11-3)

Group 17

Paul Drinkhall bt Brian Afanador (PUR) 4-1 (12-10, 9-11, 11-7, 13-11, 11-5)

Drinkhall bt Benjamin Brossier (FRA) 4-3 (11-3, 11-13, 9-11, 11-5, 11-9, 8-11, 12-10)

Group 33

Liam Pitchford bt Tobias Hippler (GER) 4-2 (11-5, 14-16, 8-11, 11-4, 11-2, 11-4)

Pitchford bt Lam Siu Hang (HKG) 4-1 (11-4, 18-20, 11-8, 11-8, 11-7)

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