

Baggaley/Pitchford Through To Semis

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Posted On: October 12, 2010



Andrew Baggaley and Liam Pitchford marched into Wednesday's men's doubles semi-finals after storming back from losing the first game to beat fancied Singaporeans Cai Xiaoli and Ma Liang 6-11, 11-7, 11-9, 11-4.

Despite the early set-back and feeling unwell, 27-year-old Baggaley and his 17-year-old partner said afterwards that they were never worried.

"It was quite good. I wasn't feeling well as I had an upset stomach, but we managed to win and now we are in the semis – it's a great comeback," said Baggaley. "I knew the game was going well and we employed tactics and they worked. We were quite relaxed."

Pitchford too put their success down to taking things calmly.

"We just relaxed after the first set. We decided to slow down the ball and play with heavy top spin. Then they became nervous. After the first set they started backing out."

The result means that Baggaley is still on course to win his fifth Commonwealth Games medal after picking up the men's doubles and team gold titles in 2002, men's doubles silver in 2006, and the team silver in Delhi on Saturday.

They now face Indians Sharath Achanta and Subhajit Saha after they came through their semi-final against Nigeria's Seun Ajetunmobi and Quadri Aruna.

It was a day of desperate come-backs although Paul Drinkhall's recovery from 2-0 down to 2-2 in his singles quarter-final with Yang Zi was ultimately unsuccessful as the Singapore man won the best of seven match 4-2.

That spelled the end of Drinkhall's Games but the tired Middlesbrough man was proud of the way he came back to two-all, winning the third and fourth sets 11-8.

Losing a ding-dong ping-pong battle in the fifth set, 11-9, knocked the stuffing out of the Middlesbrough man, however, and he couldn't halt the Singaporean tide in the sixth when he was swept away 11-5.

"My focus went totally wrong and I was really tired because of the tight schedule we had," said Drinkhall.

"Yesterday I played at 09:30 and I left at 20:00. I couldn't eat properly so there was no energy and it was difficult for today's game.

"I should have brought noodles from England. I didn't like the pasta they made here, so I couldn't get enough food."

It was the second time Drinkhall came off second best against Yang today as his mixed doubles hopes vanished earlier when he and Joanna Parker lost to second seeds Yang and Wang Yuegu, 4-11, 9-11, 6-11.

There was a good end to the tournament for Leanne Stephen in the women's wheelchair singles event. The para-sport athlete beat India's Ushabhen Rathod in three straight games, 11-6, 11-8, 11-5 to finish third in her preliminary group table.

The five times national junior champion came close to reaching the semi-finals but missed out on second place in the group to South Africa's Aletta Moll.

Stephen's GB Paralympic team-mate Hannah Coulthurst lost a tough final-day encounter with group-topper Catherine Morrow of Australia. The 17-year-old student lost 5-11, 5-11, 3-11 to leave her fifth in group one.

Baggaley and Pitchford play Indian pair Sharath Achanta and Subhajt Saha in the semi-final tomorrow morning.

By Commonwealth England

Results Round Up

Para Singles

Hannah Coulthurst v Catherine Morrow (Australia) -5,-5,-3 (0-3)

Hannah finished 5th in her group winning 1 and losing 4

Leanne Stephen v Ushabehen Rathod (India) 6,8,5 (3-0)

Leanne finished 3rd in her group (she was involved in a 3 way tie for 2nd position). Won 3 and lost 2.

Men's Doubles Quarter-Final

Liam Pitchford/Andrew Baggaley bt. Cai/Ma (Singapore) -6,7,9,6, (3-1)

They now play against Achanta/Saha (India) in the semi final to be played tomorrow at 09.30 India time.

Mixed Doubles

Paul Drinkhall/Joanna Parker are in the semi final of the mixed doubles against Yang/Wang of Singapore at 14.00

Men's Singles

Paul Drinkhall in quarter final of the men's singles against Yang of Singapore (the player he lost to in the team event final)

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