



Japan and China breeze into women's final

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Posted On: February 24, 2018

Top seeds Japan and second seeds China lived up to billing as they dismissed their semi-final opponents 3-0 to advance to the gold medal match at the ITTF Team World Cup.

Japan were first in thanks to victory over North Korea in the first match of the day at the Copper Box Arena.

With the three Japanese ranked at #4, #6 and #14 in the world, it was always going to be a tall order for opponents ranked at 52, 181 and 320, despite having shocked the fourth seeds Chinese Taipei yesterday to guarantee bronze.

Japan's Mima Ito & Hina Hayata, both aged 17, started quickly in the doubles and opened a 2-0 lead with room to spare, Ito in particular impressive, with the right-hander hitting winner after winner.

The Korean pair of Cha Hyo Sim & Kim Nam Hae looked set to find a way back when they led the third 10-6. Three successive points for the Japanese prompted a timeout, but it did not have the desired effect as the next three points also went to the top seeds to complete a 3-0 victory.

The first singles saw a huge contrast in styles, with world No 4 Kasumi Ishikawa against defender Kim Song I, the highest-ranked Korean at 52.

The Japanese dominated with constant top spin loops in the first, taking it 11-3. Kim improved in the second set, mixing it up more with some surprise attacking shots keeping her opponent honest. However, Ishikawa had too much quality, taking it 11-8 and went on to take the third 11-7, beating an opponent she lost to at the Olympics.

Hayata clinched the final place by defeating Cha – though the Korean did give her country something to cheer by taking the second to make the final scoreline 3-1 (11-8, 11-13, 11-9, 11-9).



China looked equally impressive, the combination of Ding Ning, Liu Shiwen and Zhu Yuling never looking less than serene, though Zhu did drop a game against world No 9 Doo Hoi Kem.

It was Ding who sealed it in a performance of grace and accuracy, the final serve skimming off the edge a rare slice of luck as she concluded a Chinese masterclass.



The bronze medallists from PDR Korea with Table Tennis England Chairman Sandra Deaton (picture by Alan Man)

Results

Japan 3 DPR Korea 0

Mima Ito & Hina Hayata bt Cha Hyo Sim & Kim Nam Hae 3-0 (11-3, 11-8, 12-10)

Kasumi Ishikawa bt Kim Song I 3-0 (11-3, 11-8, 11-7)

Hayata bt Cha 3-1 (11-8, 11-13, 11-9, 11-9)

China 3 Hong Kong 0

Liu Shiwen & Ding Ning bt Soo Wai Yam Minnie & Ng Wing Nam 3-0 (11-9, 11-7, 11-5)

Zhu Yuling bt Doo Hoi Kem 3-1 (11-4, 11-3, 10-12, 11-6)

Ding Ning bt Ng Wing Nam 3-0 (11-4, 11-8, 11-5)

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