

Media Notes: Tuesday 27th July

Day Three Highlights: Monday 26th July

Mixed Doubles: Medal Matches

Jun Mizutani and Mima Ito (JPN) defied the odds to win mixed doubles gold; the no.2 seeds, they recovered from two games to nil to beat Xu Xin and Liu Shiwen (CHN), the top seeds and hot favourites (5-11, 7-11, 11-8, 11-9, 11-9, 6-11, 11-6). Notably, in the seventh game, they raced into an 8-0 lead.

It is the first-ever gold medal won by Japan in the table tennis events at the Olympic Games. Jun Mizutani and Mima Ito had lost all three previous meetings when facing Xu Xin and Liu Shiwen. In 2019 on the ITTF World Tour, they lost in Sweden and at the Grand Finals in China. Likewise, they experienced defeat in the final at the 2020 ITTF World Tour German Open. Lin Yun-Ju and Cheng I-Ching (TPE), the no.3 seeds, claimed bronze; they beat Emmanuel Lebesson and Yuan Jia Nan (FRA), the no.8 seeds (11-8, 11-7, 11-8, 11-5).

Men's Singles: Round Two

Kirill Skachkov (ROC), the no.37 seed, upset the order of merit as he accounted for Kanak Jha (USA), the no.21 seed (11-9, 9-11, 11-9, 0-11, 11-7, 11-4). Bojan Tokic (SLO), the no.40 seed, now 40 years old, raised the eyebrows. He overcame 25-year-old Tomislav Pucar (CRO), the no.23 seed (11-9, 11-8, 11-9, 12-10).

Men's Singles: Round Three

Experience counted as Timo Boll (GER), the no.8 seed, who is competing in his sixth consecutive Olympic Games, beat Kirill Gerassimenko (KAZ), the no.30 seed (7-11, 11-6, 11-7, 11-2, 11-1).

Playing in his first-ever match in the Olympic Games, Jang Woojin (KOR), the no.9 seed, accounted for Paul Drinkhall (GBR), the no.36 seed (7-11, 12-10, 11-8, 11-8, 11-7). Chuang Chih-Yuan, the no.19 seed, upset the ranked order; the 40-year-old beat Wong Chun Ting (HKG), the no.13 seed (9-11, 11-5, 11-2, 11-2, 11-8).

A contest between players noted for their strong backhands ended in an upset; Darko Jorgic (SLO), the no.18 seed, overcame Liam Pitchford (GBR), the no.11 seed (11-8, 7-11, 12-10, 11-13, 11-9, 12-10).

Playing his first-ever match in the Olympic Games, Tomokazu Harimoto (JPN), the no.3 seed, accounted for Lam Siu Hang (HKG), the no.50 seed (11-9, 13-11, 8-11, 12-10, 12-10).

Women's Singles: Round Two

Jian Fang Lay (AUS), the no.58 seed, proved herself most comfortable against defensive play. She beat Li Qian (POL), the no.28 seed (11-7, 11-6, 5-11, 12-10, 11-4, 11-4).

Liu Jia (AUT), the no.55 seed, upset the odds. She accounted for Polina Mikhailova (ROC), the no.27 seed (8-11, 7-11, 11-8, 11-5, 11-6, 8-11, 11-5).

Similarly, Liu Juan (USA), the no.68 seed, caused a surprise. She overcame Barbora Balazova (SVK), the no.31 seed (11-9, 11-6, 11-9, 11-7).

Women's Singles: Round Three

Chen Meng (CHN), the top seed, made a most emphatic start to her campaign; she beat Rachel Moret (SUI), the no.48 seed, in straight games (11-3, 11-6, 11-2, 11-7).

Zhang Mo (CAN), the no.21 seed, caused a major upset. She overcame Petrisa Solja (GER), the no.11 seed, in late June, the player crowned European champion.

Suthasini Sawettabut (THA), the no.22 seed, ousted Elizabeta Samara (ROU), the no.15 seed, the 2015 European champion.

Sofia Polcanova, the no.10 seed, ended the hopes of Manika Batra (IND), the no.34 seed (11-8, 11-2, 11-5, 11-7), the reigning Commonwealth Games champion.

Looking Ahead

Men's Singles Round Three

Quadri Aruna (NGR), the no.15 seed, faces Gustavo Tsuboi (BRA), the no.25 seed; status favours Quadri Aruna, but on their only previous meeting, the Liebherr 2012 World Team Championships, the verdict went in favour of Gustavo Tsuboi.

Koki Niwa (JPN), the no.12 seed, opposes the defensive skills of Wang Yang (SVK), the no.24 seed. On home soil, Koki Niwa is the favourite, but past encounters reveal parity. On the ITTF World Tour, Wang Yang won in 2015 in Poland, Koki Niwa in 2017 in Sweden.

Mattias Falck (SWE), the no.6 seed, faces Omar Assar (EGY), the no.28 seed. It is many years since they met on the international scene but when that happened in 2008 at the ITTF World Junior Circuit Finals and the World Junior Championships, the verdict, on both occasions, went to Omar Assar.

Lin Yun-Ju (TPE), the no.5 seed, makes his men's singles debut. He opposes Anton Källberg (SWE), the no.29 seed, also on debut.

Women's Singles Round Three

Jeon Jihee (KOR), the no.7 seed, Doo Hoi Kem (HKG), the no.8 seed and Adriana Diaz (PUR), the no.9 seed, all face players who excelled in round two. Jeon Jihee opposes Yuan Jia Nan (FRA), the no.46 seed; Doo Hoi Kem confronts Shin Yubin (KOR), the no.44 seed, Adriana Diaz faces Liu Jia (AUT), the no.55 seed.

For Bernadette Szocs (ROU), the no.14 seed, it will be the first time she opposes Liu Juan (USA), the no.68 seed.

For Britt Eerland (NED), the no.16 seed, it is the first time she plays against Dina Meshref (EGY), the no.19 seed.

Jian Fang Lay (AUS), the no.58 seed and 48 years old, seeks to become the first player from Oceania to reach the fourth round of a women's singles event at an Olympic Games (no Australian male player has ever reach round four). She faces Han Ying (GER), the no.12 seed, a defensive player, a style of play against which Jian Fang Lay excels. Feng Tianwei, the no.6 seed, awaits the winner.

Women's Singles Round Four

Kasumi Ishikawa (JPN), the no.5 seed, meets Sofia Polcanova (AUT), the no.10 seed. The only prior international meetings are in under 21 ITTF World Tour women's singles. Kasumi Ishikawa won in 2012 in Slovenia and the following year in the Korea Republic.

Top Names

Men's Singles – Round Three

Fan Zhendong (CHN), the top seed, enters the arena; he plays Emmanuel Lebesson (FRA), the no.27 seed. Marcos Freitas (POR), the no.16 seed, awaits.

Hugo Calderano (BRA), the no.4 seed, opposes Bojan Tokic (SLO), the no.40 seed; both excel from the backhand. Jang Woojin (KOR), the no.9 seed, awaits.

Ma Long (CHN), the no.2 seed, faces Sharath Kamal Achanta (IND), the no.20 seed; both have mighty forehands.

Men's Singles – Round Four

Tomokazu Harimoto (JPN), the no.3 seed, can breathe a sigh of relief; in round four, he faces Darko Jorgic (SLO), the no.18 seed, a player against who he has never lost. In round three, Darko Jorgic (SLO) beat Liam Pitchford (GBR), a player against whom Tomokazu Harimoto has experienced three defeats in four contests.

Women's Singles – Round Three

Sun Yingsha (CHN), the no.2 seed, plays her first-ever match in the Olympic Games. She faces Yang Xiaoxin (MON), the no.25 seed.

Mima Ito (JPN), the no.3 seed, is pitted against Fu Yu (POR), the no.32 seed, and the winner will face Suthasini Sawettabut (THA) the no.22 seed.

Cheng I-Ching (TPE), the no.4 seed, opposes Yu Mengyu (SGP), the no.26 seed; notably, Yu Mengyu has won 10 of their previous 13 encounters in world ranking events. Significantly, commencing with the under 21 women's singles contest at the 2010 ITTF World Tour Grand Finals, Yu Mengyu has won all four recent meetings, surrendering just two games!

Women's Singles – Round Three

In round four, Chen Meng (CHN), the top seed, opposes Zhang Mo (CAN), the no.21 seed.

Player Fast Facts

Jian Fang Lay (AUS), 48 years old, booked her place in the third round of the women's singles event, thus repeating the feat experienced in Rio de Janeiro when eventually losing to Yu Mengyu (SGP). The only other female player from Oceania to reach such a stage was Li Chunli (NZL) in 2004 in Athens. She lost against Zhang Yining (CHN).

Learning with age, crowned European Youth champion in 1988 and 1999, European champion in 2005; Liu Jia (AUT) used to have challenges when up against defensive players. She has reached the third round beating defenders in her matches against Ganna Gaponova (UKR) and Polina Mikhailova (RUS) in Tokyo.

In 2018 Mattias Falck married Julia Falck, a member of the Ångby club in Stockholm; he changed his name from Mattias Karlsson as a mark of respect to his wife's mother. She had died two years earlier from Alzheimer's. He argues there are many Karlssons, fewer Falcks, and as Mattias Falck, he has achieved more!

Mattias Falck is unusual in his playing style; he uses short pimped rubber on the forehand, many male players use smooth reversed rubber on both sides of the racket.

Dina Meshref (EGY) was born in Montreal, Canada.

Suthasini Sawettabut (THA) finished fourth place in the women's singles event at the Singapore 2010 Youth Olympic Games. Of the four players who reached the penultimate round – Gu Yuting (CHN), Isabelle Siyun Li (SGP), Yang Haeun (KOR), Suthasini Sawettabut (THA) – she is the only one who qualified to compete in Tokyo.

In Tokyo, Suthasini Sawettabut became the first player from Thailand (man or woman) to reach the fourth round of a singles event at an Olympic Games.

Three European women's singles champions departed on day three: Elizabeta Samara (ROU), the 2015 winner, Li Qian (POL), the 2018 winner and Petrissa Solja (GER), the reigning champion.

The success gained by Lin Yun-Ju and Cheng I-Ching (TPE) in the mixed doubles meant that it was the third-ever medal for Chinese Taipei in the table tennis events at the Olympic Games, yet the first by players who had developed their skills in Chinese Taipei. Chen Jing won the women's singles silver in Atlanta (1996) and bronze in Sydney (2000), but she was born and bred in China; in fact, she won the women's singles title at the Seoul 1988 Olympic Games representing China.

Five Matches to Watch (local time)

- 10.00 Men's Singles: Lin Yun-Ju (TPE) v Anton Källberg (SWE)
- 11.00 Women's Singles: Doo Hoi Kem (HKG) v Shin Yubin (KOR)
- 12.00 Women's Singles: Chen Szu-Yu (TPE) v Lily Zhang (USA)
- 14.30 Women's Singles: Adriana Diaz (PUR) v Liu Jia (AUT)
- 15.30 Men's Singles: Mattias Falck (SWE) v Omar Assar (EGY)