

# **Li-Ning BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals 2014:**

## **Thomas-Uber Thrills - Day – 1**

Sunday, May 18, 2014 - Text by Dev Sukumar | BWF

The action-packed Sunday begins with two Thomas Cup and two Uber Cup ties at 9 a.m. (India time): Denmark versus Hong Kong, England versus Japan (Group B of Thomas Cup) and Australia against Indonesia and Korea versus Singapore (Group X of Uber Cup).

The powerful Chinese commence their Uber Cup Title defence against Russia in the afternoon session (2 p.m.), while their men take the courts versus France at 7 p.m.

Denmark's Thomas Cup tie against Hong Kong will elicit more than usual interest, with the Danes affected by the sudden withdrawal of their Men's Doubles specialist Mathias Boe due to a medical condition. Boe has been replaced by Anders Skaarup Rasmussen. Boe's regular partner Carsten Mogensen has been paired with veteran Joachim Fischer Nielsen for the second doubles.

European Champion Jan O Jorgensen faces Hu Yun in the first singles. Mads Conrad-Petersen / Mads Pieler Kolding take on the duty of first doubles against Ng Ka Long / Law Cheuk Him.

Swiss Open Champion Viktor Axelsen will match wits with Wei Nan in second singles while Mogensen / Fischer Nielsen are up against Tang Chun Man / Lee Chun Hei in second doubles. If the tie goes to the final match, youngster Emil Holst will shoulder the responsibility for Denmark against Hong Kong's Wong Wing Ki.

Denmark head coach Lars Uhre admitted Boe's withdrawal had affected their plans.

"It was a surprise. We were almost ready to go and then we found he had to have an operation. It's a very tight group, with lots of interesting matches. I think Japan and Denmark are favourites to progress but it will be tough. Hong Kong has a strong singles squad and the English have a good singles player and two good doubles. We have to play well, but I believe we have the team strength to go to the quarters."

Denmark have a relatively inexperienced singles line-up in the Uber Cup, but Uhre believed they could still qualify for the quarter-finals. "It's an open group. Japan are favourites to win the group and then the other three teams are even. There will be some interesting matches, but our girls have improved a lot. They did well at the European Championships, now we need to see how far they can go at the world level."

Veteran doubles player Christinna Pedersen conceded the young singles players will have their hands full but hopes they can still qualify behind Japan.

"We have chances in the group but it's going to be difficult. We have a young team that lacks experience. Kamilla (Rytter Juhl) and I are used to playing the second match. We will try to help the young players as much as we can. They played well at the European Championships. They will get some experience, I hope they can take some of the good things when we're playing here in India.

"Kamilla was injured the last two weeks so we haven't played at home that much. Our preparation has not been that good. If the team can play close to our best level, I think we have a chance against Malaysia, and I think that's the key match for who's going to be runner-up in the group. It's going to be difficult against Japan. They have two good women's doubles. We need to be at our best against them. It's going to be tough for the young players, but I think they can push them if they believe in themselves."

Pedersen has had good memories of playing at the Siri Fort Complex, having made one India Open final and a semi-final.

"Kamilla and I have enjoyed playing in India because the crowd has supported us. We have done well here. I expect that the court will be a bit fast."



## HIGHLIGHTS:

\* The Japan-England tie will see Kenichi Tago, Kento Momota and Takuma Ueda assume singles duties against Rajiv Ouseph, Rhys Walker and Sam Parsons respectively, while Kenichi Hayakawa / Hiroyuki Endo and Noriyasu Hirata / Hirokatsu Hashimoto face Chris Adcock / Andrew Ellis and Chris Langridge / Peter Mills respectively in the doubles.

\* Past winners Indonesia have fielded Lindaweni Fanetri, Bellaetrix Manuputty and Adrianti Firdasari in their singles line-up against Australia's Tara Pilven, Verdet Kessler and Joy Lai, while the doubles matches consist of Rizki Amelia Pradipta / Pia Zebadiah Bernadeth and Tiara Rosalia Nuraidah / Suci Rizki Andini facing Tang He Tian / Renuga Veeran and Gronya Somerville / Jacqueline Guan respectively.

\* The Uber Cup tie between Korea and Singapore consists of three singles matches followed by the doubles. Korea's Sung Ji Hyun, Bae Yeon Ju and Kim Hyo Min face Chen Jiayuan, Liang Xiaoyu and Fu Mingtian respectively. The doubles consists of Jang Ye Nac / Kim So Young (Korea) against Yao Lei / Shinta Mulia Sari and Jung Kyung Eun / Kim Ha Na against Vanessa Neo / Fu Mingtian.

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