



## **Li-Ning BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals 2014:** **Day 5 – Highlights**

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***India will take on Japan while China will play Korea in the Uber Cup Semi-finals, while in the Thomas Cup, Malaysia will clash with Indonesia and China with Japan on 23-05-2014 at New Delhi.***

### **Session - 1**

Japan enjoyed a fruitful afternoon session as their Men and Women entered the Semi-finals of the Li-Ning BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals today. While the Japanese Thomas Cup Team eased past France 3-1, the Uber Cup squad beat Denmark 3-0.

In the other ties, defending Thomas Cup Champions China brushed past Thailand 3-0 and past Uber Cup winners Korea endured some anxious moments before getting past Thailand 3-1.

### **Session – 2**

India rode on frenzied home support to assure themselves of a first-ever Uber Cup Medal at the Li-Ning BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals 2014 today. The Indians survived anxious moments against Indonesia before cruising them 3-0.

Defending Champions China took lesser time in recording a similar 3-0 result over England, while in Thomas Cup action, Indonesia nixed Korea and Malaysia stunned Denmark to enter the last-four stage.

### **HIGHLIGHTS:**

After his brilliant victory over Denmark's Jan O Jorgensen yesterday, Japan's lead singles player Kenichi Tago would have been expected to have it easy against Brice Leverdez (*below*) of France. However, the Frenchman too was been in spectacular form in both singles and doubles in the group stage and was one of the principal architects of France's maiden place in the quarter-finals. Leverdez started off strongly once more and was able to contain Tago's explosive game with his sharp defensive game. Despite a mid-match revival by the Japanese, Leverdez maintained his consistency to finish a winner at 21-14 15-21 21-16. France could not consolidate

any further as Japan's depth in both singles and doubles proved too much of a task. Sho Sasaki accounted for Lucas Corvee, while Keigo Sonoda/Takeshi Kamura blazed their way past Bastian Kersaudy/Gaetan Mittelheisser 21-8 21-13. Takuma Ueda, who had won a crucial last match against Denmark late yesterday, closed the issue in Japan's favour by beating giant-killer Thomas Rouxel 21-13 21-12.



Japan's women emulated the performance of their men's team in making the semi-finals over their group compatriots Denmark. Minatsu Mitani triumphed in a contest of see-sawing fortunes against Line Kjaersfeldt. The match changed complexion every few moments in the final game, with Mitani closing out a deficit and getting ahead 20-15, only for Kjaersfeldt to save five match points and earn one of her own. The experienced Japanese however nixed the Dane's comeback and sealed the contest 21-18 9-21 23-21. Denmark's hopes were pinned on world No.3 Christinna Pedersen/Kamilla Rytter-Juhl, but the world No.3 pair fell to their second straight loss to Misaki Matsutomo/Ayaka Takahashi. The Japanese duo's win today was even more authoritative than their previous victory yesterday as it took just 37 minutes: 21-12 21-13. It was left to young Anna Thea Madsen, runner-up at the European Championships, to salvage the contest for Denmark. Madsen attempted a valiant charge at Sayaka Takahashi but the Japanese left-hander had the bigger weapons on the day and confirmed Japan's semi-final place with a 21-14 21-17 result.

\* China's Thomas Cup team continued their march without losing a single contest. It was Thailand's turn to feel the heat. Neither Boonsak Ponsana, nor the doubles pair of Maneepong Jongjit/Nipitphon Puangpuapech, could run Chen Long or Chai Biao/Hong Wei (*below*) close. Tanongsak Saensomboonsuk gave Du Pengyu something to think about in the late stages of the second game but could not prevent the Chinese from winning 21-14 22-20.



\* Thailand were a handful for Korea, but the fielding of a scratch pair in the second doubles worked against them. Ratchanok Intanon gave the Thais the lead beating Sung Ji Hyun 21-15 21-15. Jang Ye Na/Kim So Young in the doubles and Bae Yeon Ju in the second singles swung the tie Korea's way, with Bae having to dig deep to counter Nichaon Jindapon. Thailand fielded Porntip Buranaprasertsuk and Puttita Supajirakul in the second doubles against Kim Ha Na/Jung Kyung Eun (*below*); the No.8 Koreans shut the door on the Thais with a 21-10 21-19 victory.



The Siri Fort Complex had turned into noisy cauldron today with home stars Saina Nehwal and Company attempting to create history for India. Nehwal, who hasn't been in the best of form in recent times, took her time to get going against Lindaweni Fanetri, but once she had pocketed the first game, she was back to her confident old self and smashed winners at will, to finish victorious at 21-17 21-10.



The second match had the crowd in rapt attention as the advantage swung from Sindhu to her opponent Bellaetrix Manuputty (*below*). Despite being ranked 13 places below her Indian opponent, Manuputty produced a valiant performance that nearly toppled India's hopes. With victory in sight, both players drove themselves past their limits, until Sindhu at last forced the

fatal error from her opponent after both had saved match points: 21-16 10-21 25-23. Manuputty was speechless for a long while after the match. Sindhu gave credit to her opponent for the memorable challenge.



Ashwini Ponnappa and Jwala Gutta ensured the third point for India with a dominant 21-18 21-18 win over Greysia Polii/Nitya Krishinda Maheswari.

The other tie that had the crowd on the edge of their seats was the Thomas Cup clash between Indonesia and Korea. Korea drew first blood with Son Wan Ho edging past Tommy Sugiarto 23-21 24-22. World champions Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Setiawan had never taken a game off their Korean opponents Lee Yong Dae and Yoo Yeon Seong in three previous matches, but they enjoyed a strong start and broke the jinx. By the third game both pairs appeared nervous and erratic at times. It was the Indonesian pair that survived the ordeal, winning 21-15 17-21 21-19. The next two matches were split through wins by Dionysius Hayom Rumbaka (Indonesia) and Kim Ki Jung/Kim Sa Rang (Korea), setting the stage for a tense battle between Simon Santoso (*below*) and Korea's Hwang Jong Soo. Santoso's superior netplay settled the issue in his favour, for he dared to spin the shuttle over the tape time after time with Hwang hovering in front. A spinning netshot on his first match point gave the tie to Indonesia at 21-12 22-20.



\* Malaysia's tactic in fielding the non-regular combination of Tan Wee Kiong and Goh V Shem (*below*) again worked wonders as they helped themselves to a 3-1 result over Denmark. Chong Wei Feng won his fourth match in a row as he ensured the critical second singles for Malaysia, enabling them to go 2-1 up. Denmark pair Carsten Mogensen and Joachim Fischer Nielsen had been in red-hot form against Japan yesterday, but Tan and Goh tied them in knots with a better tactical display.



\* The only unusual note during China's winning performance over England in the Uber Cup was in the first doubles, when the formidable Chinese pair of Bao Yixin/Tang Jinhua (*below*) found themselves six game points down against Gabrielle Adcock/Lauren Smith. The Chinese dramatically turned it around from there with eight straight points, before accelerating to a 22-20 21-10 victory.



