



Match Report Day Six: Tuesday 19th June

Warriors sound battle cry, beat Empowerji Challengers

Defeat in their opening tie in the competition, the Warriors responded in the concluding contest in the Pune itinerary on the evening of Tuesday 19th June; they recorded a 14-7 victory in opposition to Empowerji Challengers.

Conversely for Empowerji Challengers, it was their second defeat; in their opening contest they had suffered a 13-8 defeat at the hands of RP-SG Mavericks.

Warriors fielded Chuang Chih-Yuan, Quadri Aruna, Sofia Polcanova and Hana Matelova alongside Sharath Kamal Achanta and Sreeja Akula; for Empowerji Challengers the visitors were Simon Gauzy, Tiago Apolonia, Lee Ho Ching and Georgina Pota, for the host nation it was Manav Thakkar, Arjun Ghosh and Divya Deshpande.

In the opening match of the campaign on the second day of action when facing RP-SG Mavericks, Lee Ho Ching had won the opening game against Ayhika Mukherjee, a player who uses short pimples rubber on the forehand and anti-spin on the backhand but then she had lost the next two.

Opposing Warriors, she faced another Indian player who uses a combination racket; normal reversed rubber on the forehand, long pimples on the backhand. Similarly as four days earlier, Lee Ho Ching won the opening game but there was a major difference on the sixth day of play, she never relaxed her grip on the contest; never in trouble, she secured a three games to nil win.

“Two matches and four different types of rubber to play against! Before the match I thought that Sreeja would play against me because in the previous match I lost to Ayhika Mukherjee. Today I was prepared; I knew what I had to do.” Lee Ho Ching

Empowerji Challengers ahead, matters were levelled in the next contest on court; Quadri Aruna proved too powerful for his spirited opponent, Manav Thakkar. Playing from a step back from the table, controlled top spin play nullified the speed of the Indian teenager.

Two matches completed it was matters level; it was the same after the second game of the Mixed Doubles. Comfortably, Arjun Ghosh and Lee Ho Ching secured the opening game; in the second neither pair was able to establish a telling lead.

At 10-9 Sharath Kamal Achanta and Sofia Polcanova held the advantage; Arjun Ghosh and Lee Ho Ching levelled but the “golden point” went the way of the Warriors.

A close success, in the third game at the change of ends Sharath Kamal Achanta and Sofia Polcanova led 5-2; Arjun Ghosh and Lee Ho Ching reduced the arrears to one point at 9-8 but never gained parity. At 10-8 the Warriors held two game points; at the second attempt they converted.

The Warriors one game ahead, Chuang Chih-Yuan extended the lead to four games by overcoming Simon Gauzy, a player he beat in the second round of the Men's Singles event earlier this month at the recent Seamaster 2018 ITTF World Tour Lion Open.

Chuang Chih-Yuan dominated the opening two games but the third was much closer. Matters level at 8-all, Chuang Chih-Yuan, playing consistently, won the next three points to secure a three games to nil success.

"I beat him in Japan but I don't think that result had an effect on today's match. Playing at a high level, you beat a player one day; they go away study the video, change the tactics and win. Today in the third game Simon led 5-4 but then he made some mistakes, some unforced errors; in this format when a player is two games to nil down, they relax. The play more freely."
Chuang Chih-Yuan

Motivated, playing at a high tempo, in the next match of the engagement, Georgina Pota won the opening game against Sofia Polcanova on the "golden point" regulation; the overall deficit was reduced to three games. However, Sofia Polcanova, who at the recent Liebherr 2018 World Team Championships had beaten Georgina Pota, remained calm and resolute.

Taking no risks, the more consistent player, she won the second game before in the third securing the first eight points.

"She started smashing every ball, she was so fast and when she starts like that it's difficult. I think in the first game I was too passive, I let her play. In the second and third games, I was better on the first attack. Here, it's not always easy to block the ball when someone attacks strongly, the ball jumps a little." Sofia Polcanova

The Warriors lead was extended to five games; they needed a good performance; just as in the previous match Georgina Pota had come out of the blocks at full speed, so did Tiago Apolonia against Sharath Kamal Achanta.

Active, positive Tiago Apolonia won the opening two games to reduce the overall deficit to three games but he could not make it three in a row; Sharath Kamal Achanta adjusted to the pace of the encounter secured third game.

The Warriors lead was four points, they were 11-7 ahead.

Now very much in the driving seat, the Warriors completed matters with Hana Matelova proving too strong for Divy Deshpande; a three-nil was recorded; for Warriors it was an overall 14-7 win for the Warriors.

WARRIORS 14–7 EMPOWERJI CHALLENGERS

Sreeja Akula v Lee Ho Ching	7-11, 5-11, 6-11	0-3 (0-3)
Quadri Aruna v Manav Thakkar	11-8, 11-7, 11-3	3-0 (3-3)
Sharath Kamal Achanta / Sofia Polcanova v Arjun Ghosh / Lee Ho Ching	6-11, 11-10, 11-9	2-1 (5-4)
Chuang Chih-Yuan v Simon Gauzy	11-7, 11-6, 11-8	3-0 (8-4)
Sofia Polcanova v Georgina Pota	10-11, 11-4, 11-2	2-1 (10-5)
Sharath Kamal Achanta v Tiago Apolonia	5-11, 6-11, 11-6	1-2 (11-7)
Hana Matelova v Divya Deshpande	11-8, 11-7, 11-9	3-0 (14-7)

POSITIONS (TUESDAY 19TH JUNE)

	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5
DABANG SMASHERS	14 (14)	17 (31)			
RP-SG MAVERICKS	13 (13)	11 (24)			
WARRIORS TTC	7 (7)	14 (21)			
MAHARASHTRA UNITED	10 (10)	10 (20)			
FALCONS TTC	11 (11)	4 (15)			
EMPOWERJI CHALLENGERS	8 (8)	7 (15)			