

Only one match took place on the opening day of the 2013 Liebherr European Championships for England but it was an absolute epic as the Men's team overturned a 2-0 deficit to beat Turkey 3-2 in Austria.

It seemed as though the team would face an early exit from the promotion race as both Liam Pitchford and Daniel Reed were beaten in their opening games to give Turkey a 2-0 lead. Pitchford, having himself recovered from 2-0 to level with Li Ahmet (109) would have been disappointed to concede the final game 11-6, while Reed, despite winning the first against Bora Vang, fell away in the next three as Turkey took control.

However, Andrew Baggaley stemmed the tide with an important nerve-settling 3-0 win over Gencay Menge before Pitchford secured a dramatic win against Bora Vang to level proceedings.

The 20-year-old found himself 10-4 down in the opening game but, fought back incredibly to save 9 (nine) game points en route to an opening 15-13 end. The Chesterfield star then saved two more game points in the second game before Vang finally took the third 11-9 to reduce the arrears to 2-1.

Not to be denied, Pitchford saved another game point in the fourth (12 in the match total) as he recorded a dramatic 3-1 (15-13, 13-11, 9-11, 13-11) win to set up a winner-takes-all deciding match between Reed and Ahmet.

Cleveland-born Reed, ranked 119 places below his opponent, was nerveless during the critical encounter as he confidently led his country to an astonishing opening victory. An 11-8 first game was followed up by a 7-0 lead in the second to secure a 2-0 lead before he wrapped up the win in straight sets on his next visit to the table.

England will now play a dangerous Romania side tomorrow in their next encounter for a place in the Challenge Division's semi-finals. The sides did meet recently in Hull where Romania triumphed 3-1 with both sides missing their no. 1 player. While the Romanians welcome back Adrian Crisan into their side, England will again be without the injured Paul Drinkhall as another mountainous challenge awaits at the European Championships.

For the time being, the team can bask in the glory of an amazing opening victory.

Men's Challenge Division:

England 3-2 Turkey

Li Ahmet (wr 109) bt Liam Pitchford (126) 3-2 (11-2, 12-10, 12-14, 8-11, 11-6)

Bora Vang (84) bt Daniel Reed (228) 3-1 (9-11, 11-8, 11-7, 11-7)

Andrew Baggaley (153) bt Gencay Menge (362) 3-0 (11-3, 12-10, 11-5)

Liam Pitchford (126) bt Bora Vang (84) 3-1 (15-13, 13-11, 9-11, 13-11)

Daniel Reed (228) bt Li Ahmet (109) 3-0 (11-8, 11-5, 11-6)

Written by Russell Moore (October 4, 2013)