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MEDIA RELEASE

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Singapore put on gutsy showing but Romania a step too far for the Republic

Resilience and determination were not enough for Singapore's female paddlers on Sunday afternoon against Romania at the ITTF World Team Table Tennis Championships in Busan, Korea, as the Romanians superior quality was evident as they secured a 3-1 victory over Singapore.

Singapore was looking to recover from their loss to Sweden in their opening group encounter, while the 7th-ranked Romanians, led by world number 12, Bernadette Szocs, sought to secure their third consecutive victory after defeating both Sweden and Canada with convincing 3-0 wins.

It was Szocs that gave the Romanians the perfect start when she showed her superiority against Zhou Jingyi, 18, in the first singles, as she easily beat the Singaporean teenager, 11-7, 11-6, 11-8.

Singapore then fought back through Zeng Jian, with the number one ranked Singapore player determined to pull her country on level terms. The 27-year-old got the job done when she beat Elizabeta Samara 11-7, 9-11, 13-11, 11-7, marking the first time that the Romanians lost a match in the competition.

Another teenager, Ser Lin Qian, was next up against world number 47, Adina Diaconu. Not cowed by her higher ranked opponent, the 17-year-old Singaporean put up a gutsy showing on her World Championships debut, before eventually succumbing 9-11, 5-11, 3-11.

With the Romanians up 2-1, it was down to Zeng and Szocs in the penultimate match, with Zeng looking to level the tie once again for Singapore and Szocs aiming to kill the game off. And true to script, Szocs' superior skill was evident as Zeng succumbed in straight sets, with a score of 6-11, 10-12, 9-11.

Singapore will play Canada, at 12pm Singapore time on Monday, 19 February, as they look to get their first win on the board at these championships and give them a chance of making it through to the next round as one of the top three teams in the group.

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