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MEDIA RELEASE

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Singapore's bid for victory falls short in epic clash against Sweden

Singapore's female paddlers got their ITTF World Team Table Tennis Championships underway on Saturday night but definitely not in the way they wanted, when they were defeated by Sweden 3-2 in their first group stage match in Busan, Korea.

Singapore, ranked 10th in the world, had a bye yesterday, while Sweden (22nd) had already played and lost to Romania.

Zeng Jian, 27, leading things off for Singapore, was unable to get the better of Christina Kallberg, as she fell in straight sets, 4-11, 9-11, 7-11.

Rising star Zhou Jingyi hauled Singapore back on level terms when the 18-year-old outlasted the Swedes number one player, Linda Bergstrom, 29th in the world, 11-8, 11-5, 18-20, 11-9 in superb match characterized with countless long rallies, especially in the third set which left many at the edge of their seats and with each rally itself deserving of a standing ovation.

Fellow youngster, Wong Xin Ru, 22, then put in a gutsy shift against Filippa Bergand but she eventually lost to the 25-year-old Swede, going down 9-11, 11-13, 11-4, 14-16.

Redeeming herself following her earlier defeat, Zeng levelled the tie once more at 2-2 when she beat Bergstrom in another thrilling encounter, 11-5, 12-14, 11-8, 11-7, to force a fifth and deciding match.

Up stepped Zhou once more and facing Kallberg, the youngster put in another valiant effort, but could not avoid falling to a 12-14, 11-8, 8-11, 9-11 defeat, as Sweden claimed the victory.

Singapore's will take on Romania next, at 12pm Singapore time tomorrow, as they look to get their first win on the board.

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