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Gunawan, Bach first Americans to reach semis

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. -- Tony Gunawan and Howard Bach became the first Americans to reach the semifinals of the World Badminton Championship by upsetting the top seed in men's doubles Friday night.

Gunawan, of Fullerton, Calif., and Bach, of San Francisco, rallied from a 10-6 deficit in the second game to earn a 15-9, 15-10 victory over Denmark's Jens Eriksen and Martin Lundgaard Hansen, the three-time defending European champions.

After Eriksen hit a shot wide to end the match, Bach knelt on the court and kissed it.

"You have no idea what state of mind I'm in right now," Bach said after the victory. "Beating the No. 1 at home, you can't buy that for a million dollars."

Thirteenth-seeded Gunawan and Bach will play No. 4 Luluk Hadiyanto and Yulianto Alvan of Indonesia in Saturday night's semifinal.

Gunawan won the 2000 Olympic gold medal in men's doubles for Indonesia.

Second-seeded Candra Wijaya and Sigit Budiarto from Indonesia remained in contention for their first world title since 1997 with a 15-10, 11-15, 15-9 quarterfinal victory over No. 5 Lars Paaske and Jonas Rasmussen of Denmark.

They will face No. 9 Chan Chong Ming and Koo Kien Keat of Malaysia. Chan and Koo earned a 6-15, 15-12, 15-10 victory over No. 10 Flandi Limpele and Eng Hian, Olympic bronze medalists from Indonesia.

The women's doubles final Saturday will be an all-China match. Top-seeded Olympic champions Yang Wei and Zhang Jiewen, and second-seeded defending world champions Gao Ling and Huang Sui swept their semifinal opponents.

Yang and Zhang routed No. 4 Lee Kyung Won and Lee Hyo Jung of South Korea 15-4, 15-2. Gao and Huang swept No. 5 Zhang Dan and Zhang Yawen 15-5, 15-8.

New Zealand and Thailand put entrants into the semifinals for the first time ever with victories in mixed doubles. One came at the expense of China's Gao and Zhang Jun, last year's Olympic gold medalists.

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The second-seeded Zhang and Gao lost to No. 7 Sudket Prapakamol and Saralee Thungthongkam of Thailand, 10-15, 15-7, 15-11.

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No. 15 Daniel Shirley and Sara Runesten-Petersen of New Zealand advanced with a 15-11, 15-13 upset of No. 6 Lee Jae Jin and Lee Hyo Jung of South Korea.

In other action, sixth-seeded Taufik Hidayat of Indonesia, the 2004 Olympic champion in men's singles, rallied for a 3-15, 15-10, 15-7 quarterfinal victory over second-seeded Kenneth Jonassen of Denmark.

Hidayat joins top-seeded Lin Dan of China, third-seeded Peter Gade from Denmark and fifth-seeded Lee Chong Wei of Malaysia in the men's singles semifinals.

Top-seeded Zhang Ning of China, the defending Olympic and world champion in women's singles, reached the semifinals by beating No. 12 Kaori Mori of Japan, 11-4, 11-6..



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