

Ashutosh-Mankad in the Challenger tennis final

Harsh Mankad and Ashutosh Singh stormed into the final of the ATP Challenger tennis tournament, beating second-seeded Indo-Australian pair Purav Raja and Adam Feeney at the DLTA complex here Thursday.

The Indian pair outERVED their opponents and followed it up with clever shot placement to win in straight sets, 6-4,6-1.

Ashutosh-Mankad got off the blocks smoothly, breaking Raja-Feeney early. Thereafter, it was a matter of holding their serve and they did it comfortably to take the first set.

Ashutosh and Mankad raced to close the match with excellent volleying in the second set, backing their serve. The Indians went two breaks up by the fifth game and a dispirited Raja and Feeney lost the serve once more to bow out.

Ashutosh and Mankad now meet top-seeded pair of American Brendan Evans and Indian Mustafa Ghouse who defeated fourth-seeded Alexandre Kudryavtsev of Russia and Ilia Marchenko of Ukraine, for title clash Friday. Evans and Mustafa won 7-5, 6-1.

In the singles quarterfinals, top seed Yen-hsun Lu of Chinese Taipei came from behind to beat fifth seed Pakistani Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi, 5-7,6-3,7-5. Lu now meets Guillermo Alcaide of Spain who defeated Frenchman Thomas Ogre 7-6(2),4-6,6-1.

In another quarter-final, fourth-seeded Japanese Go Soeda defeated eighth-seeded Ricardo Mello of Brazil, 6-4, 3-6, 6-1, to meet seventh-seeded Kudryavtsev in the semi-finals. Kudryavtsev beat second seeded Giles Muller of Luxembourg 7-5,4-6,7-6(2).

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