



England give China a fright at World Schools

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England had a better day at the World Schools' Championships in Malta, but one not without disappointments and a lot of very near misses.

The boys' national select team began with a 5-2 victory over host nation Malta. Two wins each for both Joseph Hee and Shayan Siraj was backed up by a remarkable comeback win for Ethan Walsh who was 9-5 down in the deciding set but raised his game after a timeout called by coach Sam Perry and took the match.

Next up were China who rarely drop a set in this competition but did lose the doubles 3-0 to the England pairing of Joe Clark and Walsh. England were not so lucky in the singles but did take the Chinese close in many games and both Hee and Walsh took ends off highly-ranked opponents.

Their final match was a titanic tussle that went late into the evening against Chinese Taipei, the No 2 seeds. Siraj, Clark and Walsh each won one match and Siraj, playing with attacking flair, narrowly lost his second singles having a match point and losing deuce in the fifth. The doubles was also close but England lost 3-1 and overall lost the whole match 4-3.



Reiss Vydelingum and James Smith in action for Whitgift

In the girls' national select competition England lost 7-0 to a powerful Chinese team but Jasmin Wong did manage to take an end in one match, much to the annoyance of the Chinese coach.

Their other game was also a 7-0 loss to Slovakia but so many of the games were close with Charlotte Bardsley unlucky to lose her singles both in five ends and the same story in the doubles where Charlotte and Jasmin lost by the same score. Gauri Duhan also played well to take the top Slovakian to four ends.

Whitgift School started well to win their first match 4-3 against Luxembourg with double wins for both James Smith and George Hazell. However their next match was a 4-3 defeat to the Czech Republic with George winning his two matches and James one.

This meant they could only finish in 13th to 18th positions, which will be decided on Wednesday, however they started well by beating the United Arab Emirates 4-0 with at this stage matches being played to a win. Reiss Vydelingum opened his account in this match and Jason Kwok partnered Smith to win the doubles.

The unluckiest team of the day was Charles Read in the girls' school competition. They started with a 4-3 loss to Italy but had their chances, notably Danielle Kelly, who lost deuce in the fifth in one match. Mollie Patterson, Darcie Proud and Danielle won one match each so the loss in the doubles was crucial against the team that was to finish group winners.

Their second match was a 5-2 defeat to the Czech Republic but again ends were taken in the losing games and on a different day the result could have been reversed. Charles Read will play for 13th to 18th positions on Wednesday.

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