Para GB end with three medals

Author: Paul Stimpson

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The British Para Table Tennis team ended the PTT Slovenian Open with three medals in the team events – silver for Paul Karabardak, Martin Perry, David Wetherill (men's class 6) and Tom Matthews with his Argentinian partner Guillermo Bastamante Sierra (men's class 1) and bronze for Commonwealth champion Ross Wilson and Aaron McKibbin (men's class 8).

In their semi-final, European team champions Karabardak, Perry and Wetherill faced the German team of former world bronze medallist Thomas Rau and 21-year-old Tim Laue who had taken team gold in the Italian Open earlier this season.

Karabardak and Perry played superbly to win the doubles 3-0 and Perry then showed great determination to come back from 2-1 down against Laue to level at 2-2. A good time out call from GB head coach Greg Baker when Perry's 7-4 lead in the fifth was reduced to 7-6 put the Scotsman back on track and he took the set 11-7 to take his team into the final.

Against the combination of the Romanian Bobi Simion and Georgios Mouchthis from Greece, Karabardak and Perry quickly went a set down and although they pushed their opponents harder in the next two sets they lost them 9 and 11 which meant they had to win both singles. Perry lost the first set to Mouchthis but then held his nerve to win the second 14-12, having led 10-4, and went on to take the match 3-1.

European bronze medallist Simion, who won gold at the Italian Open, has become something of a nemesis for Karabardak but after losing the first 11-4 the 32-year-old Welshman fought back to win the second 11-6 and pushed the Romanian all the way despite a 3-1 loss.

"Bobi is the toughest player for me apart from the top two or three," admitted Karabardak, "but I felt that I had a very good chance playing a more defensive tactic and then trying to pick him off, whereas in the past I've tried to attack too much and I think that worked for me.

"On the whole I think we have done well because to beat Germany 2-0 was a good win as they are both good

players. I'm disappointed that it wasn't gold but happy with silver and it was a solid performance."

"We are disappointed not to get gold," said Perry, "but it has been a good solid team effort by everyone involved – not just Paul, myself and Dave and the coaches we've had in the corner – but everyone has been down for every match supporting us and that has really lifted us."

Matthews and Bustamante Sierra were playing together here for the first time and after a defeat to world champions Italy in their opening match they have gone from strength to strength in the round-robin men's class 1 team event. They clinched the silver medal with a 2-0 win in their final match against the German Open champion Sung Joo Park from Korea and Alan Papirer from France.

After combining well with the Argentinian to win the doubles 3-1 Matthews produced some great play to beat Papirer 3-0 in the singles. The 25-year-old Welshman has struggled in the very humid conditions in the competition hall but has shown tremendous resolve to come back with some good singles wins in the team event after being very disappointed to go out of the singles event at the quarter-final stages.

"Guillermo is a really nice guy and we gelled quite well," said Matthews. "We improved throughout the tournament and it went really well. I'm much happier with the team event than I was after the singles – it was a shame I couldn't do it in the singles but that is the way it goes sometimes."

McKibbin and Wilson faced Paralympic champions Ukraine in their semi-final and as so often in team events now the doubles proved to be crucial. At 9-4 up in the first the GB pair looked to have made the perfect start but the situation can change so quickly in table tennis and Ivan Mai and Maksym Nikolenko worked their way back into the set to level at 9-9 and went on to take it 17-15 and the next two 9 and 9.

Wilson recovered from dropping the first set to beat Nikolenko 3-1 and McKibbin fought hard against Mai but the world No 4 started strongly to go 2-0 up and although McKibbin reduced the deficit by winning the third set the Ukrainian took the deciding singles 11-9 in the fourth.

Although bitterly disappointed 22-year-old Wilson from Minster and 26-year-old Londoner McKibbin were able to take plenty of positives from both singles and team events in Slovenia.

"I think the first set was important in the doubles," said Wilson, "but all three sets were tight and I don't think we played very well in the close points today."

"That first set was quite crucial," agreed McKibbin "because it gave them an advantage and they relaxed a little bit but we can't be too disappointed as I think we have made quite a big improvement in our doubles in this tournament. Even though we lost it 3-0 it was really tight and it was just a couple of mistakes here and there which is a lot better than playing someone and not being able to find a way through them.

I found Mai quite difficult today – in the first two sets I couldn't get going and he was all over me. I really started to claw my way back into it in the third set and I was disappointed to miss the last two balls in the fourth set because I thought I was going well.

"It has been a good two tournaments for me in Slovakia and Slovenia and overall I've performed well in all my matches even the ones I've lost so it is going in the right direction. I know what I need to work on now and I've definitely taken a big step up since Italy so hopefully I can keep that going."

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