



Daybell and Stacey take golden double

Author: Paul Stimpson

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Kim Daybell, Ashley Facey Thompson and Josh Stacey won gold in the men's class 10 team event at the Czech Open in Ostrava.

Fliss Pickard and her Swedish team partner Caisa Stadler won silver in the women's class 6-7 event and Craig Allen combined with Barnabas Retter from Hungary to take bronze in men's class 9.

With Facey Thompson nursing a knee injury and unable to play, Daybell and Stacey came through their group comfortably with 2-0 wins against Czech Republic and Luxembourg. As top seeds that gave them a bye into the semi-finals where they defeated Russia 2-0.

In the final against the Chilean/Japanese combination of Manuel Echaveguren Farias and Hayuma Abe, they won the doubles 3-1 and Daybell secured the gold with a 3-0 win against Echaveguren Farias.

It was a second gold for both Daybell and Stacey after they had won the men's class 10 and men's class 9 singles respectively earlier in the event.

"It was nice to cap off the tournament with a victory in the team event," said 26-year-old Daybell. "For a number of years it has only been Ash and me and it's really exciting to have a new member to strengthen our team even further.

"Ash was carrying a minor injury so couldn't play and we showed that we can be just as strong no matter what combination we play. Josh is a good young player with an exciting future and I hope we can go on to be successful as a team."

Less than a year after making his international debut 18-year-old Stacey has already shown huge promise for the future.

"The team event was a good experience for me," said the Welshman. "Ash and Kim will be the team for the next few years so just to be part of the team was good for my confidence. The doubles with Kim was positive – he's

very experienced so it helped me to settle into the matches knowing he was accustomed to being in these situations. Winning gold is a great feeling as it means I've had the perfect tournament on paper."

"The boys played really well," said Facey Thompson. "Although I couldn't play I was supporting them all the way and they got the job done."

Pickard and 15-year-old Caisa Stadler from Sweden began the round-robin women's class 6-7 event with a 2-0 win against Dora Molnar from Hungary and Keiko Fujimoto from Japan. They were handed a walkover against Sweden and had to settle for silver after a 2-1 defeat by Giselle Munoz from Argentina, Fatma Fattakhova from Russia and Gabriela Constantin from Romania, although Pickard did well to avenge her defeat by Constantin in the singles, beating the Romanian in five sets.

"I think my performances in the singles and team were up and down," said Pickard, "but to get two wins against higher ranked players is always a confidence booster. I am happy with how I approached the team match against Gabriela having lost to her in the singles."

Allen and Barnabas Retter from Hungary were beaten 2-0 by Aviv Gordon from Israel and David Pulpan from Czech Republic but secured second place in the group and a semi-final place with a 2-0 win against the second Polish team and a 2-1 win against Takumi Tsujimura from Japan and his Czech partner Vit Spalek.

Against the first Polish team of Pawel Jablonski and Pawel Konstantyn they lost the doubles and although Allen played well to level the tie with a 3-1 win against Jablonski, Konstantyn took his team into the final with a 3-0 win against Retter.

"I'm pleased to have won a medal with Barnabas," said the 23-year-old from Bromsgrove. "We have played together before so we are familiar with each other's style.

"I was really pleased with how I have played here. I played Jablonski on Friday in the singles and got quite close to him in each set so when I got a second opportunity in the team event I was determined to turn the result around. It's been a good tournament but it's back to the training room on Tuesday."

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