



## Top marks as 10 GB athletes go through

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Paralympic champions Will Bayley and Rob Davies are among 10 British athletes who have made it through to the knockout stages of the World Para Table Tennis Championships in Slovenia after the second day of competition today.

Bayley won his second match to top his group and Davies progressed despite losing his second match to the Argentinian Fernando Eberhardt. They are joined by Tom Matthews, Jack Hunter-Spivey, David Wetherill, Ross Wilson, Ashley Facey Thompson, Kim Daybell, Sue Gilroy and Megan Shackleton.

The knockout stages will be shown live on the BBC Sport website starting at 11.45am on Friday – [click here to watch](#)

### Men's class 1

After a dominant performance yesterday against the Frenchman Alan Papirer, Rob Davies was unable to reproduce that form today and he lost in three close sets to Eberhardt, the PanAmerican champion from Argentina. Davies went through in second place in the group after Eberhardt won his final match against Papirer.

"I just wasn't right mentally today," admitted Davies. "I really struggled to get into it and that was the difference in the end. I know I didn't play as I can so I've got to look forward to the next match now.

"My mentality has got to be better and my return of serve has definitely got to be better and my serving. We knew it was something I had to work on coming in here so I've still got lots to do."

Davies will play a last-16 match against Guillermo Bustamante Sierra from Argentina on Friday.

Tom Matthews bounced back from the disappointment of losing his first match yesterday against the Korean Hyeon Uk Kim to beat the vastly experienced Italian world No 6 Andrea Borgato in five sets. His place in the knockout stages was confirmed when Kim beat Borgato in the final match of the group to leave Matthews in second place.

"I'm really happy but a bit shaky at the moment," said a relieved Matthews. "Borgato is a difficult character – he's got a good game and he's solid and he's got a lot of experience on me so I'm over the moon to come through that."

"To give credit to Neil Robinson (coach) going into the fifth set he calmed me down a lot and just said 'keep it simple, stop trying to attack everything' and that gave me a positive attitude on the table. I think I can improve on being positive with my game and inflicting my game on my opponent instead of letting them dictate the rallies."

Matthews receives a bye into the quarter-finals tomorrow where he will play the Italian Federico Falco.

Paul Davies got his competition under way with a tough match against Endre Major, who has been the form player this season in men's class 1, winning gold in Slovakia, Slovenia and Czech Republic. The Hungarian world No 3 took the match 3-0 which left Davies needing to beat Guillermo Bustamante Sierra in his final match to progress. Although Davies fought hard the Argentinian PanAmerican bronze medallist came through in three very close sets.

"I wasn't at my best," said the London 2012 bronze medallist. "It just didn't click for me today. He (Bustamante Sierra) was the better player and you can't take that away from him. The loss I had earlier wasn't the best either – so it's back to the drawing board. I've got to work a bit harder but no excuses – they played better on the day and deserved to win."

### **Men's class 5**

Jack Hunter-Spivey came up against Cheng Ming Chih from Chinese Taipei, who was ranked as high as No 2 in the world last year and recently lost a five-set final to Paralympic champion and world No 1 Cao Ningning at the Asian Para Games. The 39-year-old took the first two sets and although Hunter-Spivey fought back to take the third Cheng won the match 11-8 in the fourth.

The 23-year-old from Liverpool then had to wait until the final group matches were completed in the afternoon to know that he had secured a place in the knockout stages.

"Overall I feel that I played okay," said Hunter-Spivey. "It wasn't my best level but it wasn't my worst either. Tactically I think I got it a bit wrong and towards the end I felt that I played the right way but it is too late when you are 2-0 down."

"At the last World Championships I was a reserve that got in and was seeded third in my group and now I'm No 6 seed in the tournament and it is a different type of feeling. I'm enjoying it and enjoying the atmosphere so I just want to play at my best level."

Hunter-Spivey plays defending champion Valentin Baus from Germany in the last 16 tomorrow.

### **Men's class 6**

With David Wetherill already through, Paul Karabardak was bitterly disappointed to lose his second match to 19-year-old Kazuki Shichino from Japan which meant that the 33-year-old Welshman did not join his team mate in the knockout stages.

"I felt that if I could go out there and play my game I'd have too much for him," said Karabardak, "but I was too nervous. I didn't play the way I wanted to play and I let him do what he wanted to do and that is why he won."

"It's tough because I like to get into the tournament and get a win under my belt and get a bit of confidence but when you've lost the first group match it is always going to be harder going into the second match."

Wetherill plays the Spaniard Alberto Seoane Alcazar in the last 16 tomorrow.

### **Men's class 7**

Will Bayley started his match against Stephane Messi in great form and was quickly 2-0 up but the world No 7

from France is a former Paralympic champion and he forced his way back into the match. After taking the third set 11-9 he pushed Bayley all the way in a tense fourth set which the world No 2 and defending champion was relieved to win 11-9 to clinch the match 3-1 and his place in the quarter-finals.

"I felt that I played some of my best table tennis in the first two sets," said Bayley, "especially in the second set. I just wanted to close it out in the third set and maybe I forced it a bit. When he won it he gained a bit of confidence and started moving me around and played tactically smart against me so I'm really grateful to pull through and looking forward to the quarter-finals.

"To be honest, I haven't got a brilliant record in the group stages – I always seem to come through them but scrappily and then I seem to gain momentum and that is what I feel like I'm doing again here."

As one of the top four seeds Bayley receives a bye into the quarter-finals tomorrow afternoon.

#### **Men's class 8**

After losing his first match yesterday to defending champion and world No 1 Viktor Didukh, Aaron McKibbin had to beat a former world champion in Richard Csejtey today in order to progress but could not find his best form against the experienced Slovakian who took the match 3-1.

"I just didn't play well, to be honest," said McKibbin. "I've had a really good year and I was really looking forward to playing here but it is probably the worst I have played in a major. The first set was the story of the tournament for me – I was leading quite comfortably and then I lost it and the match turned on its head suddenly."

Having secured top place in his group yesterday and as one of the top three seeds Ross Wilson receives a bye into the quarter-finals tomorrow afternoon.

#### **Men's class 9**

Ashley Facey Thompson has been a revelation this season and the 23-year-old Sheffield-based Londoner made it three wins from three in his group with a 3-0 win against Chao Ming Chee from Malaysia, fighting back in the first two sets and taking the match 11-8 in the third.

"It's been an amazing two days," said Facey Thompson, "they couldn't have gone better. My opponent has improved since the last time I played him in Slovakia so I had to work even harder. Credit to him, he played well but I had the upper hand in the end.

"I was very nervous today but my experience helped me to fight back in the first two sets. It has given me a lot of confidence to know that I can be down against a top player and come back so I'm really happy with how I performed today and I can't wait for the quarter-finals now."

Facey Thompson receives a bye into the quarter-finals and will play Koyo Iwabuchi from Japan.

#### **Men's class 10**

Kim Daybell endured a nervous wait today for the result of the final group match between Claudio Massad from Brazil and the Frenchman Mateo Boheas. A 3-1 win for Massad meant that the group was decided on countback and his 3-0 win against Massad and 3-2 loss to Boheas yesterday gave Daybell first place in the group and he plays a last-16 match tomorrow against the Spaniard Jorge Cardona.

#### **Women's class 4**

After a promising performance yesterday against Paralympic champion Borislava Peric-Rankovic, 19-year-old Megan Shackleton secured her place in the knockout stages at her first World Championships with a gutsy 3-1 win against the very experienced world No 10 Pi-chun Lu from Chinese Taipei

"I feel amazing right now," said Shackleton. "I've been training really hard back home and training full time since I finished sixth form and that is starting to pay off for me. That was one of my best wins yet and it does give me confidence going into the next round."

Sue Gilroy also progressed with a 3-0 win against the PanAmerican champion Martha Verdin from Mexico.

"I played a lot better today," said Gilroy. "I didn't play well yesterday but thank goodness I'm starting to play at the standard that I can. I've just got to try and do what I've been working so hard on in training and play my game rather than my opponents'.

"I always get nervous on the first day of majors and then get better during the tournament. I've made it out of the groups so now I just need to dig in and start playing my game."

Gilroy plays the Russian Aleksandra Vasileva in the last 16 tomorrow while Shackleton has been drawn against Wijittra Jaion from Thailand.

#### **Women's class 6**

Fliss Pickard plays her second and final group match tomorrow against Gabriela Constantin from Romania.

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