



Vecko happy with Worlds showing

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British Para Table Tennis Team Performance Director Gorazd Vecko has pronounced himself satisfied with his team's performance at the World Championships in Slovenia in which Ross Wilson took gold in men's class 8 and Tom Matthews and Fliss Pickard took bronze in men's class 1 and women's class 6 respectively.

Reflecting on defeats for Rio gold medallists Will Bayley and Rob Davies and the emergence of new talent he said: "We are very happy because we have three players who have never medalled at a World Championship taking medals and a new world champion in Ross Wilson who is still only 23 years old. I'm very happy for Ross because it means everything to him and his family after all his injuries.

"We also have medals in two new classes for us with Ross in men's class 8 and Fliss Pickard in women's class 6.

"Obviously we want to have more medals but it was too much to expect that everyone could take a medal. The target from UK Sport was two to five and we have three medals including a gold. If you had asked me a year ago if Fliss Pickard could take a medal at the World Championships I would not have said she has no chance because I believe in all my players, but what she has done here is fantastic.

"I think the results at this competition show the strength of our programme because when our Paralympic champions Will Bayley and Rob Davies were not able to take a medal here we had other players who stepped up to take medals. We know that Will and Rob will come back stronger than ever so I have no doubt that they will have a chance to medal at the European Championships next year and in Tokyo 2020.

"We had a lot of young athletes coming through and producing brilliant results like Megan Shackleton who reached the quarter-finals of women's class 4 and won a lot of good matches. She had a breakthrough at the training camp in Lasko this year when she was beating some really quality players. She was smiling the whole time at this tournament and to lose against the best Chinese player is no disgrace.

"Tom Matthews didn't show his best level but it was still enough to take a medal; Ashley Facey Thompson played an amazing three matches and beat the best Chinese player in class 9. He knew the opportunity was

there for a medal and he was nervous in his quarter-final but he is not experienced at this level yet. I know that he will have a chance to medal at the European Championships and will be a candidate for a medal in Tokyo.

“Sue Gilroy came up against the Paralympic champion in the quarter-finals who is always difficult to beat. David Wetherill lost his quarter-final against a very good Korean player – he couldn’t get into the match but he was trying the best he could and didn’t play badly. Paul Davies is back after many problems and he was also trying his best although it was not enough here to get out of his group; Paul Karabardak also did not get out of his group but he had injury problems before the competition.

“So I think overall we had some disappointing results and some amazing results. We will review everything to see what we need to do better to be ready for next year which is our qualification year for Tokyo.”

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