



Three medals for Para GB in Spain

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Commonwealth medallist Josh Stacey (men's class 9) and Lucie Bouron (women's class 1-3) took silver in their respective events at the PTT Spanish Open in Almeria and Dan Bullen picked up a bronze medal in men's class 5.

Stacey came through his group with comfortable 3-0 wins against 25-year-old US Open team gold medallist Kusnanto from Indonesia, Bart Van Der Zanden from Netherlands and 14-year-old Julian Chinchilla Ramos from Colombia.

The 18-year-old Welshman beat the Pan-American bronze medallist from Colombia Diego Jimenez Velandia 3-1 in the quarter-finals and produced a good performance in the semi-finals to beat the Slovakia Open gold medallist Lev Kats from Ukraine 3-0. That took him through to the final where he lost 3-0 to the very experienced former European medallist Dezso Bereczki from Hungary.

"I think overall I played well and applied some things I've been working on in training well," said Stacey, "so I'm happy with my performance so far in the tournament. I think at times I wasn't safe enough and went for some shots I shouldn't have gone for and I'm looking to rectify those mistakes and bring all of the positives into the team event with Shae (Thakker)."

Women's classes 1-3 are combined here in a round-robin event and after a 3-1 loss to the US Open bronze medallist Yukimi Chada from Japan, Bouron beat 21-year-old class 1 athlete Aino Tapola from Finland 3-0. The 23-year-old from Bracknell secured second place and the silver medal with a 3-0 win against another class 1 Finnish player, Anna Pasanen.

Bullen began with a 3-0 loss to Gerardus Van Grunsven from Netherlands but took second place in his group with a 3-1 win against Hector Castaneda Ossa from Colombia.

The 21-year-old from St Neots progressed to the semi-finals with a 3-1 win against the US Open bronze medallist Sam Roelofs from Netherlands in the quarter-finals but had to be content with bronze after a 3-0 loss to 18-year-old David Olsson, the European Para Youth Games medallist from Sweden.

"I'm pleased to win a medal at my first Factor 40 tournament," said Bullen, "but I'm disappointed with my loss in the semi-final as I have beaten David before. But he has obviously worked hard and studied my game as he changed his tactics and game plan and he did play well.

"This has made me even more determined to work hard to improve my game and look at my opponents' weaknesses so when I play them again I will be much stronger."

In men's class 8 Billy Shilton began with two hard-fought 3-2 wins against Fredrik Johansen, the 20-year-old European Para Youth Games bronze medallist from Norway, and the European team gold medallist from Ukraine Roman Vakarash.

He secured top position in his group with a 3-1 win against Konstantin Kislytsyn from Russia and a 3-0 win against the Spaniard Ricard Sabio Ruiz took him through to the quarter-finals where he lost 3-0 to the world and European team medallist from France, Thomas Bouvais.

After a battling 3-2 win against 17-year-old Marios Chatzikyriakos from Greece, Paisley's Martin Perry was beaten 3-1 by the former European team silver medallist from Germany, Tim Laue. A 3-0 win against former European team bronze medallist Amalio Castillo Rodrigues from Spain earned him a quarter-final against Alberto Seoane Alcazar and the 31-year-old world team gold medallist from Spain was the winner in three close sets.

Although only seeded third in his men's class 7 group 19-year-old Alex Bland from Rotherham emerged as the winner with victories over Vladimir Anikanov from Russia (3-0), 22-year-old Wojciech Wlazlo from Poland (3-1) and last year's Hungarian Open champion Christian Scheiber from Austria (3-0). He lost his quarter-final against the more experienced Thomas Rosenast from Switzerland 3-0.

In the combined men's classes 1 & 2 Marc Bonnar went out after losses to world team bronze medallist Tomasz Jakimczuk from Poland (3-0), Lazaro Rodriguez from Spain (3-1) and Julien Michaud from France.

Craig Allen went out of men's class 9 after 3-0 losses to Lev Kats and world team silver medallist Nobuyuki Suzuki from Japan.

In men's class 10, Shae Thakker had a tough start against the world and Paralympic team medallist Jorge Cardona and the 31-year-old Spaniard was a 3-0 winner. A 3-1 loss to Ivan Davydov from Russia and a narrow 3-2 loss to the Asian Para Games team gold medallist Naoya Nagashita from Japan meant that the 15-year-old did not progress to the knockout stages.

The tournament continues with the team events which conclude on Sunday.

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