British team assured of singles medals in Italy

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On the first day of competition in the Lignano Master Open in Italy Megan Shackleton (women's class 4), Fliss Pickard (women's class 6), Jack Hunter-Spivey (men's class 5), Will Bayley (men's class 7), Josh Stacey (men's class 9) and Kim Daybell (men's class 10) all reached the semi-finals of their respective singles events while Rob Davies and Thomas Matthews (men's class 1) and David Wetherill, Paul Karabardak and Martin Perry (men's class 6) are all through to the quarter-finals tomorrow. Men's class 8 World champion Ross Wilson withdrew from the tournament with a hamstring injury.

Shackleton lost a close four set match to World number nine Wijittra Jaion from Thailand but went through to the quarter-finals after 3-0 wins against the German Lisa Hentig and Michaela Yosupov from Israel. She produced a great performance to beat the Rio bronze medallist and World number six Nada Matic from Serbia, coming back from 2-1 down to win the match 11-9 in the fifth, and plays Sandra Mikolaschek, the World number three from Germany, in the semi-finals.

Pickard had a tough start against the Russian World number two Raisa Chebanika who took their match 3-0 but she secured her place in the quarter-finals with a 3-1 win against Emelie Andre from Sweden and edged a close fourth set 13-11 to beat Katarzyna Marszal from Poland 3-1 in the quarter-finals.

Paralympic champion Rob Davies started with a 3-0 win against the Brazilian Aloisio Lima Jnr and gained revenge against Guillermo Bustamante Sierra for his defeat to the Argentinian in the World Championships last October with a 3-0 win which earned him a bye into the quarter-finals tomorrow. Tom Matthews also topped his group with three wins from three against the Russian Dmitry Lavrov, Alan Papirer from France and Luca Chiarini from Italy and joined Davies in the quarter-finals. Paul Davies won his last group match against Timo Natunen from Finland but earlier losses to the Argentinian Fernando Eberhardt and Hakjin Kim from Korea left him in third place in his group.

Jack Hunter-Spivey began with a hard-fought 3-2 win against the Korean Jae Hyeon Park but reached the quarter-finals with wins against Maura Depergola from Argentina (3-1) and Roberto Punzo from Italy. He reached the semi-finals with a 3-1 win against the Korean Kyung Young Kim and takes on former World

champion Valentin Baus from Germany.

David Wetherill, Paul Karabardak and Martin Perry all received byes into the quarter-finals tomorrow after they topped their respective groups, Perry putting up a great performance to beat World number six Bobi Simion from Romania 3-0.

Will Bayley dropped a set to Bogdan Omelchuk from Ukraine but secured top place in his group and a bye into the quarter-finals with a 3-0 win against the Russian Alexei Samsonov. A 3-0 win over Thomas Westerberg from Sweden took him into the semi-finals tomorrow where he will play the Brazilian Paulo Salmin Filho.

Aaron McKibbin and Billy Shilton both progressed to the last 16 of men's class 8. McKibbin had to fight hard to beat the Italian Samuel De Chiara 3-2 but topped his group with three wins from three and Shilton bounced back from a narrow 3-2 loss to Phisit Wangphonphathanasiri from Thailand to beat Myungkook Shin from Korea 3-0 and take second place in his group.

McKibbin came through his last 16 match against the Russian Artem Iakovlev 3-0 but lost his quarter-final to World number one Viktor Didukh from Ukraine 3-0, while Shilton just lost out in his last 16 match to Zeev Glickman from Israel 11-8 in the fifth.

Stacey lost his opening group match to the Italian World number five Mohamed Kalem 3-1 but fought back from 2-1 down to beat Pawel Jablonski from Poland 3-2 to reach the quarter-final where he came back from 2-0 down to beat the Ukrainian Lev Kats 11-8 in the fifth.

Ashley Facey Thompson was a 3-0 winner against Daniel-Alexandru Dinca from Romania and Lucas Didier from France but lost in four tight sets to Kats. He progressed to the quarter-finals but was beaten 3-0 by Daniel Gustafsson from Sweden.

Daybell topped his group in men's class 10 with wins against Benoit Grasset from France (3-0), Alexandros Diakoumakos from Greece (3-0) and Luka Bakic from Montenegro (3-1). He was a comfortable 3-0 winner in his quarter-final against the Russian Pavel Lukyanov and will play the Frenchman Mateo Boheas in the semi-final.

The full squad for the Lignano Master Open is as follows:

Will Bayley MBE, 31 years old (men's class 7) – Tunbridge Wells (home town)/ Sheffield (lives)

Paul Davies, 52 (men's class 1) – North Cornelly

Rob Davies MBE, 34 (men's class 1) – Brecon

Kim Daybell, 26 (men's class 10) – Sheffield/London

Ashley Facey Thompson, 24 (men's class 9) – London (Stratford)/Sheffield

Jack Hunter-Spivey, 23 (men's class 5) – Liverpool/Sheffield

Paul Karabardak, 34 (men's class 6) – Swansea

Tom Matthews, 26 (men's class 1) – Aberdare

Aaron McKibbin, 27 (men's class 8) – London (Wandsworth)/Sheffield

Martin Perry, 24 (men's class 6) – Paisley/Sheffield

Fliss Pickard, 24 (women's class 6) – Burnley/Sheffield

Megan Shackleton, 19 (women's class 4) – Todmorden/Sheffield

Billy Shilton, 20 (men's class 8) – Stonehouse (Gloucestershire)/Sheffield

Josh Stacey, 19, (men's class 9) – St Mellons/Sheffield

David Wetherill, 29 (men's class 6) – Torpoint

Ross Wilson, 23 (men's class 8) – Minster/Sheffield

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