



## Golden finish for British team in Italy

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**Posted On:** March 17, 2019

After [two gold medals in the singles yesterday](#) the British Para table tennis team finished the Lignano Master Open in style today with gold in the team events for Kim Daybell, Ashley Facey Thompson and Josh Stacey in men's class 10, Paul Karabardak, Martin Perry and David Wetherill in men's class 6 and Jack Hunter-Spivey with his German partner Jeorg Didion in men's class 5. Men's class 7 Paralympic champion Will Bayley and Billy Shilton took silver in men's class 8.

### Men's class 10

Daybell, Facey Thompson and Stacey won their three group matches 2-0 with Daybell and Facey Thompson combining well in the doubles and Facey Thompson recording a good singles win against the American class 9 World number four Tahl Leibovitz 3-0. That took them into a semi-final against the French team of Mateo Boheas and Benoit Grasset and after combining with Facey Thompson to win the doubles 3-1, Daybell secured their place in the final with a 3-0 win against Grasset.

In the final against a combined team from Poland and Italy, Daybell and Facey Thompson seized the early advantage by winning the doubles 3-1. Class 9 Stacey then fought hard in a narrow 3-2 defeat to the class 10 Italian Lorenzo Cordua and Daybell clinched the gold medal with a 3-1 win over Igor Misztal.

"I was pleased with our performance in the team event," said Daybell. "It is exciting to play with two young talents and I'm sure we will only get stronger as the season progresses. Ash and I continued our good form in doubles and I think with Josh we have a team strong enough to compete against the best in the world."

"It was a solid performance by all of us," said Facey Thompson. "I played a lot better than I did in the singles event and beat the World number four which I was very happy with. Kim and I played a lot of good doubles so I was happy with that as well. The singles was hard because I struggled mentally and couldn't get going but I'm looking forward to Slovenia in May."

### Men's class 6

Wetherill, Karabardak and Perry topped their group with 2-0 wins against France and Israel which gave them a bye into the semi-finals where they beat the Slovakian team of Gabriel Csemy and Alexander Nagy to set up a final against Bobi Simion from Romania and Valentin Kneuss from Switzerland. Wetherill and Karabardak combined to win the doubles and Perry sealed the gold with a 3-1 win against Kneuss in the first singles match.

"It was excellent to win gold," said Karabardak, who had lost a close match to Simion in the quarter-finals of the singles. "We played really well as a team in a combination of doubles and singles and Martin was excellent in winning the singles to make every match a 2-0 win. Overall a good performance but plenty more to work on and hopefully improve for the rest of the year."

"It's great to grab another medal with Dave and PK," said Perry, "and it's always even better when it is gold. The three of us were a really tight unit out here and I think it showed the way we played. I feel that I've played some really good table tennis which I'm hoping to build on as it's only the first competition of the season so it is exciting times."

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

Hunter-Spivey and Didion came through all three of their group matches 2-0 which gave them a bye into the semi-finals against the second Korean team of Kyeonghun Lee and Jae Hyeon Park. A 2-0 win sent them through to the final where they beat the German team of former World champion Valentin Baus and Jan Guertler 2-0.

"Winning gold is a great way to end a good start to the year for me," said Hunter-Spivey, "beating some very good teams in the process. I'm happy with the level I've played this competition and proved a lot to myself but I also know I can play so much better this year."

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

With Aaron McKibbin unable to play due to a wrist injury Will Bayley and Billy Shilton topped their group with 2-0 wins against Russia and Australia/Korea, with Shilton winning the singles ties in both matches after combining with Bayley to win the doubles. That gave them a bye into the semi-finals where they put up a great performance to beat Phisit Wangphonphathanasiri and Komkrit Charitsat from Thailand 2-0, winning the doubles 3-1 and Shilton again winning the singles against Charitsat 3-0.

In the final they pushed Paralympic champions Ukraine all the way in the doubles, leading 2-1 before Viktor Didukh and Maksym Nikolenko came back to win it 3-2, and World number one Didukh secured the gold with a 3-0 win against Shilton.

"Billy and I have a great record together in doubles," said Bayley. "We have beaten most teams in the world so we expected to win the final today but Ukraine played a great last set. We will keep improving and I look forward to playing with Billy again."

#### **Men's class 1**

Rob Davies, Tom Matthews and Paul Davies lost their opening match to Korea 2-0 but bounced back with a 2-1 win against the Swiss/Russian combination of Sylvio Keller and Dmitry Lavrov and a 2-0 win against Vincent Thomas from France and Timo Natunen from Finland. They were unlucky not to progress after Keller and Lavrov defeated Korea and with three teams level on points the group was decided on countback with the British trio in third place.

#### **Women's class 4-5**

Megan Shackleton and team partners Tamara Leonelli from Chile and the Russian Irina Voronina lost their opening match to Thailand 2-0 and did not progress from the group after a 2-1 loss to Serbia.

#### **Women's class 6-8**

Fliss Pickard and Supannee Kokaew from Thailand also went out at the group stages after losses to Poland and France/Italy.

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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