



## Three silvers for Para GB

**Author:** Paul Stimpson

**Posted On:** October 12, 2019

World and Commonwealth champion Ross Wilson (men's class 8), European bronze medallist David Wetherill (men's class 6) and Commonwealth bronze medallist Joshua Stacey (men's class 9) all took silver in their respective singles events at the PTT Finland Open today and there were bronze medals for Martin Perry (men's class 6), Ashley Facey Thompson (men's class 9) and Fliss Pickard (women's class 6).

Wilson came through his group with 3-0 wins against Takumi Shukunobe from Japan and 2017 European team gold medallist Roman Vakarash from Ukraine.

That gave him a bye into the quarter-finals where he beat Linus Karlsson, the world team gold medallist from Sweden, 3-1, to set up a rematch with Maksym Nikolenko, the Ukrainian world No 4 who had beaten him in the quarter-finals at the European Championships last month. Wilson avenged that defeat with an emphatic 3-0 win but had to settle for silver after losing 3-0 in the final to another Ukrainian, world No 1 Viktor Didukh.

"The tournament has had its ups and downs," said Wilson, "and I would have liked to play better in the final but I couldn't quite get a grip of the game. It was a good performance up until the final and it was good to beat Nikolenko 3-0 after losing to him at the Europeans. It's also a positive towards qualification for Tokyo and I'll look to improve my game so that I can give myself a better chance of taking gold next time."

Wetherill also topped his group with 3-0 wins against Markku Manner from Finland, the former European team champion who was playing his first tournament since 2011, and Petr Hnizdo from Czech Republic. He defeated Marios Chatzikyriakos from Greece 3-1 in the quarter-finals and reached the final with a 3-1 win against the Italian Raimondo Alecci.

His opponent in the final was European bronze medallist Thomas Rau and it turned into a marathon with Wetherill fighting back from 2-1 down to level before the German eventually took the gold 12-10 in the fifth.

"When you play the game of table tennis you win or lose – there is no middle ground," said a philosophical Wetherill. "The final today was a draw except he won."

Stacey fought back from 2-1 down to beat Kusunoto from Indonesia 3-2 and then beat the world silver medallist Iurii Nozdrunov from Russia 3-1. He secured top place in his group and a bye into the semi-finals with a 3-0 win against Bart Van Der Zanden from Netherlands then beat his British team-mate Facey Thompson 3-0 to go through to the final where he was beaten 3-1 by the European silver medallist Lev Kats from Ukraine.

"The final was a difficult match to play as I've struggled with the conditions here," said Stacey. "I think I played well in parts but I broke down in the rally too early to bring the best out of myself and the game then ran away from me.

"Playing Nozdrunov was a first for me so I had to build points slowly to work out weaknesses and I ended up serving very aggressively and attacking first to give myself the best chance of putting him under pressure. It worked really well towards the end of the match and that is what got me the win.

"Playing a team-mate is always difficult and it was even harder as we are sharing a room here. I think I played positively and I was very aware of the tactics I had to use and thankfully I managed to win. Now I'm looking forward to competing with Ash in the team rather than against him."

Facey Thompson received a walkover against Supriyatna Gumilar from Indonesia and was beaten 3-0 by Kats. He joined Stacey in the knockout stages with a 3-0 win against Aviv Gordon from Israel and set up the all-British semi-final with a 3-1 quarter-final win against Esa Miettinen from Finland.

"It is weird playing against Josh as we train with each other every day but he played really well," said Facey Thompson. "My form has been up and down in the singles and my middle game and movement need to improve but I know what I need to work on and I'm looking forward to playing the team event with Josh."

Perry won his first match against Tor Rasmussen from Norway 3-0 and then came through a great battle against Chatzikyriakos 3-2. The 18 year old European team silver medallist beat Perry over five sets in the Japan Open but this time it was Perry who came out on top, fighting back from 2-0 down to win 12-10 in the fifth and secure his place in the quarter-finals as the group winner. A 3-0 win against Manner took him through to the semi-final where he lost 3-0 to Rau.



Martin Perry in action

"I've not played my best," said Perry, "but I'm really happy with my discipline at the table. I just tried to do the basics well as I didn't feel too confident in my attacking game so I was really pleased with how I managed to grind out the victory against Marios. Even at 2-0 down I knew if I could just sharpen up enough to hold the ball on the table I would be in with a chance.

"My quarter-final was against an opponent from Finland I have never seen before so again I just tried to focus on the basics and place the ball in clever positions. In the semi-final I knew that Rau was going to serve strong and look to attack the third ball and it was paying off for him. By the end of the second set I was dealing with his serve better and I had chances in the third set but I couldn't capitalise."

Pickard received a walkover in her first match against Najlah Al Dayyeni from Iraq and lost 3-0 to the world No 2 and former Paralympic champion Raisa Chebanika from Russia. A 3-0 win against Caisa Stadler from Sweden secured her place in the semi-finals where she lost 3-0 to the European champion Maliak Alieva from Russia who went on to take the gold.

Billy Shilton started with a 3-0 win against the 17 year old Russian Nikita Novikov from Russia but lost his second match to Ivan Mai, the world No 5 and world bronze medallist from Ukraine. He claimed his place in the knockout stages of men's class 8 with a 3-0 win against Lukas Maxa from Czech Republic and narrowly missed out on a place in the semi-finals after twice levelling against Nikolenko in their quarter-final before the European silver medallist took the match 3-2.

In men's class 10 Kim Daybell beat the 21 year old Russian Ivan Shmuilo 3-0 and was then beaten 3-1 by the world bronze medallist from Austria, Krisztian Gardos. A 3-0 win against Benoit Grasset, the world team bronze medallist from France, took him through to the knockout stages where he lost 3-0 to world No 4 Mateo Boheas from France.

In women's class 3 Lucie Bouron put up a determined performance against world No 10 Hatice Duman from Turkey, fighting back from 2-0 down to level at 2-2 before the former world and European singles medallist eventually took the match 11-6 in the fifth. The 24 year old from Bracknell went out after losing her second match against Fanny Bertrand, the former European team champion and Paralympic team medallist from France, 3-1.

Marc Bonnar (men's class 1-2), Lee York (men's class 4) and Dan Bullen (men's class 5) all went out after losing their group matches. Bonnar lost 3-0 to Rasul Nazirov from Russia, Mitsuhiro Matsuo, the Asian Para Games team silver medallist from Japan, and Benoit Besset from France; York lost 3-0 to Shai Siada, the former European bronze medallist from Israel, Aleksandr Sokolov from Russia and Nesim Turan, the European silver medallist and world No 4 from Turkey; Bullen was beaten 3-0 by Lin Yen-Hung, the very experienced world team gold medallist and Paralympic team silver medallist from Chinese Taipei, 3-1 by Isak Nyholm from Sweden and 3-0 by the Turkish world champion Ali Ozturk.

The tournament continues with the team events concluding tomorrow.

**Downloaded From:**

<https://newsarchive.tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/archived/three-silvers-for-para-gb/>