

Silvers for Jack and Ash in China

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Silver medals for Jack Hunter-Spivey in men's class 5 and Ashley Facey-Thompson in men's class 9 were the highlights for the British team in the singles events at the PTT China Open in Hangzhou today. Megan Shackleton (women's class 4), Fliss Pickard (women's class 6), Joshua Stacey (men's class 9) and Kim Daybell (men's class 10) all took bronze.

Hunter-Spivey progressed to the quarter-finals of men's class 5 as group winner after 3-0 wins against Norakan Chanpahaka from Thailand, Agus Sutanto from Indonesia and Cheong Lam Sam from Macau. He went on to beat Toru Nakamoto from Japan 3-1 and the 2017 Asian champion Zhan Dashun from China 3-0 before losing 3-1 to the Paralympic champion from China Cao Ningning.

"I'm really happy with the way I played out here," said Hunter-Spivey, "and really pleased to navigate my way through to the final beating some good players on the way. This was a big competition for me in terms of qualification for Tokyo and feel I handled the pressure well and it was a great end to the year."

Facey Thompson began with a 3-0 win against the Dutchman Tonnie Heijnen and then lost 3-1 to the Asian champion Zhao Yi Qing from China; he took second place in the group after beating Wong Chi Yin from Hong Kong 3-0 in his final group match and then came back from 2-1 down to beat the Japanese world No 3 Koyo Iwabuchi in the semi-finals. In the final he again fought back from 2-0 down against Zhao to level at 2-2 but Chinese player took the match and the gold 11-8 in the fifth.

"I had to dig deep against Koyo," said Facey Thompson. "It was a good match but I had the upper hand in the end and managed to win. I started slowly in the final but I kept a cool head and managed to get back into the match but my opponent played well. Overall I'm happy with silver."

Stacey won 3-0 against Han Yajie from China and then lost 3-1 to Iwabuchi. He secured second place in his group with a 3-1 win in his final match against Dinesh Pitiyage Don Silva from Sri Lanka and was beaten 3-0 by Zhao in the semi-final.

"I played well in patches," said Stacey, "but in the semi-final Zhao was a lot better at being solid for the first three balls of a rally and was the better player by a wide margin from start to finish. I'm looking forward to playing in the team event with Igor Misztal from Poland and seeing how well we can do."

Shackleton showed her continued improvement by twice levelling against the world No 2 from China Zhou Ying, taking a tight fourth set 12-10 before the Beijing and London Paralympic champion took the match 11-6 in the fifth. Shackleton secured her place in the semi-finals with a 3-1 win against world No 9 Joyce De Oliveira, the Pan American champion from Brazil, and was beaten 3-1 by Gu Xiaodan, the Chinese world No 4 who went on to take the gold.

"I'm pleased with the way I've played so far," said Shackleton. "To take Zhou so close has given me great confidence; although I didn't get the win I think it was a great learning curve I can take going forwards and it's great to be the only other country on the podium alongside China!"

Pickard started with a 3-1 win against the Asian Para Games silver medallist Lam Oi Man from Macau then was edged out in a great battle by Najlah Al Dayyeni, the 15 year old Asian championships silver medallist from Iraq, who won a titanic fourth set 19-17 and clinched the match 12-10 in the fifth. Pickard went through in second place and was beaten 3-0 in the semi-final by Katarzyna Marszal, the former world champion from Poland who also sent on to take the gold.

Daybell beat Nariaki Kakita from Japan 3-0 and then lost 3-1 to the Chinese world No 3 Lian Hao. He lost the first set against Bunpot Sillapakong from Thailand 12-10 but took the next three 5, 2 and 5 and went through to play Ivan Karabec in the semi-finals. After taking a close first set 12-10 the former world and Paralympic champion

from Czech Republic went on to take the match 3-1.

"It is always good to win a medal at a major tournament so I'm pleased to come away with one," said Daybell. "Unfortunately it was the same story as it has been for a lot of my season and I was unable to deliver against the best players in the world but I will do my best to improve on that in the team event."

In men's class 8 Billy Shilton beat Arufuahirokazu Tateishi from Japan 3-1 and then lost 3-0 to Piotr Grudzien from Poland, the former world No 1 and World, Paralympic and European team gold medallist. Shilton took second place in the group with a 3-0 win against the Italian Samuel De Chiara and was beaten 3-1 by the 17 year old Asian champion Peng Weinan from China in the quarter-finals.

In men's class 6 Martin Perry was a 3-0 winner against the Egyptian Ibrahim Hamadtou but was beaten 3-1 by the Chinese world No 7 Huang Jiaxin and went out after a 3-1 loss in his final group match to Mars Gabdullin from Russia.

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

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