



Karabardak pleased with silver show

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Welshman Paul Karabardak took silver in the men's class 6 singles at the PTT Dutch Open in Stadskanaal while Tom Matthews (men's class 1), David Wetherill (men's class 6) and world champion Ross Wilson (men's class 8) all took bronze in their respective events after very close semi-final defeats.

Karabardak began with a 3-0 win against 15-year-old Kristian Jelinek from Czech Republic but then had to fight hard to defeat Tim Laue, the European team bronze medallist from Germany, 3-2, taking the final set 11-4 after losing a tight fourth set 12-10.

He secured top place in his group with a 3-0 win against 16-year-old Asier Llave from Spain and was a 3-0 winner against Petr Hnizdo from Czech Republic in the quarter-final and a 3-0 winner against the Russian Mars Gabdullin in the semi-final.

Going into the final the 34-year-old from Swansea trailed the world, Paralympic and European champion Peter Rosenmeier 8-2 in their head-to-head but had won their most recent meeting in the Slovenia Open earlier this year. Today it was Rosenmeier who proved the stronger in a 3-0 win although Karabardak had his chances in the second set which he lost 13-11.

"I'm very pleased with the way I played," said Karabardak, "especially against Laue and Gabdullin. They were playing really well and I played tactically smart and managed to play the way I wanted; I was very positive and I'm pleased it paid off.

"The final was difficult as Peter was playing really well and I'm disappointed as I couldn't pressure him more, which enabled him to be relaxed and play his game. The second set was big and I think I could have made him nervous if I had won it but he was excellent today and was a worthy winner.

"Overall I'm very pleased with my performance and hopefully this can be a big step towards qualification for Tokyo."

Wilson was a 3-0 winner against 19-year-old Devin Wassink from Netherlands and the two-time Oceania

champion from Australia Nathan Pellissier to top his group and then beat Leonardo Aritonang from Indonesia 3-0 in the quarter-final.

The 24-year-old led the Asian champion Peng Weinan 2-1 in their semi-final and had a match point in the fourth set but the Chinese teenager is a talented young player and fought back to win it 15-13 and took the match 11-7 in the deciding set.

"I didn't take my chances," said Wilson. "I should have won my match point but I just couldn't quite get over the line. The rest of the tournament was fine and it feels good to have completed my competitions for this season and to have given myself the best chance of qualifying for Tokyo."

Matthews was a 3-0 winner against Ibrahim Dardas from Jordan but lost his chance of a bye into the semi-finals with a 3-0 loss to Seeun Lim from Korea, who went on to top the group with Matthews in second place. The Welshman won his quarter-final against Timo Natunen from Finland 3-0 and looked to be in control of his semi-final against World team gold medallist Andrea Borgato leading 2-0 but the experienced Italian fought back to level at 2-2 and edged the deciding set 11-9.

"I feel overall that I played well," said Matthews, "but still not the standard I want to be at. The semi-final was a good match; it's a tough one to take after being 2-0 up but he showed his experience and came out on top. He played well and went on to win the tournament so congratulations to him. Now it's back to the training hall to prepare for next year."

After starting with a 3-0 win against newcomer Mark Alberti from Netherlands, Wetherill also lost his chance of an automatic semi-final place after a 3-0 loss to the in-form Gabdullin, a bronze medallist in the China Open last week.

The 29-year-old came through his quarter-final against Laue 3-0 and came agonisingly close to joining Karabardak in the final, leading Rosenmeier 2-1, 10-6 in their semi-final before the Danish world No 2 edged the fourth set 14-12 and went on to take the deciding set 11-7.

The two players have had some tense matches in the past and Wetherill was happy that today's match was played in the right spirit.

"It was more important to have a friendly match today," he said, "after the last few matches were quite aggressive. It would have been horrible to meet the next time in Tokyo with a similar mentality so we spoke beforehand and cleared the air and that was carried on to the table with some great rallies.

"I think we were both almost too respectful; it felt almost like an exhibition match and I probably wasn't as clinical as I may have been otherwise. It will be good to have a period of proper recovery now and I can fully concentrate on next year."

Sue Gilroy was a 3-0 winner against Tarsilem Tarsilem from Indonesia but lost her second match to world No 9 Joyce De Oliveira, the four-time PanAmerican champion from Brazil, 3-1. She clinched her place in the quarter-finals with a 3-1 win against the world team silver medallist from Germany Lisa Hentig but lost 3-0 to the Bangkok Open gold medallist Bhavina Patel from India.

Pathway athletes Cellan Hall (men's class 5) and Grace Williams (women's class 8) did not progress from their tough respective groups. Hall lost 3-0 to the Paralympic champion from China Cao Ningning and was then edged out by 22-year-old Sem Roelofs from Netherlands 3-2, having led 2-1.

Williams could not have had a tougher first match on her international debut and was beaten 3-0 by Mao Jingdian, the world No 1 and double world and Paralympic champion from China. The 16-year-old then went down fighting in the battle of the teenagers which 18-year-old Frederique Van Hoof from Netherlands won 3-1.

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