



Three medals for GB in Costa Rica

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British Para Table Tennis Pathway athletes Lucie Bouron (women's class 2-4), Alex Bland (men's class 6-7) and Shae Thakker (men's class 10) all secured bronze medals in their respective singles events at the Copa Costa Rica in San José.

Bouron lost her first match to Edith Sigala Lopez from Mexico, the class 3 seven time PanAmerican champion, 3-1, but took second place in her group with a 3-0 win against Mayumi Ozawa from Japan and a 3-2 win against the higher ranked Manuela Guapi Guzman from Colombia, holding her nerve to win the fifth set 11-8 after the 17-year-old class 4 PanAmerican medallist had come back from 2-0 down to level at 2-2.

She went on to beat the former PanAmerican champion Yanelis Silva Zamora from Cuba 3-0 in the quarter-final and lost the semi-final to the class 2 world No 10 Maria Constanza Garrone from Argentina 3-0.

"I'm really happy to win a bronze medal" said 24-year-old Bouron from Bracknell, "as it was quite a tough competition for me with lots of good players. I'm pleased with how I played and hope to take that forward into the team event now with Anna-carin (Ahlquist)."

Bland, from Rotherham, lost his opening match to Jose Vargas Pirajan, the five-time PanAmerican medallist from Colombia, 3-0, but progressed to the knockout stages with a 3-0 win against the unranked Allan Sanchez Madrigal from Costa Rica. He defeated the 19-year-old Canadian Gabriel Seguin 3-0 before losing in the semi-final to Kazuya Kaneko, the Asian Para Games team bronze medallist from Japan, 3-0.

"I think I did what was expected of me regarding the matches I won," said 20-year-old Bland, "and did it in a professional manner. In the matches I lost I tried hard but they played well and I just wasn't good enough."

Thakker was beaten 3-0 by Jose Manuel Ruiz Reyes, the Spanish former world and European champion, but reached the quarter-finals with a 3-0 win against Jose Angel Quesada Rojas from Costa Rica.

He showed great determination to beat Erich Manso Salazar from Cuba, taking the final set 11-9 after Salazar had levelled at 2-2 from 2-0 down, but was then beaten 3-0 in the semi-final by Nariaki Kakita, the Asian Para

Games team gold medallist from Japan.

"I'm very happy to have been able to get a bronze medal," said 16-year-old Thakker from Denham in Buckinghamshire, "and I am going to use this experience as a learning curve into future matches. There are many aspects of my game I need to improve but overall I am pleased with how I performed."

Jack Stockdale also came through his group in men's class 10 after a 3-0 win against Jose Andres Vargas Torres from Costa Rica, a 3-2 loss to Kakita – fighting back from 2-0 down to level at 2-2 before losing the deciding set 11-4 – and a hard-fought 3-1 win against Kevin Jose Rivera Rios, the 23-year-old former US Open silver medallist from Puerto Rico. He was beaten 3-0 in the quarter-final by the PanAmerican champion Carlos Carbinatti Junior from Brazil.

In the round-robin men's class 5 singles Dan Bullen began with a 3-1 win against self-funded British player Simon Heaps but finished out of the medals after losing 3-1 to Kentaro Doi from Japan, the team gold medallist in the Bangkok Open this year, 3-2 (12-10 in the fifth) to the Argentinian Elias Romero, the 2017 PanAmerican champion, and 3-1 to Gerardus Van Grunsven from Netherlands.

Heaps was also beaten by the same opponents, going down 3-1 to Van Grunsven and 3-0 to Doi and Romero.

Ryan Henry was drawn in a tough group in men's class 8 and was beaten 3-0 in his first match by Linus Karlsson, the world team champion and Paralympic team medallist from Sweden. He won 3-0 against Jason Jesus Anchia from Costa Rica but lost out in a place in the knockout stages after a narrow 3-2 defeat by Arufuahirokazu Tateishi, the Asian Para Games team medallist from Japan, losing 11-5 in the fifth after fighting back from 2-0 down.

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