



Lowly finish for boys despite back-to-back victories

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England ended on a high with successive victories over Bosnia-Herzegovina and Lithuania, but still finished in 35th position in the Junior Boys' Team event at the European Youth Championships in Croatia.

With positive covid tests and isolation requirements having resulted in late team changes and impacted on preparation, the team began Group H with a narrow defeat to Finland.

They recovered from 2-0 down to draw level, Naphong Boonyaprapa beginning the comeback and Ben Piggott then winning 13-11 in a decider against Sam Khosravi. However, Arttu Pihkala picked up his second victory for Finland, defeating Amirul Hussain 3-1 to seal a 3-2 victory for his nation. There were some close sets in the match – Hussain winning the second 19-17 and Pihkala the fourth 15-13.

Toby Ellis made his debut in the second group match against a strong Ukraine team and it was a 3-0 reverse for England, though Piggott did close from 2-0 down to take the first match to a decider, which he lost 11-9 to Nazar Tretiak.

That put England into the play-offs for positions 31-38 and they started with a 3-2 defeat to Austria, which hinged on a few points here and there. Piggott put England ahead, 12-10 in a decider against Lorenz Purstinger, but Andre Pierre Kases levelled by beating Boonyaprapa 3-1. Hussain restored the advantage 11-8 in a fifth against Florian Bichler, but Kases' second victory and Purstinger's win over Boonyaprapa tilted it in Austria's favour.

The next match saw relatively routine victories for Piggott, Hussain and Ellis as Bosnia-Herzegovina were seen off 3-0.

It was tighter in the final play-off match against Lithuania. Piggott came from 2-1 down to win the opener 3-2 against Aleksandras Chmelevskis, and Ellis took match three against Lukas Laketcenko – but both times, Lukas

Rimkus levelled for Lithuania. It was left to Hussain to defeat Chmelevskis in three straight to complete the overall win.

Attention now turns to the singles and doubles events, beginning today, with Charlotte Bardsley and Mari Baldwin adding to England's representation after having to miss the team event after Jasmin Wong and Amy Marriott had to pull out of the tournament.

Results

Junior Boys' Team

Group H

Finland 3 England 2

Arttu Pihkala bt Ben Piggott 3-0 (11-9, 11-7, 11-9)
Sam Khosravi bt Amirul Hussain 3-2 (10-12, 11-7, 9-11, 11-7, 11-2)
Naphong Boonyaprapa bt Aleksi Rasanen 3-0 (11-9, 11-5, 11-8)
Piggott bt Khosravi 3-2 (6-11, 11-9, 12-10, 9-11, 13-11)
Pihkala bt Hussain 3-1 (11-7, 17-19, 11-6, 15-13)

Ukraine 3 England 0

Nazar Tretiak bt Piggott 3-2 (13-11, 11-5, 7-11, 4-11, 11-9)
Andrii Grebeniuk bt Boonyaprapa 3-0 (18-16, 11-3, 11-5)
Mykyta Zavada bt Toby Ellis 3-1 (11-4, 11-2, 6-11, 11-6)

Positions 31-38

Austria 3 England 2

Piggott bt Lorenz Purstinger 3-2 (7-11, 13-11, 11-8, 3-11, 12-10)
Andre Pierre Kases bt Boonyaprapa 3-1 (11-9, 6-11, 11-6, 12-10)
Hussain bt Florian Bichler 3-2 (11-7, 11-3, 9-11, 6-11, 11-8)
Kases bt Piggott 3-1 (11-9, 10-12, 11-9, 11-6)
Purstinger bt Boonyaprapa 3-0 (16-14, 11-2, 11-3)

Positions 35-38

England 3 Bosnia-Herzegovina 0

Piggott bt Dario Pejic 3-1 (11-4, 11-5, 4-11, 13-11)
Hussain bt Marko Simunovic 3-0 (11-6, 11-2, 11-7)
Ellis bt Anes Mujicic 3-1 (11-9, 7-11, 11-7, 11-6)

Positions 35-36

England 3 Lithuania 2

Piggott bt Aleksandras Chmelevskis 3-2 (5-11, 11-9, 9-11, 11-8, 11-7)
Lukas Rimkus bt Hussain 3-0 (13-11, 11-9, 11-5)
Ellis bt Lukas Laketcenko 3-0 (11-9, 11-5, 11-4)
Rimkus bt Piggott 3-1 (11-6, 11-9, 10-12, 11-5)
Hussain bt Chmelevskis 3-0 (11-8, 11-9, 11-6)

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