



Gold for Henry in Costa Rica

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Posted On: December 13, 2021

Ryan Henry combined with Paul Leonardo Polo Astudillo from Ecuador to take gold in the men's class 8 team event on the final day of the ITTF Para Copa Costa Rica today and fellow Pathway athletes Dan Bullen and Lee York took bronze in the men's class 1-5 team.

Henry and Polo Astudillo started the round-robin event with a tough match against USA and after losing the doubles 3-1 Henry levelled the tie with a 3-2 win against Masoud Mojtahed, fighting back from 2-1 down to win 11-8 in the fifth. Polo Astudillo then secured the tie with another 3-2 win against Marco Makkar.

The British/Ecuadorian partnership won their second match against the first Costa Rican team 2-0, taking the doubles against Steven Roman Chinchilla and Hernan Domingo Solis Roodriguez 3-0 and Henry winning the first singles 3-0 against Solis Roodriguez. Against the second Costa Rican team of Andres Mendez Ramirez and Jason Jesus Anchia they took the doubles 3-0 and Polo Astudillo clinched the tie and the gold with a win in the singles against Mendez Ramirez.

"As the tournament went on I became happier with how I was playing," said 21-year-old Henry from Ardrossan, "and I started to find my game more. I'm happy to bounce back in the team event and take gold after a disappointing singles event. I enjoyed playing with Paul and feel it was a great experience playing alongside him."

Men's class 1-5

Bullen and York began with a 2-0 win against the second team from Costa Rica, winning the doubles 3-0 and York winning the first singles against Sebastian Chaves Quiroz 3-0. Against the top seeds from Chile they lost a very close doubles 3-2 and Bullen was just edged out in another five set match by Maximiliano Rodriguez Avila 11-9 in the fifth. The British pair secured second place in the group with a 2-0 win against Canada, taking the doubles 3-0 and York winning the first singles against Mohsin Ali Wotto 3-0.

In the semi-final they played the American/Canadian partnership of Ahad Bakhshaei Sarand and Muhammad

Mudassar and had to settle for bronze after they lost a close doubles match 3-2 and Bullen was beaten 3-0 by Sarand.

"I really feel that Dan and I work well together," said York, "and I feel that we understand each other's game very well. I think we were a bit unlucky in the doubles today and the result could have gone either way. I know what I have to work on and can't wait to get home and get started. I really want to say thank you to the rest of the team for their support. Everyone out here has worked so well together and been there for each other."

"I love playing team with Lee and we played some brilliant doubles," said Bullen. "He is so supportive in the corner when I play and he gets me fired up for the doubles which is good. This is only the third time we have played team together and after losing out on a medal on countback in Spain last month it is great to get a bronze here.

"It's been a good experience and I really think we can be a force to be reckoned with in the doubles if we keep going. It was a tough singles for me today after beating him (Sarand) 3-2 yesterday. I played well but he came out on top unfortunately and there are just a few little things I need to tweak to get him next time."

Women's class 8-10

Grace Williams teamed up with Anaili Arreola from Guatemala and they started the round-robin event with a 2-1 win against Costa Rica. After combining well to win the doubles Williams lost a very close match to Aneth Priscila Araya Alvarez 13-11 in the fifth, having led 2-0, and Arreola took the deciding singles against Carina Ugalde 3-0 to win the tie.

In their second match against the top seeds Russia/Chile Williams and Arreola lost the doubles 3-0. The 18-year-old from Wrexham then played really well to beat the class 10 PanAmerican Championships bronze medallist Ailyn Paulina Espinoza Perez 3-0 before Anastasia Kostenevich secured the tie for Russia/Chile with a 3-0 win against Arreola.

With Russia/Chile beating Costa Rica in the final match Williams and Arreola finished second but with just three teams only the gold medal was awarded.

"I feel that overall I played really well," said Williams. "I've been working hard on certain aspects of my game in training which I believe I implemented well in my matches. I've been working on growing in confidence on the table and I feel pleased that I have overcome the intimidation of some players when they become focused and vocal at times in matches.

"I had some close games with good players and I'm over the moon to have beaten the Chilean class 10 player, which to me is an amazing result. Playing with my teammate has been very enjoyable and so has this tournament."

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