

UKDTTA At The Euro Champs

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In the team competition GB chose to rotate the squad as they felt all the players should have a share of the games. In the opening round GB lost to Russia 3-0 and beat Belarus 3-2 which left them fighting for 5th to 8th place in the next rounds. As the score against Russia in the first round carried forward the match against the very experienced Croatia, and Ukraine team's became ultra important. The Croatia match against 3 very good players resulted in a loss of 3-1 Nick Gilmour winning the one game and against Ukraine another 3-0 loss leaving GB to fight against Poland for 7th and 8th places. And fight they did! Going 2-0 down it was left to Andrew Calloway to start the fight back by beating their No 3 in straight games then Nick Gilmour levelled it by beating their No 1 only for James Meyers to lose the final set in 4 games despite playing his best table tennis ever. Considering that there were a number of full time players amongst the teams GB played they accredited themselves very well finishing 8th, in the last Europeans 4 years ago their finishing position was 12th.

Nick Gilmour was the only player to get through his group in the Men's Singles in second place and then losing to the Russian No 2 in 4 games despite playing well. James Meyers, Alireza Kamrani Masooleh, and Andrew Calloway all finishing 3rd in their respective groups.

It wasn't all "what might have been though", in the Women's singles Nasim Khakbaz-Nejad really upset the European apple cart with her combination bat by beating the Hungarian world No 18 in her group 3-2 who became so frustrated she picked up a yellow card for table abuse, then beating a Polish player world ranked No 24 and an unranked Turkish player and so finishing 1st in her group. Playing in the last 16 she then met a Russian player ranked No 32 in the world who was also so frustrated against the combination bat that she too picked up a yellow for abuse and her coaches were consigned to the stands for coaching during the game. Nasim then had to play the Russian world No 7 and European No 1, in the last 8, whose coach took the trouble to come and watch Nasim, and, despite fighting hard lost 8 4 4 3. The Russian then going on to win the competition with ease. Nasim's final placing on countback was 5th. What makes this such an outstanding result is that this was Nasim's first open tournament and she was considered to be a complete outsider who no one rated..... to their cost! The sort of thing Table Tennis dreams are made of!

It made my day!

By Andrew Calloway

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