

Nine medals for GB Para team

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NINE MEDALS FOR GB PARA TABLE TENNIS AT THE BRITISH OPEN

The British Open Factor 40 Para Table Tennis Championships held at the English Institute of Sport, Sheffield last week was a resounding success for the Great Britain Para Table Tennis team.

They won nine medals and had many good performances in a highly competitive field of 312 players from 44 countries playing on 25 tables.

The singles events garnered 4 medals for Great Britain. In Men's Wheelchair Class 1, there were gold and silver medals respectively for the South Wales pair – Robert Davies and his unrelated training partner, Paul Davies. An all Welsh final was a wonderful achievement for both.

Meanwhile, Sue Gilroy MBE from South Yorkshire in Women's Wheelchair Class 3 and Will Bayley from Kent in Men's Standing Class 7 won two Bronzes. Sara Head from South Wales came fourth in Women's Wheelchair Class 3.

In all, 14 players from the BTTAD Performance team won through their groups with three falling in the last 16 and six in the quarter-finals – three of them 9-11 or 10-12 in the fifth

The team events brought GB five more medals. Jane Campbell from London won gold and Sara Head in Women's Wheelchair Class 3 – maintaining their excellent record this year. Sue Gilroy MBE added to her singles bronze with silver with her Korean partner in a combined team. Bronze was the colour of the three medals won by Scott Robertson from North Wales and Jack Hunter–Spivey from Cheshire in Men's Wheelchair Class 5 partnering a Norwegian, Will Bayley and Paul Karabardak from West Wales in Men's Standing Class 7 and Aaron McKibbin from London with Ross Wilson from Kent in Men's Standing Class 8.

There were two other semi-finalists in Dave Wetherill from Cornwall partnered by a Croatian in Men's Standing Class 6 as well as Paul and Robert Davies in Men's Wheelchair Class 1 – losing out on bronze.

This medal haul brings the season's tally to over 40 for GB players in international events this year and it is hoped that more will be won in the European Para TT Championships in Croatia in October

The event was refereed by Steve Welch and was organised by the British Table Tennis Association for people with Disabilities working with its partners UK Sport, Sheffield City Council, ITTF Para TT and ETTA as well as its contracted event management company – MLS Contracts Ltd- and its trade partners notably Butterfly, Sheffield International Venues and HR Media

There was considerable media interest with Channel 4 coming for the day on Saturday to record for That Paralympic Show. Presenters Ade Adepitan, Rick Edwards and Iwan Thomas all had a go under the benevolent eye of GB Performance Manager Gorazd Vecko. Many GB matches were recorded for the show on Saturday October 29th at 1.25pm. Farrel Anthony was interviewed for regional TV and there were articles and photographs in the local press

ETTA members were involved as players, referees, umpires and staff; VIPs welcomed by Peter Taylor – Chairman BTTAD – and Gary Clifton from Sheffield CC – Chair Steering Group included the Lord Mayor of Sheffield – Councillor Sylvia Dunkley, ITTF Para TT 's Oivind Eriksen, Nico Verspeelt and Alison Burchell as well as Esther Nicholls and Graeme Thompson from UK Sport, Richard Scruton and Sheila Mercer from LOCOG together with Alex Murdoch, Peter Bradley and Richard Yule from ETTA and Alan Ransome OBE Chairman of Commonwealth Table Tennis Federation.

Mike Smith – Secretary BTTAD

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