

Players round-up at the ETTC

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With the European Table Tennis Championships all over for the English contingent we take a look back at the individual's squad performances in what was, overall, an excellent tournament for our players.

Although the men were narrowly relegated from the Championship division, the women were promoted back into it after some terrific performances. Then, in the singles events, there were some outstanding performances and we shall begin with the most spectacular of them all.

Liam Pitchford

Liam Pitchford had the stand-out tournament amongst the British players with a series of unexpected and unforgettable performances.

He began with his best, but it was not downhill from there. After beating world number nine Vladimir Samsonov in his first team match he also went on to record a superb double-header victory against the Czech pair of Dmitrij Prokopcov (51) and Tomas Konecny (96). Although he lost in straight games to Adrien Mattenet (26) in the relegation play-off loss to France he bounced back beating Benedek Olah (316) in his singles qualifier. Pitchford didn't get far in the doubles with Paul Drinkhall but that didn't matter as he pulled off another big win when he defeated Alexey Smirnov in a dramatic last game decider 12-10.

The 18-year-old then beat world number 115 Oleksandr Didukh 4-1 before his eventual defeat to Wen He Zhi (62) in another tight match.

Pitchford bt Samsonov (BLR) (9) 3-2 (11-8, 6-11, 11-8, 4-11, 11-7)

Jakab (HUN) (103) bt **Pitchford** 3-1 (11-5, 4-11, 12-10, 11-5)

Rubtsov (RUS) (61) bt **Pitchford** 3-2 (8-11, 9-11, 13-11, 11-8, 11-6)

Pitchford bt Prokopcov (CZE) (51) 3-1 (11-5, 8-11, 11-8, 11-8)

Pitchford bt Konecny (CZE) (96) 3-0 (11-6, 11-7, 11-8)

Mattenet (FRA) (26) bt **Pitchford** 3-0 (11-3, 11-7, 11-7)

Tokic (SLV) (45) bt **Pitchford** 3-2 (8-11, 7-11, 11-3, 16-14, 11-5)

Pitchford bt Horvat (SLV) (333) 3-2 (7-11, 11-7, 9-11, 11-9, 17-15)

Pitchford bt Olah (FIN) (316) 4-2 (4-11, 11-4, 9-11, 14-12, 11-8, 11-7)

Pitchford/Drinkhall bt Erlandsen/Ronneberg (NOR) 3-1 (11-5, 5-11, 11-8, 11-8)

Pitchford bt Smirnov (RUS) (20) 4-3 (12-14, 11-9, 6-11, 11-5, 11-4, 10-12, 12-10)

Gardos/Habesohn (AUT) bt **Pitchford/Drinkhall** 3-1 (6-11, 11-6, 11-7, 11-2)

Pitchford bt Didukh (UKR) (115) 4-1 (5-11, 13-11, 11-5, 11-5, 11-6)

He Zhi (ESP) (62) bt **Pitchford** 4-3 (11-6, 11-3, 8-11, 8-11, 11-6, 9-11, 11-8)

Kelly Sibley

Kelly Sibley helped the women's team to a superb promotion from the Challenge division with a series of no-fuss victories.

Although she often played opponents below her rank she never gave up any room for error and won 10 consecutive matches at the tournament in both her singles and doubles with Joanna Parker.

Her best wins came against Alice Abbat of France in the women's final fixture and her amazing triumph over world number 78 Anna Tikhomirova in a dramatic 4-3 win. She trailed 9-3 in the final game but still won through where she lost to Li Jiao, the world number 15 and eventual tournament winner.

Sibley bt Eminova (AZE) (U/R) 3-1 (10-12, 11-5, 11-6, 11-7)

Sibley bt Ridolfi (ITA) (564) 3-0 (11-7, 11-8, 9-11, 11-4)

Sibley bt Eriksson (FIN) (808) 3-0 (11-8, 11-3, 11-5)

Sibley bt Christoforaki (GRE) (340) 3-2 (8-11, 11-6, 11-6, 7-11, 11-7)

Sibley bt Neves (POR) (418) 3-0 (11-4, 11-7, 11-6)
Sibley bt Abbat (FRA) (203) 3-2 (11-9, 11-8, 13-15, 6-11, 11-5)
Sibley/Parker bt Pietkiewicz/Luczakowska (POL) 3-1 (9-11, 11-7, 11-9, 11-5)
Sibley bt Phillips (WAL) (872) 4-0 (11-7, 11-6, 11-5, 11-2)
Sibley/Parker bt Nilsen/Grutle (NOR) 3-0 (11-9, 11-7, 11-5)
Sibley bt Tikhomirova (RUS) (78) 4-3 (8-11, 3-11, 11-9, 11-6, 11-6, 4-11, 13-11)
Pavlovich/Ganina (BLR/RUS) bt **Parker/Sibley** 3-0 (11-6, 11-5, 11-4)
Li (NED) (15) bt **Sibley** 4-0 (11-6, 11-5, 11-8, 11-7)

Paul Drinkhall

Paul Drinkhall may have been overshadowed by his teammates' astonishing performances but Drinkhall had his own fine victories during a quiet tournament for the England number one.

Although he lost his opening four matches they were all against much higher ranked opponents. He broke his duck with a great victory over Tomas Konecny in the men's terrific win over Czech Republic. He also pushed Dmitrij Prokopcov in every set of his defeat in the same match.

In the end, Drinkhall was beaten by Joao Monteiro, the world number 65 from Portugal, he lost 4-2 but had he taken some of his chances he might have had a different result.

Chtchetinine (BLR) (58) bt **Drinkhall** 3-1 (4-11, 13-11, 13-11, 11-6)
Samsonov (BLR) (9) bt **Drinkhall** 3-0 (11-6, 11-7, 11-6)
Kosiba (HUN) (213) bt **Drinkhall** 3-1 (11-8, 9-11, 11-4, 11-5)
Shibaev (RUS) (56) bt **Drinkhall** 3-1 (11-5, 11-9, 6-11, 12-10)
Drinkhall bt Konecny (CZE) (96) 3-2 (5-11, 11-7, 7-11, 12-10, 11-4)
Prokopcov (CZE) (51) bt **Drinkhall** 3-0 (11-9, 12-10, 15-13)
Lebesson (FRA) (79) bt **Drinkhall** 3-1 (10-12, 11-1, 11-7, 11-7)
Drinkhall bt Horvat (SVN) (333) 3-0 (11-6, 11-5, 11-4)
Tokic (SVN) (45) bt **Drinkhall** 3-0 (11-6, 11-5, 11-6)
Drinkhall/Pitchford bt Erlandsen/Ronneberg (NOR) 3-1 (11-5, 5-11, 11-8, 11-8)
Drinkhall bt Howieson (SCO) (579) 4-2 (11-8, 12-14, 11-8, 11-7, 5-11, 11-4)
Gardos/Habesohn (AUT) bt **Drinkhall/Pitchford** 3-1 (6-11, 11-6, 11-7, 11-2)
Monteiro (POR) (65) bt **Drinkhall** 4-2 (11-7, 11-13, 11-5, 13-11, 9-11, 11-9)

Joanna Parker

England's number one woman lead her team to promotion with a set of fine performances in Poland.

She, like teammate Kelly Sibley, was victorious in her first 10 matches which helped the women cruise into the top tier of European competition.

She had two fine victories in the final team match against the French pair of Alice Abbat and Emmanuelle Lennon but her singles campaign was cut short by one of the tournament favourites Krisztina Toth.

She had a great run to the last 16 of the doubles with Sibley as well as her participation at the Championships extended to 13 matches.

Parker bt Guliyeva (AZE) (U/R) 3-1 (11-5, 7-11, 11-3, 11-5)
Parker bt Trotti (ITA) (536) 3-1 (11-3, 11-5, 15-17, 11-6)
Parker bt Ridolfi (ITA) (564) 3-0 (11-6, 11-6, 11-5)
Parker bt Kiritchensko (FIN) (U/R) 3-0 (11-0, 11-5, 11-3)
Parker bt Exarchou (GRE) (406) 3-0 (11-5, 11-6, 11-2)
Parker bt Christoforaki (GRE) (340) 3-0 (11-8, 19-17, 11-7)
Parker bt Goncalves (POR) (491) 3-0 (11-8, 11-7, 11-6)
Parker bt Lennon (FRA) (235) 3-0 (11-7, 11-5, 11-4)
Parker bt Abbat (FRA) (203) 3-2 (9-11, 11-6, 11-9, 9-11, 11-8)
Parker/Sibley bt Pietkiewicz/Luczakowska (POL) 3-1 (9-11, 11-7, 11-9, 11-5)
Toth (HUN) (45) bt **Parker** 4-1 (11-6, 11-5, 7-11, 11-8, 11-6)
Parker/Sibley bt Nilsen/Grutle (NOR) 3-0 (11-9, 11-7, 11-5)

Pavlovich/Ganina (BLR/RUS) bt **Parker/Sibley** 3-0 (11-6, 11-5, 11-4)

Darius Knight

Darius Knight had just six fixtures during the Championships but ended with a 3:3 level record.

His first match was tough as he had to face French star Christophe Legout (63) and he was edged out in three tight games but Knight came back with three victories after that.

Firstly, he partnered Danny Reed to an excellent doubles win over the Czech pair of Pavel Sirucek and Tomas Tregler before he had his best victory against Lei Kou from Ukraine.

The world number 129 found himself 2-0 down to Knight before fighting back but in the deciding game Knight scraped home 12-10 to complete a fantastic triumph.

He also crushed Robert Floras later in the day to reach the last 32 before he suffered a disappointing defeat to Croatian Ivan Juzbasic.

Legout (FRA) (63) bt **Knight** 3-0 (11-9, 12-10, 12-10)

Reed/Knight bt Sirucek/Tregler (CZE) 3-1 (11-8, 6-11, 11-9, 11-9)

Knight bt Kou (UKR) (129) 4-3 (11-7, 11-7, 7-11, 8-11, 5-11, 11-6, 12-10)

Knight bt Floras (POL) (303) 4-0 (11-7, 11-7, 11-5, 11-6)

Samsonov/Platonov (BLR) bt **Reed/Knight** 3-0 (11-8, 12-10, 11-1)

Juzbasic (HRV) (228) bt **Knight** 4-2 (8-11, 11-5, 11-7, 11-7, 12-14, 11-9)

Emily Bates

Emily Bates had a terrific senior team debut at the INTERSPORT European Championships and will take home so many memories.

Not only did she help the women's team earn promotion from the Challenge division she also had a huge singles win over Tatjana Tsistjakova.

She gained a number of 'firsts' in her campaign too; In her first team match she beat Ahmadova (AZE), in her first singles match she beat Tsistjakova (EST) and in her first doubles match alongside Alice Loveridge she beat Molnar and Todorovic (SRB).

Although she ended up with a close defeat to world number 98 Elena Timina and a doubles defeat to the tough German pair of Wu and Ivancan, she can take a lot from her first senior England appearance at just 15 years old.

Bates bt Ahmadova (AZE) (U/R) 3-2 (11-7, 6-11, 11-13, 11-1, 11-4)

Colantoni (ITA) (857) bt **Bates** 3-1 (9-11, 11-7, 11-6, 11-7)

Bates bt Bolenius (FIN) (829) 3-1 (11-2, 11-9, 6-11, 12-10)

Toliou (GRE) (652) bt **Bates** 3-1 (11-6, 5-11, 11-8, 11-5)

Bates bt Martins (POR) (504) 3-0 (11-7, 11-7, 11-6)

Grundisch (FRA) (95) bt **Bates** 3-0 (11-6, 14-12, 11-4)

Bates/Loveridge bt Molnar/Todorovic (SRB) 3-2 (9-11, 11-9, 8-11, 11-7, 12-10)

Bates bt Tsistjakova (EST) (368) 4-1 (11-5, 7-11, 11-9, 13-11, 12-10)

Wu/Ivancan (GER) bt **Bates/Loveridge** 3-0 (11-3, 11-3, 11-5)

Timina (NED) (98) bt **Bates** 4-0 (11-6, 11-9, 11-9, 11-9)

Daniel Reed

Danny Reed almost helped the men's team stay afloat in the Championship division but was ultimately just short of the target.

On the way he faced a lot of tough opponents and recorded a couple of excellent victories.

His 3-2 win over Sas Lasan from Slovenia proved crucial in the men's tight 3-2 win while his demolition of Irishman Ashley Robinson was impressive.

When he teamed up with Darius Knight for the doubles no-one expected them to beat the Sirucek/Tregler pairing but Reed truly pulled out all the stops.

He was eventually knocked out by Zoltan Fejer-Konnerth (GER) (64) in the singles and the tough Samsonov/Platonov pairing from Belarus in the doubles but he can take a lot of positives back with him from

Poland.

Platonov (BLR) (161) bt **Reed** 3-1 (8-11, 15-13, 11-9, 11-4)

Pattantyus (HUN) (251) bt **Reed** 3-2 (10-12, 4-11, 11-8, 11-3, 11-9)

Burov (RUS) (213) bt **Reed** 3-1 (8-11, 11-8, 11-9, 11-9)

Sirucek (CZE) (128) bt **Reed** 3-1 (11-9, 11-8, 4-11, 11-6)

Reed bt Lasan (SVN) (182) 3-2 (13-11, 11-5, 11-13, 7-11, 11-7)

Reed bt Robinson (IRL) (U/R) 4-0 (11-7, 11-6, 11-4, 11-3)

Reed/Knight bt Sirucek/Tregler (CZE) 3-1 (11-8, 6-11, 11-9, 11-9)

Fejer-Konnerth (GER) (64) bt **Reed** 4-0 (11-6, 11-5, 14-12, 12-10)

Samsonov/Platonov (BLR) bt **Reed/Knight** 3-0 (11-8, 12-10, 11-1)

Alice Loveridge

It was a quiet tournament for the player from Guernsey but she still managed a great doubles victory alongside Emily Bates.

She had no team fixtures so only played three matches and her first was against team finalist and world number 50, Daniela Dodean from Romania.

Although she lost she kept close to her opponent in the first two games. She then partnered Bates to their great doubles win over Molnar and Todorovic – holding her nerve when they were 2-1 down and coming through to win 3-2 with a tight 12-10 deciding game.

Dodean (ROM) (50) bt **Loveridge** 4-0 (11-8, 11-7, 11-4, 11-4)

Bates/Loveridge bt Molnar/Todorovic (SRB) 3-2 (9-11, 11-9, 8-11, 11-7, 12-10)

Wu/Ivancan (GER) bt **Bates/Loveridge** 3-0 (11-3, 11-3, 11-5)

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