

Final Report from ISF WSTTC

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ISF WORLD SCHOOLS' TABLE TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS

CAGLIARI, SARDINIA, ITALY

Day 4 Thursday April 5th

After yesterday's rest day, when the players and coaches were treated to a sightseeing tour of Cagliari and all attended a 'cultural' evening later on (the whole England Delegation acted as backing group to Emma Torkington as lead singer and received rave reviews), the serious table tennis action returned with the individual competitions.

Ninety-four boys and 97 girls started the day, but were quickly reduced in numbers as the individuals were played as a straight knock-out, with first and second round losers entering a friendship doubles competition.

In the boys competition, Charles Sketchley lost in the first round against Jan Poel (Belgium) and Evan Clancy went out in three against Marco Sarigu (Italy). The second round saw the demise of Sam Bell, who having beaten Neoklis Baris (Greece), then lost to Wei-Chieh Wen (Chinese Taipei). Tyrone Wells lost to Jim Cloos (Luxemburg) after winning in three against Yuval Weisbord (Israel) and Danny Lewis lost in five against Dany Frost (Luxembourg) having defeated Simone Serra (Italy) in round 1. Harefield then lost their last remaining player Mitchell Jones who went down in three against Chia-Yen Hsu (Chinese Taipei) after accounting for Gianluca Del Frate.

The boys from the England select team fared little better in their quest for glory with Helshan Weerasinghe losing in five against Alexis Douin (France), after defeating Mateusz Belka (Poland), whilst Adam Harrison beat Jack Donnelly (Ireland) in round 1, before losing out to Huajiang Gao (China) in the second round.

Igor Morais and Liam McTiernan were next up and after both being seeded into the second round, both managed to reach the last 32, before exiting in round 3. Igor beat Huseyin Durmaz (Turkey) 17-15 in the fifth, before going out against Hao Ren (China) 3-0. Liam defeated Jan Fabini (Czech Republic) in four, before being eliminated 3-0 by Cheng-Ting Liao (Chinese Taipei).

Whilst this was going on, the girls individual had got under way with similar results to the boys competition, in that only two players; Vicky Smith and Tin-Tin Ho made the last 32. The girls from Morpeth found the going tough, with Akashi Alam going out in the first round against Gwen Geronimi (France), whilst Harriet Taylor seeded into the second round went out there in four against Maria-Angeliki Panourgia (Greece). Sayeeda Miah defeated Bo Thijs (Belgium) in round 1, before losing out to Wensheng Wei (China) 3-0.

The girls from the England select team did little better, demonstrating yet again, the standard of this competition. First, Emma Torkington went out in round 1 against Elodie Fortin (France), going down in five, whilst Emily Bates beat Aleksandra Reluga (Poland) before losing out to Bianca Bracco (Italy) in four.

Vicky Smith and Tin-Tin Ho, both had byes in round one and successfully negotiated round 2 before having England's hopes ended in round 3. Vicky defeated Elen Laanevali (Estonia), before going out to Lea Racovac (Croatia) and Tin-Tin beat Michelle Modert (Luxemburg), finally losing out to Nina Mittelham (Germany).

As usual, China took all the gold medals and with Chinese Taipei and most of the top Europeans being represented, we were delighted to return with a silver and bronze medal for the disability team and girl's National team and a silver medal for Sam Bell of the Ormesby club in the individual disability singles.

There are too many people to thank individually for their help and support in attending these championships but I must thank the team captains Gail Johns, Paul Birch, Eli Baraty, Simon Hoang and Shaun Alvey for working so hard with their teams to make the event both enjoyable and successful for all concerned.

I must thank the ETTA and in particular Judy Rogers for support and financial assistance and Russell Moore at ETTA for his patience in getting reports and photographs on the website.

Finally, I would like to thank Ransome Sporting Goods our sponsors, on behalf of ESTTA and all members of the squad for providing the fantastic team kit for these championships.

Arrivederci !!!

John M. Blackband

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