

# GB stars hunt medals in Slovenia

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Jane Campbell has assured herself of at least bronze

Rob Davies and Will Bayley were among nine GB players to progress from the group stages through to the knockout rounds in the singles events at the Slovenia Open.

They will contest quarter-finals later today, together with Paul Davies, Kim Daybell and David Wetherill, while Jane Campbell has reached the semi-finals and is assured of at least a bronze medal.

Campbell recovered from losing her first match to the Croatian Andela Muzinic to beat Doris Mader from Austria 3-2 and progress to the quarter-finals where she played Pamela Fontaine of the USA. The London 2012 medalist won 3-0 to book a place in the final.

"I was really up for it today," said Campbell. "I was a bit rusty in my first match and it just took a bit of getting used to competing again – I haven't competed since the European Championships last year and it didn't come back to me fast enough.

"In the second match when I was 1-2 down I just wanted to fight – I thought I haven't come all this way to go out in the group stages and I'm thrilled that I have a medal."

European champion and world No 1 Rob Davies won both his group matches 3-0 against Federico Falco of Italy and the Brazilian Aloisio Lima Junior in his first competition of 2014.

"I'm reasonably happy," he said after winning his second match. "I'm not playing my best yet but there were glimpses of it today so I've just got to keep going and keep improving through the tournament.

"I was nervous for the first match and in the second match I knew he was going to be a tough contender so it was just a matter of getting over the nerves."

Paul Davies, runner-up to his fellow Welshman in the European Championships last September, also progressed to the knockout stages as the winner of his group. After a 3-0 win against Martin Barbierik of Slovakia he had to overcome a determined Sylvio Keller from Switzerland in his second match before coming through 3-2.

Will Bayley is defending his men's class 7 title and came through both his group matches with 3-0 wins over Michal Deigslar of Poland and the Belgian Arnaud Duquesne.

The Sheffield based world No 2 from Tunbridge Wells said: "I was pleased with the way I played, especially in the second match because I played positively and won it comfortably and I had to do that to give me confidence for the next round. I didn't miss a lot of balls so I was really pleased."

Sheffield's Kim Daybell won both his group matches 3-0 to progress to the knockout stages of the men's class 10 event and the Leeds medical student has clearly benefited from some good wins on the UK able bodied circuit coming into the Slovenia Open.

"It was a good start," said Daybell after his second win. "The first few matches of a tournament are always a bit nervy but I'm feeling pretty good going into the knockout stages. You just have to keep your head because everyone here is a good player so you have to keep focused."

Torpoint's David Wetherill (class 6) dropped a game in each of his three matches but three wins put him top of his group and gave him a bye into the quarter-finals.

Widnes teenager Jack Hunter-Spivey (class 5) enjoyed one of the best wins of his career in his first group match beating world No 3 Mitar Palikuca of Serbia 3-1. He lost 3-1 against the Belgian Bart Brands in his second match

but progressed to the last 16 where he played world No 6 Valentin Baus from Germany. Although Hunter-Spivey started well, winning the first game, the more experienced German fought back to take the match 3-1.

Londoner Aaron McKibbin was outplayed by the class 8 world No 2 from Sweden Emil Andersson in his first match but progressed through to the knockout stages with a 3-1 win over Miroslav Jambor from Slovakia.

In the last 16 he played another Slovakian Richard Csejtey, the former world champion and London 2012 silver medalist. McKibbin started well but the Slovakian had too much experience and took the match 3-1.

Paul Karabardak came through his group in the men's class 7 event with two wins from three to reach the last 16 in the men's class 7 event but lost a close match 2-3 to Duquesne.

Ashley Facey Thompson, Sara Head and Thomas Matthews all recorded one win in their group matches but did not progress to the knockout stages.

**Fran Bullock (8th May 2014)**

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