

Youthful GB extend medal surge at Romanian Open

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Megan Shackleton won her first individual honour

A squad of young players from the GB Para Table Tennis Team has won four medals in the in the Romanian International Open with youngest member, 15-year-old Megan Shackleton, taking bronze in the women's class 2-5 singles.

Paisley's Martin Perry (20) secured two bronze medals of his own; in the men's class 6 singles and the men's class 6-7 team event alongside 15-year-old Billy Shilton, while 21-year-old Welshman Thomas Matthews' bronze in the men's class 1-2 team event completed a successful campaign for the GB Para team in Cluj.

Shackleton, from Todmorden, is the youngest member of the GB Performance Squad and progressed to the knockout stages of the singles after wins over Giada Rossi from Italy and the Romanian Dorina Vargatu before finding the experienced Federica Cudia from Italy too good in the semi-finals.

"I think I played quite well," said Shackleton. "I was focusing on my tactics and I'm beginning to understand more about what I need to do to win games. I'm really happy to win my first individual medal."

Perry was also delighted to win two medals and had two good wins against the Romanians Christian Draghici and Florin Milciu in the group stages of the singles before losing his semi-final against another Romanian Bobi Simion 3-0.

"I played a bit up and down," admitted Perry, "but in the team Billy and I really started to gel. We are really good friends and that helped us on the table. We had chances in the semi-final so we were unlucky not to get the result."



Martin Perry returned with two medals from Romania

Shilton was disappointed with his performance in the singles but played really well in the team event, winning both his singles matches in the semi-final against a Polish/Japanese combination of Michal Deigslar and Masachika Inoue.

"I didn't play my best in the singles," he said, "but I played well in the team event and it has been really good experience playing against players with different styles."

Matthews, from Aberdare, also showed improved form in the team event in which he continued his partnership with Slovakian Martin Barbierik to pick up the bronze medal.

"I didn't start the tournament well," he said, "but I was happy that I came back stronger in the team. It was good to play with Martin again and he is helping me to calm down. I'm starting to be more relaxed and thinking about the next point."

Shaun Marples, GB Pathway Team Coach, said: "It has been a good tournament and all the players have benefited from the experience of playing against some very tough international opposition."

by Francesca Bullock (June 16, 2014)

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