



Liu in the top six at World Hopes

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Jamie Liu finished in sixth place at the World Hopes Week & Challenge in Doha.

The Reading youngster was representing Europe at the event and was one of only 32 boys and girls from around the world to compete in Qatar, travelling with coach Daniel Basterfield for a week of intensive training and competitions.

The primary goal of the programme was to support national table tennis associations in identifying talented young players and enhancing their chances of future success by working with young players and expert coaches from other countries around the world.

As for the Challenge, Liu successfully booked a place in the main knockout rounds by winning his qualification group, overcoming stern battles with players from Egypt, Australia and Qatar.

A very close defeat in the deciding set in the quarter-final against Erik Huzsvar of Hungary meant that Liu needed to beat Carlos Fernandez of Peru in the classification to reach the fifth and sixth-place play-offs – and he did it convincingly by overturning a first-set deficit to win 3-1.

He was eventually edged out in his final match against Vishwa Deenadayalan of India to finish in sixth place overall. Navid Shams of Iran and Elena Zaharia of Romania were the winners of the Boys' and Girls' events respectively.

During the week, the visiting coaches were engaged in a series of lectures designed to support their professional development and boost their knowledge and understanding in topics including talent identification, strength and conditioning, sports psychology, biomechanics, basic tactics and the profile of a professional coach.

Commenting on the event, coach Basterfield, a former Junior national champion, said: "I'm delighted with how the week has gone for Jamie – he trained very hard and listened well to coaching instructions in his first world event – we have both learned something valuable from this experience and I hope we'd have more chances to work together in the future."

Liu added: "It was a tough week with all that physical training but I've thoroughly enjoyed myself. I've made new friends from all over the world and I've learned so much from great coaches like Dan Basterfield and Dirk Wagner [Head Coach at Werner Schlager Academy and at the World Hopes Week]."

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