



Opening wins for Wetherill, Davies

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David Wetherill and Rob Davies got their Paralympics campaigns off to a winning start in Rio today but there was defeat for Will Bayley.

Cornishman Wetherill faced Egyptian Ibrahim Hamadtou in Men's Singles Class 6. It was a match between two men who have become internet sensations – Wetherill for his 'Superman' shot at London 2012 and Hamadtou for playing by holding the bat in his mouth as he lost both arms in a childhood accident.

It was far from a one-sided match, but Wetherill won it in three straight.

"I'm here to get the job done," he said, "and two weeks ago I was feeling the pressure and feeling a bit jittery and then you come here and see people like Ibrahim and you can't possibly feel nervous because he kind of puts it into perspective with the things he can do.

"In table tennis it is skill versus skill and I know I won today but I think he has demonstrated far more skill than I have just now and I've got so much respect for him – it was an honour to play him."



Ibrahim Hamadtou in action against David Wetherill (ITTF picture)

Rob Davies won his opening match in the MS1 class but only after withstanding a fightback by Switzerland's Silvio Keller from 2-0 down to level at 2-2.

"Silvio beat me last time I played him in Slovakia and I think that was playing on my mind a bit but I've put that to bed now," said Davies. "Hopefully I can play better in my next match and be a bit more clinical. In the last set I just focused a lot more and put into practice how I can play."

London silver medallist Bayley won the opening game against the host nation's Israel Pereira Stroh but saw his opponent win the next three.

"It was one of those days," said Bayley. "When he won the second set it was a turning point in the match and he seemed to play better in the important points after that."

"I still want to try and win this competition and I still believe I can win this competition and I'll be back stronger tomorrow. No excuses – I just want to focus on tomorrow and put this defeat to bed because I'm already thinking about trying to win my next match."

There were opening defeats also for Aaron McKibbin, Jane Campbell – against world champion Li Qian – Ashley Facey Thompson, Sara Head, Ross Wilson and Sue Gilroy.

"I changed my tactics and gave it my all but it wasn't my day today," said Head after her defeat to Anna-Carin Ahlquist of Sweden.

"The positives are I've played in the hall and enjoyed it so I'm going to take that forward into my next match on Saturday. The atmosphere is incredible with the Brazilians supporting their players and I was grateful for those that were supporting me as well."

Results

Men's Singles Class 8

Group D

Thomas Bouvais (FRA) bt Aaron McKibbin 3-1 (11-6, 10-12, 11-5, 11-6)

WS3

Group A

Li Qian (CHN) bt Jane Campbell 3-0 (11-7, 11-7, 13-11)

MS9

Group C

Juan Bautista Perez Gonzalez (ESP) bt Ashley Facey Thompson 3-0 (11-4, 12-10, 11-5)

MS6

Group D

David Wetherill bt Ibrahim Hamadtou (EGY) 3-0 (11-5, 11-7, 11-5)

MS1

Group A

Rob Davies bt Silvio Keller (SUI) 3-2 (13-11, 11-4, 11-13, 9-11, 11-2)

WS3

Group A

Anna-Carin Ahlquist (SWE) bt Sara Head 3-0 (11-3, 11-2, 11-5)

MS7

Group A

Israel Pereira Stroh (BRA) bt Will Bayley 3-1 (10-12, 11-9, 11-8, 11-7)

MS8

Group E

Emil Andersson (SWE) bt Ross Wilson 3-2 (6-11, 11-8, 11-7, 9-11, 11-8)

WS4

Group C

Zhang Miao (CHN) bt Sue Gilroy 3-0 (11-7, 11-6, 11-9)



Action from Ashley Facey Thompson's match (ITTF picture)

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