



Stockdale makes a golden start

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Romford teenager Jack Stockdale made a winning start to his international career in Para table tennis by taking gold in the men's class 10 singles at the Lignano Junior (U23) Open in Italy.

The 16-year-old came through his group with three wins from three and after 3-1 wins over Alexandros Diakoymakos from Greece and Lorenzo Cordua from Italy he defeated his GB team-mate Lawrence John in the final 3-2.

"I really enjoyed my first ever international tournament representing GB," said Stockdale, "especially getting the chance to play in the final. I feel like I have learned a lot already.

"I played well throughout the tournament and got even better towards the end. It was very nice to come away with gold and I can't wait to play another international tournament.

"I was nervous at the start but with the support of the team and the right attitude I was able to bring it together and keep the same high intensity throughout. Overall, it was a very good experience."

Welshman John, 18, is hoping to take this experience into the Lignano Master Open starting today.

"I enjoyed my first international tournament back this year," he said. "I felt I played well throughout the tournament – keeping a good intensity from the first match to the last. My game felt stronger as I progressed and it was a good experience to play against a team-mate in the final.

"I'm looking forward to now playing the senior event and I'm going in having learnt from the U23s event and taking on board how I played."

The young British Pathway squad picked up a further two medals with 18-year-old Dan Bullen from St Neots taking bronze in the men's class 4-5 singles after losing his semi-final to the Dutchman Sem Roelofs and Tamlan Eastwood picking up bronze in the round-robin men's class 9 event thanks to a 3-0 win over the Russian Vladislav Balobanov.

"I have enjoyed the first international of the year," said Bullen. "I played well in parts and I have learned a lot that I can work on going forward before the Romania Open in a few weeks. I'll go back to training now feeling motivated to get better."

"I have learnt a lot from my time in Italy and it has been a good experience," said 15-year-old Eastwood, from Swansea. "I feel that I played well throughout the tournament and have a lot of things to improve on."

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