



## Three medals for GB at Worlds

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The British team took three bronze medals at the PTT World Team Championships in Slovakia in men's class 1, men's class 6 and women's class 4-5.

Paul Davies and Tom Matthews were denied the gold medal in men's class 1 on countback at the end of the round-robin event. They won their first doubles match of the tournament against Hungary but Endre Major levelled the tie with a 3-1 win against Davies. Matthews has had to win the deciding singles in their previous two matches here and he did so again, beating Janos Kaiser 3-0 to win the tie for Britain 2-1.

That left the Welsh pair needing to win their final match against top seeds Korea to take the gold after KiWon Nam and Jae-kwan Cho were surprisingly beaten by Italy. But they lost the doubles 3-0 and the match 2-0 when Matthews was beaten 2-1 by the Paralympic bronze medallist Nam.

With three teams tied on points the medals were decided on countback and Italy took the gold, Korea the silver and Britain the bronze.

"Against Hungary this morning our doubles was absolutely brilliant," said Davies, 50, who now has a world medal to add to his Paralympic and European ones. "We put Tom in as number one against Korea because he has more experience against Nam but unfortunately Nam came out on top today and we lost in the doubles as well.

"Italy won the gold even though we beat them yesterday so it is one of those unfortunate things. But we've got a World team bronze which is good in my eyes. Fair play to Tom – it is a massive achievement for him to get his first world medal and it gives me the box set as I've now got one of each so I'm happy as well."

"Our doubles got better through the tournament," said 24-year-old Matthews. "Slovenia last week was the first time we had played together and going to a World Championships was always going to be difficult but we did cause some problems to the other teams and we managed to up our game.

"It has been really good experience – there was a lot of pressure and I think I handled it well and I'm really happy

with my performance.”

After their great win against European champions Denmark the previous day, Paul Karabardak, David Wetherill and Martin Perry ensured their progress to the men’s class 6 semi-final as group winners with a 2-0 win against Chile. Karabardak and Wetherill combined well to win the doubles 3-0 and Karabardak won the tie with a 3-1 victory over Matias Pino Lorca.

They made a great start to their semi-final against Croatia, winning the doubles 3-0, and from 2-0 down Wetherill was just edged out in a thrilling match against Pavao Jozic, 12-10 in the fifth. That left Karabardak to play the deciding singles and he was beaten for the first time in the tournament by Vjekoslav Gregorovic, 13-11 in the fourth.

“I think I’ve played well over the last three days,” said Swansea’s Karabardak, who has only been back in training for two weeks after injuring his foot in Italy in March. “I was pleased with my performance and pleased to get a bronze medal.

“We had a good start to the semi-winning the doubles when I think Dave and I played the best we’ve ever played together and we have to give credit to Croatia because they played well in the singles. World Championship medals are not easy to win so I’m pleased to have two now.”

Wetherill also had to overcome a knee injury incurred in Slovenia last week and was delighted with his win yesterday against the Paralympic champion Peter Rosenmeier.

“Against Rosenmeier I was really pumped for it and I felt comfortable,” said the 27-year-old from Torpoint. “Mentally, tactically and technically I played really strong so that is positive to know that when I get things right I can beat anyone.

“We are disappointed that we’ve lost but we have to be proud because Paul and I are not 100% fit and it is down to fine margins. Sometimes you just need a little bit of luck – Paul had a few edges against him and a deuce set at the end and it is those fine margins but we are not far off. We are class 6 so probably we are never going to be 100% but given the circumstances we have played incredibly well.”

For Martin Perry it was a medal at his first major championship.

“I feel that is definitely the strongest performance we’ve had as a team,” said the 23-year-old from Paisley. “We are such a tight knit unit and that is going to stand us in good stead for the future. It’s been such an eye-opening experience – my first major championships – and to do it alongside Dave and Paul who have done multiple Paralympic Games and major championships – I can only thrive off that.”



Megan Shackleton and Sue Gilroy (ITTF picture)

The key match for Sue Gilroy and Megan Shackleton in the round-robin women's class 4-5 proved to be against Germany in the morning. The British pair fought back from 2-1 down in the doubles to level at 2-2 but Sandra Mikolaschek and Lisa Hentig took the deciding fifth set 11-8 to take a 1-0 lead.

Gilroy and Mikolaschek have had some tight matches over the last three years including at the Paralympic Games in Rio last year when Gilroy won 13-11 in the fifth. This time it was the 19-year-old German who came out on top – taking the match 11-6 in the fifth and securing a 2-0 win for Germany.

Gilroy and Shackleton were still in with a chance of gold going in to their final match against the top seeds Serbia but Paralympic champion Borislava Peric-Rankovic and Rio bronze medallist Nada Matic were in top form and after combining with Matic to win the doubles 3-0, Peric-Rankovic made sure of the gold with a 3-0 win against 18-year-old Shackleton.

"We had so many chances against Germany," said Gilroy. "We played really well but we just made a few too many errors. We needed to win the doubles and hopefully in future we can spend more time practising together.

"We can take a lot of positives from our first world team medal together. We're a relatively new partnership and hadn't played together for a year before Slovenia last week so it is a fantastic achievement to get a bronze medal and I'm really pleased."

"I feel that we have had a really good tournament," said Shackleton. "To improve on the results we had in Slovenia last week just shows we are working well as a partnership and hopefully we have a good future ahead of us.

"I feel that I've learned a lot from this tournament especially playing the last match against the Paralympic champion under that sort of pressure and learning to deal with it. It will take time but I feel like it is coming together now."

Aaron McKibbin and Billy Shilton beat Germany 2-1 in the men's class 8 play-offs and play a final match on Saturday against Slovakia to decide their finishing position in the tournament.

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