

BTTAD NEWSLETTER JULY 2009



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BTTAD AGM

Peter Taylor was re-elected as Chairman at the BTTAD AGM in May at Sheffield, narrowly defeating Mark Palmer for the position

All the other officer posts were not contested.

The BTTAD Committee for 2009-10 is as follows

Chairman	Peter Taylor
Vice-Chairman	Shaun Newcomb
Secretary	Mike Smith
Treasurer	John Mackey
Committee Members	
Farrel Anthony	Dennis Beech
Mark Palmer	Louise Stotesbury

Great Britain appoint one of the leading International Coaches as their new PERFORMANCE MANAGER

Gorazd Vecko – currently the performance director/ head coach of Slovenia's disabled table tennis team – has been appointed Performance Manager of our World Class Programme.

Under his leadership and coaching, Slovenia has had great success in International competitions at the highest level

The interviews for the posts of Head Coach, Full-time Coach - both based at Sheffield - and a part-time National Coach - based in the South of England – took place on July 22 at EIS. Gorazd was involved in these interviews along with Peter Taylor and Mike Smith.

The successful candidates were
Head Coach Greg Baker
National Coach Matt Kenny
Part-time national Coach Neil Robinson

After these interviews, Gorazd is taking a holiday with his family and then starts work with his team in August.

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Sue Gilroy MBE



Congratulations to Sue Gilroy, who was awarded the MBE in the recent honours list for services to table tennis and her work with young children. Sue is one of our leading Paralympic table tennis players and a previous medallist at major Championships. She has just come back from the European Championships in Italy with a silver medal in Women Singles Class 4.

Here are a few words from Judy Rogers (Equality & Child Protection Officer) about Sue and her experiences working with her:

My relationship with Sue goes back some 11 years when I joined the ETTA as the full time national officer with the responsibility for developing table tennis for disabled players. Sue has supported the work I have been carrying out in promoting our 'Ability' programme to table tennis clubs working with them and providing the training to the members to work with disabled people. Within the school where she teaches, she has been coaching the children to play table tennis for a number of years, in addition to her 'day' job as a teacher, giving up her own time to encourage these new players to our sport.

Despite the fact that she is still only 36 years old, she supports, encourages and helps coach the disabled national squad, using her experiences and knowledge to help the rest of the squad. She has also been involved with the UK School Games as an athlete mentor in Coventry where her enthusiasm for the sport touched all the young competitors, both disabled and non disabled. Along with all of this she is one of the nicest people I have ever had the pleasure to meet and work with and when I need a role model, someone to provide an exhibition she is always there to help.

I cannot think of a more fitting acknowledgement of her dedication, commitment and love for her sport.

MEMBERS see page for exciting news about the benefits of membership

World Class Programme

Interim Period

With the European championships at the beginning of June, the BTTAD decided it would not be a good idea to appoint new staff during this period. Therefore, during the interim period from April to August, Peter Taylor, the Chairman, took over the responsibilities of the Performance Manager and the core coaching staff were given greater responsibility. Greg Baker was appointed acting Head Coach, Matt Kenny acting National Coach, based in Sheffield and Neil Robinson joined the coaching team as acting Part time National Coach based in the South of England. Mike Smith, secretary of BTTAD, took on the responsibility of the administrative role in the appointing of the staff to the World Class Programme for 2009-13.

MISSION 2012

BTTAD like all Olympic and Paralympic sports report 3 or 4 times a year to UK Sport –our funders – on progress and receive comments in response. The latest report was submitted at the beginning of June. On reviewing the submission, the UK Sport panel commented positively on “the improvements being made with progress on appointments for Performance Manager, Head Coach and National Coaches. The programme’s communication with athletes has improved as has the athlete commitment to training schedules, with associated positive development. The report commended the acting PM and current coaching staff for their hard work in maintaining the programme during this recruitment phase “ And this was all reported before the Euros !

European Championships Italy 2009

The British Paralympic Table Tennis Squad had encouraging success in the recent European Championships held in Genoa, Italy at the beginning of June. They exceeded their target of three medals by taking 1 silver and 4 bronze medals at this event

Sue Gilroy took Silver in the Women’s Class 4 event, losing in the final to the world number 1, Serbian, Rankovic Peric, 3-0. In the semi-final she had a very good win over Andreja Dolinar from Slovenia.

Britain had two players in the semi-final of the mens Class 7 singles but both lost their matches to leave an all British playoff for the bronze medal. Paul Karabardak from Wales beat Will Bayley in 3-0 to take the bronze medal.

In the ladies Class 2, Cathy Mitton took the bronze by beating the Italian C Podda 10, -4, 10, 8 in the bronze playoff. In her group, she narrowly won all her three games to finish top of the group including a fine win over the eventual winner of the event Pamela Pezzutto from Italy 11-9 in the fifth.

In the team events, the Ladies Class 3 team of Sara Head and Jane Campbell took the bronze medal. They lost to Italy in the semi-final, losing the deciding match against Federica Cudia on an edge ball 15 -13 in the fifth. The playoff for bronze was equally tense but this time the British pair won 3-2 against Slovakia taking the deciding doubles 11-9 in the fifth.

The remaining bronze came from the Ladies Class 1-2 team event. The British team of Cathy Mitton and Dzaier Neil narrowly lost to France 3-2, Cathy taking her two singles, but lost to the Italian pair 3-0 to finish with the bronze medal.

Reports on the international tournaments attended so far by the BTTAD WCP squad have been placed on the ETTA website.

GORAZD VECKO

Who is the new Performance Manager recently appointed to lead our World Class Programme for the period 2009-13?

Gorazd Vecko, the new Performance Manager of the BTTAD World Class Programme is one of the top coaches and managers in the disability table tennis. He has been the head coach and team manager for Slovenian National Disabled table tennis team and under his leadership the squad have won over 100 medals in International Competitions in Europe and around the world. Mateja Pintar and Andreja Dolinar are two world class players that he has trained from their beginning in table tennis.

His good connections and relationships with many coaches and

players from various countries and national teams make it possible for him to organise high-quality training camps and he has nine years of working with disabled players as the Slovenian national team head coach and manager. His numerous skills and experience pass onto other coaches as well.

Born in Ljubljana, Slovenia in 1972, Gorazd came from a table tennis background. His father, Edvard Vecko, was a top-rank international player with six European titles. Gorazd is married with two children.

Gorazd started playing table tennis in 1978 as a young promising player, joined Olimpija, the most successful table tennis club in Yugoslavia at the time. He won national titles at various youth categories. In 1996, he played in the German 2nd League but a back

injury ended his playing career. He then turned his attention to coaching, gained his coaching licence in 1997 and began to concentrate on working with players with a disability. In 2000, he was appointed head coach and team manager of Slovenia.

Gorazd is an excellent organiser. From 2004-2009, he independently organised annual international disability table tennis tournaments and training camps in Lasko, Slovenia. In 2007, he organised the European Disability Table Tennis Championships. Since 2009 he has been the Tournament Director/Manager at ITTF for Para Table Tennis. He tests bats and rubbers for the Stiga company.. He also trains table tennis coaches for disability table tennis

**The Michael Hawkesworth Championships
(BTTAD Nationals) 2009**

The Championships were once again held in the EIS, Sheffield – this time in two adjoining halls. The playing conditions were as a result better but being in two halls seemed to lack that buzz that seemed to be present last year. Due to the lack of entries in the ladies section, many of the class events were mixed. Sue Gilroy took silver in the Class 4 event, losing to Mark Palmer. Victoria Bromley has dominated the Class 11 ladies for some years now but she showed that she is a force to be reckoned with among the Class 11 men as well. She reached the final of the Mixed Class 11 singles, taking the first game but losing the next three to last year's champion Adam Thompson.

Jane Campbell had a great tournament, narrowly losing to Sue Gilroy in the Ladies Wheelchair Open and taking the Class 1-3 ladies event. Her performance earned her the player of the tournament. Kim Daybell took two titles the Mens open and the Mens Class 9-10. Rajan Waterman had an impressive victory over Chris Cattell in the Mens Class 9-10 event 11-6 in the fifth, to take the silver medal in this event. Some new players entered and two of these made a considerable impact on the event. Aaron McKibbon had a great win over Paul Karabardak in the quarter-final of the Mens Standing Open 11-8, 11-9, 11-5 and won both the Class 8 event and the Junior Boys Singles. Ashley Facey-Thompson took the Mens Standing Open B title with impressive wins over Shaun Alvey in the semi and Andrew Harper in the final. He just missed out in a medal in the Class 9-10 finishing fourth and also reached the final of the Junior Boys Singles.

Results

Mens Class 1 – 5 Open Singles

Final
James Rawson b Kevin Plowman 7, 9, 11
Semi-Finals
James Rawson b Roger Hales 3,5,8
Kevin Plowman b Shaun Newcombe -8, 5, 6, 2

Mens Class 1 – 5 Band B Open Singles

Final
Tyler Paul b Daniel Bulleen -8, 7, 9, 8

Mens Class 6 – 11 Open Singles

Final
Kim Daybell b Chris Cattell -5, 6, 5
Semi-Finals
Kim Daybell b Will Bayley 2, -6, 6, 8
Chris Cattell b Aaron McKibbon -7, 8, -7, 8, 9

Mens Class 6 – 11 Band B Open Singles

Final
Ashley Facey - Thompson b Andrew Harper 1, 6, 6
Semi-Finals
Ashley Facey - Thompson b S Shaun Alvey 5, 3, -5, 8
Andrew Harper b Simon Green 8, 10, 6

Ladies Class 1 – 5 Open Singles

Final
Sue Gilroy b Jane Campbell -7, 6, -11, 10, 5
Third Place
Sara Head b Cathy Mitton 4, -9, 4, 5

Ladies Class 6 - 11 Open Singles

Final
Victoria Bromley b Jackie Smith 7, 10, 6
Third Place
Jessica Bromley b Jessica Turner 2, 5, 3

Junior Boys Singles

Final
Ashley Facey - Thompson b Aaron McKibbon 7, 7, 11
Krysten Coombes -6, 8, 5, 7
Third Place
Tyler Paul b Joseph Land -6, 7, 8, -8, 8

Junior Boys Wheelchair Singles

Final
Jack Hunter-Spivy b Joe Lund 5, 0, 3
Third Place
Tyler Paul b Daniel Bulleen -8, 7, 9, 8

Mixed Class 1 – 5 Doubles

Final
James Rawson and Arnie Chan b Sue Gilroy and Mark Palmer 3, 8, 7
Semi-Finals
Sue Gilroy and Mark Palmer b Roger Hales and Mike Prendergast -10, 9, 3, 3
James Rawson and Arnie Chan b Sara Head and Jane Campbell 8, 6, 6

Ladies Class 1 – 5 Doubles

Final
Jane Campbell and Sara Head b Sue Gilroy and Claire Robertson 8, -6, 9, 9
Third Place
Cathy Mitton and Dzaier Neil b Leanne Stephens and Hannah Coulthurst 8, 6, 8

Mixed Class 6 – 11 Doubles

Final
Will Bayley and Paul Karabardak b Rajan Waterman and Medhi Sarafashani 7, 2, 6
Semi-Finals
Rajan Waterman and Medhi Sarafashani I b Joe Stotesbury and Chris Cattell 10, 4, -8, -8, 4
Will Bayley and Paul Karabardak b A Barrett and Shaun Alvey 3, 5, 4

Mens Class 1 – 3 Singles

Final
Arnie Chan b Jamie Rawson 9, -10, 5, -7, 8
Semi-Finals
Arnie Chan b Kevin Plowman 6, 5, -11, 8
Jamie Rawson b Roger Hales 5, 8, 7

Mixed Class 4 Singles

Final
Mark Palmer b Sue Gilroy 8, 9, -9, 7
Third Place
Shaun Newcombe b Tyler Paul 6, 2, 8

Mixed Class 5 Singles

Final
Mike Prendergast b Jack Hunter-Spivy 3, 10, 6
Third Place
Lee Hammill b Hannah Coulthurst 5, 5, 8

Mixed Class 6-7 Singles

Final
Paul Karabardak b Will Bayley 8, 8, 12
Semi-Finals
Will Bayley b David Wetherill 5, 2, 6
Paul Karabardak b Farrel Anthony 3, 8, 6

Mens Class 8 Singles

Final
Aaron McKibbon b Medhi Sarafashani 9, 9, -5, 3
Semi-finals
Medhi Sarafashani b Michael Credland 6, 4, 8
Aaron McKibbon b Shaun Alvey 11, 4, 8

Mens Class 9-10 Singles

Final
Kim Daybell b Rajan Waterman 8, 9, -11, 8
Third Place
Chris Cattell b Ashley Facey-Thompson 8, 10, -9, 8

Mixed Class 11 Singles

Final
Adam Thompson b Victoria Bromley -6, 5, 9, 5
Semi-Finals
Adam Thompson b Simon Green 11, 4, 3
Victoria Bromley b Jeffrey Jarvis -9, -11, 7, 8, 9

Ladies Class 1 – 3 Singles

Final
Jane Campbell b Sara Head -7, -9, 13, 5, 10
Third Place
Cathy Mitton

Ladies Class 11 Singles

Final
Victoria Bromley b Jacqui Smith 4, -7, -6, 2, 7
Semi-Finals
Victoria Bromley b Jessica Bromley 9, 7, 5
Jacqui Smith b Rebecca Wright 3, 5, 4

Player of the Tournament

Jane Campbell

LATEST NEWS

Krysten Coombs

Krysten won gold for the table tennis at the World Dwarf Games in Belfast. He also competed in the athletics winning . gold for the relay and 200 mtrs and bronze in the 100 mtrs..

Recently, Krysten met Paul Deighton Chief Executive of the 2012 London Games at MARJON Plymouth at an event organised by Marjon to promote the SW's participation in the 2012 games. Krysten starts at MARJON University College in Plymouth doing a Foundation Degree in Sports Development and Coaching. He was an invited as a rising star performer to talk to Paul and ask him questions. Krysten very pointedly asked him how they are going to get more people to watch and support disabled table tennis in 2012. Reports indicate that Paul Deighton was challenged by his question and answered honestly and thoughtfully. Well done ,Krysten

Special Olympics, Leicester 2009

The opening ceremony of the Special Olympics held in Leicester took place at Leicester City football stadium on Saturday 25th July. The city council put on a tremendous show and the ceremony was a spectacular event, lasting over 4 hours. Peter Taylor the Chairman, attended the event on behalf of the BTTAD and also presented trophies at the Singles event on the following Tuesday. Adam Thomson and Victoria Bromley won their respective events. More details in the next issue.

Forthcoming events in 2009

UK School Games

3rd – 6th September Newport
Article on P8

National Junior Games

23 – 27 September Stoke Mandeville, Aylesbury contact **Wheelpower**
Website www.wheelpower.org.uk
Telephone 01296 484848

Mencap Grand Prix

3rd -4th October, Crewe
.Entry forms when available from mencap.org.uk
or
Dennis Beech
Home phone 01270 560341
Email russell@rbeech.freeseve.co.uk

Merseyside Open Games

13 December Liverpool
Contact Dennis Beech

2009 – The Michael Hawkesworth Championships 2 – 3 May 2009 – Sheffield A Personal View by Ian Thomas

I have been playing table tennis for approximately 4 years either in the Stroud and District or Bristol and District leagues. During the 2008-09 Winter season, I made a conscious effort of solely concentrating and playing all my matches in the Bristol and District League.

During this period, I've also participated in various tournaments held across England for those with a pan disability primarily through Disability Sport England (DSE) and Mencap Sport. At this point I am grateful for Mencap Sport who has kindly adopted me, which has allowed me to attend their England National Squad training sessions. Without doubt these training camps has certainly benefited my game. Whilst my table tennis progress has been slow, I am only now beginning to calm down, which is resulting with me not getting so tense and nervous during match play. However, I still have to work on this part of the game, but at least it is now beginning to move in the right direction. It was evident during the Bristol and District Winter league when I managed to win 7 league matches with an average of slightly below 13%.

The British Table Tennis Association for Disabled people (BTTAD) was held in Sheffield between 2 – 3 May 2009 and for the first time I was participating in this tournament. I knew from past experience of the high tournament standard because in my category are individuals who have competed at the highest level, the Paralympic Games.

The opening morning of the tournament consisted with the Doubles group matches, which I wasn't involved. It was agreed to give some of the junior players who were also not involved with the opening morning play some tournament experience by giving them some matches and a minor round robin matches were held.

My tournament involvement commenced after lunch when the Category groups round robin matches were held and was in a group of 4 other competitors, with two of them, Paul Karabardak and David Wetherill representing Great Britain at the Beijing Games in 2008. To my surprise I was asked to participate in all my matches one after another. At least I couldn't use the excuse of not being properly warmed up.

By nature my style of play would be described as cautious and safety conscious and this was evident during some of the group matches. It was only when one of my opponents David Wetherill comfortably beat me in the first two sets when I realised I should go out and try to execute some of my forehand shots I have been working on to develop over the years. Whilst the end result concluded in another set and match defeat, at least I was able to cumulative more points in this one game compared to the previous two put together. Another area of my game where I need to learn how to play against spin and this was evident when I struggled against Martin Adams. The second day of the tournament consisted with the Mens Standing B and I was in a pool with three other players. My first match was against my friend and Mencap England squad member Simon Green. Whilst Simon won in four sets, overall I was pleased with my performance especially when I was able to take a set off him. The second match was average, but I thought over the three sets defeat I executed some good shots, but must learn to become more positive and confident using my forehand. My third match I knew I was on a hiding to nothing after watching A Facey-Thompson smash his way to victory in his two previous matches. I knew what to expect and it was evident from the start in the first set when he started to smash the ball past me. My game plan was to play a short game over the net and to force my opponent to use his backhand, which had limited success. Whilst I lost this match 3 – 0, I was not too downhearted because A Facey-Thompson became the overall winner within this Division.

In summary during this tournament I was not as nervous compared to previous tournaments held for people with disabilities, but I still have to learn to become more relax that would help me to execute forehand shots and confidence to move around the table more freely.

Ian Thomas
Filton College
Mencap Sport England Squad Member



Will Bayley in action



Will Bayley takes gold in Class 7 singles



Dave Wetherill takes gold in class 6 singles

Slovenia Open May 2009

The Great Britain Paralympic Table Tennis Squad continued to build on the success that they achieved at the Czech and Slovakian Open. The team finished third in the medal tables when they competed in the Slovenian Open at the beginning of May against very strong international competition..

In the singles, Will Bayley, class 7, had a fantastic run in the Mens Standing Open beating Loicq (Belgium) 3-1 in the Q/F, losing in the semi-final the Swede F Anderson 3-1 -12, 8, 15, 16 to W and then narrowly losing in the third place playoff to D Berecki (Hungary) 3-2 6, 9, -5, -12, 9. The open event is contested by players from Classes 6 – 10 and so normally, the more disabled players are not expected to progress very far in this event. This makes Will's achievement even more remarkable as he was playing players far less disabled than he and ranked in the top 10.

Sara Head and Jane Campbell took the gold medal in the Ladies Team Class 3. The two British girls are currently ranked 12th and 23rd in the Ladies world class 3 ranking list respectively. They beat the more highly ranked French team 3-1 in the final of the ladies class 3 team event. Sara very narrowly lost the first match against Fanny Bertrand (ranked 9 in the world) 5,-11,9,-9,9. Jane then beat the current world number 7 three games to nil to level the score and then the two girls took the doubles 3-1. Sara then beat Stephanie Mariage 3-1 to give the girls the gold medal

David Wetherill took gold in the Mens Class 6 event beating E Dalpan from France ; -10, 7, 14, 7 in the final. Will Bayley took gold in the mens Class 7 beating J Wollmert from Germany 11, 6, 7, 6 in the semi-final and then in the final beating S Messi from France 6, 9, -9, 5. Paul Karabardak narrowly lost in the 3rd-4th place playoff to J Wollmert; 7, 11, -5, 6 in Class 7 and therefore just missed out on the bronze.

Cathy Mitton took silver in the ladies class 2 event. She had a good win over Sireau Florence from France 3-0, especially having lost to her in the team event the day before, to reach the final. The Jordanian Maha AlBargouti proved too strong for her and she lost 9, 10, 7.

Will Bayley and Paul Karabardak also took silver in the Mens Class 7 team event, losing to the Czech pair Daniel Horut and Zbynek Lambert 3-1. After losing the first two singles the British pair took the doubles 9 in the fifth to keep themselves in the match. Horut then beat Paul 3-1 to give the Czech's the gold medal.

The Mens Class 3 team - Jamie Rawson and Arnie Chan - lost in the semi-final to France. This meant that they had to play off against Austria for the bronze medal. They showed their fighting spirit and experience by coming back from 2-0 down to win the next three matches to take the bronze medal

David Wetherill paired with Domingo Arguello in the Mens class 6 team event and gained a silver medal.. They lost in the final 3-2 against Croatia, David winning both his singles.

Paul Davies reached the final of the mens class 2 team event with Austrian Hans Ruep to take silver medal. They lost 3-1 to Slovakia.

Cathy Mitton and Dzaier Neil finished fourth in the Ladies Class 2 event losing to Italy in the semi-final 3-1 and then a mixed pair from Jordan and Germany again 3-1. Both games were hard fought. Cathy lost 11-7 in the fifth to the German Bianca Neubig and Dzaier lost 11-9 in the fourth to the Jordanian Maha AlBargouti. The doubles was won by the British pair 11-6 in the fifth and then Dzaier lost to the German 11-6 in the fifth – meaning that the girls came away without a medal in the team event.

Romanian Open May 2009

Romania proved successful for the squad which this time contained a mix of experience and youth. For some, it was a chance to gain valuable experience at this level.

The experienced players of the group (Rob Davies, Sue Gilroy and Joe Stotesbury) all came back with medals. Sue got bronze in the open singles and bronze in the class singles and won gold in the team event with her partner from Hong Kong. Joe also secured a bronze medal in the class 7 singles which is his first ever singles medal. Rob Davies also secured a bronze medal in the class 1 singles.

Aaron McKibbin and Ashley-Facey-Thompson did extremely well for their first ever International competitions. Both of them got a few wins which was great since it was their first competition at international level. They showed that they have great potential for the future, and should be included within the programme when the time comes to review it again.

Leanne Stephen also showed she has improved in the last 6 months. She beat four class 4 players which is a great confidence boost. Krysten Coombs also got his first win at an International Competition. He played very positively. Although Jack Pegram failed to win any matches, he showed continual improvement and gained valuable experience as the competition went on.

For the developing players, the competition helped to identify areas which need to be worked on as well as strengths already evident. These players will now go and focus on these to improve their game.

The first two competitions that GB have entered for the year of 2009 has ended in overall success and some exceptional performances. Both took place in April.

Czech Open

In Czech Republic (standing only event) Great Britain ended with taking 3 medals.

Will Bayley won the class 7 singles without dropping a single game, beating Daniel Horut 3-0 in the final (someone he had never beaten before).

Dave Wetherill reached the final of the class 6 singles losing out 3-2 to Gregorovic of Croatia.

Finally the Class 7 team of Will Bayley and Paul Karabardak gained a silver medal where they narrowly lost to Czech Republic 3-2.

Other great performances to mention are Kim Daybell and Joe Stotesbury who both reached the quarter finals in their classes (class 10 and class 7). Both these players had never progressed from their group in previous competitions, so this was a big step forward.

In addition, Paul Karabardak reached the semi finals of the open men's event, which on his way he beat Richard Csejtyey, the current world ranked number 1 in class 8.

Slovakia Open

In Slovakia (standing and wheelchair) the team came away with 7 medals. Sue Gilroy had a great open women's singles event beating Peric from Serbia in the semi finals (silver medallist in class 4 in Beijing and current world ranked number 1 in women's class 4) and narrowly lost to Lundback from Sweden in the final 3-2.

Sue also gained a bronze medal in the Class 4-5 singles.

Dave Wetherill gained a bronze medal in the class 6 singles, which on his way had beaten Buzin from Russia world ranked number 5 3-2 who he had never beaten before.

In addition, the mens class 7 team (Will Bayley and Paul Karabardak) took the gold medal in the class 7 team event beating Czech Republic 3-0 who they lost to in the final at the Czech Open.

The women's class 4-5 team (Sue and Claire Robertson) took a bronze medal beating a pair from Norway and Spain in the bronze medal playoff.

The women's team 2-3 (Cathy Mitton, Sara Head and Jane Campbell) also took a bronze medal beating Slovakia in the 3rd place playoff 3-2.

Rob Davies partnered with Holger from Germany (current ranked 3 in the world) in the class 1 team event in which he took a silver medal.

Other noticeable performances were Joe Stotesbury, Kim Daybell and Jane Campbell.

Joe progressed again through his group beating [Ben Despineux](#) from Belgium 3-0. He lost in the quarter finals to Daniel Horut of Czech 3-0.

Kim Daybell progressed through to the Semi Finals of the class 10 men's singles beating Ladislav Gaspar from Slovakia world ranked Number 6 and Sebastian Powroziak from Poland - current world ranked number 8.

Jane Campbell also progressed through her group stages beating Doris Mader 3-1 current world ranked number 8 and Christine Fillou from France 3-0 - world ranked number 22.

Some good performances at the two competitions

Bridgend Table tennis star, Neil Robinson, announces retirement after seven Paralympic Games



Multi-medal winning table tennis player Neil Robinson retired from international competition following a Paralympic career spanning nearly 25 years. He has now channelled his energies into becoming a successful coach for disabled athletes and was part of the coaching staff which led the successful Great Britain squad at the European Championships this June. put his experience to good use by

Fifty-year-old Robinson made his Paralympic debut at the Stoke Mandeville 1984 Paralympics and has competed at every Games since with his last appearance at the Beijing Paralympics in 2008, making him one of Britain's most experienced Paralympians.

In 1988 at the Seoul Games Robinson won his first Paralympic medal - team bronze - but it was at the Barcelona 1992 Games that he really excelled, winning team gold with James Rawson as well as an individual silver medal.

Neil went on to become European singles champion in 1995 and again took individual silver at the 1996 Atlanta Paralympic Games before also becoming world No.1 in his classification.

Neil, who over the years has also amassed several world and European medals, said: "To play my last event in Beijing, the 'home' of table tennis was a nice way to finish. I just missed out on a medal there despite playing well but it was a great event to be involved in. The atmosphere in the arena was amazing – a very loud but informed crowd, it was real theatre.

Members

Join the BTTAD now if you are not already a member.

Full Membership (£10)

Any person who has a physical, sensory or learning

Junior Membership (£5)

Any person under 18 on 31st December, 2008, who has a physical, sensory or learning disability,

Associate Membership (£7)

Able-bodied people who are supportive of the objectives of the Association

Organisational Membership (£25)

Any organisation supportive of the objectives of the Association.

"Table tennis has come a long way since my early days. The game has evolved into a very technical and highly skilled affair since the early days of 'ping pong'! It is a genuine world game with all continents having strong representation.

"The Paralympic Games has also changed from what seemed like a 'large national games' in 1984 with little media or public interest, to an event of world interest and huge media coverage in 2008."

Although Neil, who is from Bridgend, South Wales, has some regret over never securing that elusive individual Paralympic gold medal, he still went out on top – both winning a world ranking event and was holding the title of British champion in 2008.

"Table tennis is a very strong and competitive sport so I can look back on a very successful career and my two individual Paralympic silvers I won in this sport now seem like gold. I feel that now is the right time for me to finish. Although I am still good enough to qualify for major events I realistically don't think I can improve on what I have achieved", added Neil, who will now focus on coaching the sport he is so passionate about.

"My intention now is to channel my skills, knowledge and passion into coaching and help those who are prepared to listen! I have recently been added to the ParalympicsGB Table tennis coaching team and am looking forward to the challenges ahead. It would be great to be part of the London 2012 team and hopefully help others achieve what I have and more.

"I have had a good attitude to training over the years but I would like to thank all the coaches and practice partners who have helped me, and would like to pay tribute to my family and in particular my wife Karen and daughter Emily, for all their help and support."

ParalympicsGB Chief Executive Phil Lane paid tribute to Neil and his sporting career. He said: "I would like to wish Neil all the best for the future. He has, over the past two-and-a-half decades, made a significant contribution to Paralympic sport in the UK and has always demonstrated extreme professionalism and dedication to his table tennis career, which epitomizes the spirit of a top Paralympian."

"Neil has an immense experience of the Paralympics and has seen the movement develop significantly since he made his debut in 1984 so I'm delighted to learn that he will be using this vast experience to help develop a new generation of GB players and I look forward to continue to work with him in the future."

Contact Mike Smith for an application form

Secretary Mike Smith

207 Glenfield Road
Leicester
LE3 6DL Tel 01162 858475
Email mike.gr.smith@tesco.net

DVD with membership



Part of the membership package will involve free DVDs. Only members will be able to access and be sent this benefit.

The first DVD will be sent out late August and contain footage of the Slovenian Open. It will give members a chance to see our top players in action. The quality of the footage will be good but the presentation of the disc will probably not be of the same standard. Hopefully, this will improve as more

experience of this type of work is gained. Other DVDs will be sent later in the season and will contain footage from the European Championships and previous tournaments

Next Issue of newsletter out in September along with the latest ranking list. Issue will contain reports on
DSE Games 2009
Special Olympics 2009

Reminder to send your views, comments, suggestions to Peter Taylor so that this newsletter can be as interesting as possible.

Publication Dates	2009/10
September	2009
December	2009
March	2010

UK School Games

The UK School Games is moving to Wales for 3rd to 6th September 2009. The Games is the largest multi sport event of its kind in the UK, with over 1600 athletes taking part in 10 sports, supported by over 900 volunteers and officials. An anticipated 10,000 spectators will watch the event over the four days.

The Table Tennis event will take place at Newport Tennis Centre at the International Sports Village in Newport. Eighty four players will take part in both the team and individual competitions over the three days, represented five England regional teams and teams

from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. There will also be players competing in wheelchair, standing and learning disability events.

Aaron McKibbin, Jack Pegram and Alex Southern will all be hoping they can match their 2008 gold medal places in the disability events.

More information can be found on the ETTA website

www.englishtabletennis.org.uk

Special Olympics 2009

Over 2,400 athletes visited Leicester for the eighth Special Olympics GB National Summer Games

The Special Olympics began on Saturday 25 July with an opening ceremony attended by Prime Minister Gordon Brown, Olympics minister Tessa Jowell and England rugby manager Martin Johnson. The Games take place every four years, providing an Olympic-style sports competition for athletes with a learning disability. This year's Games ran until Friday 31 July, with 2,400 athletes from across the UK taking part in 21 sports across 19 venues in the city. Saturday's opening ceremony was held at Leicester City FC's stadium, hosted by the team's former midfielder Alan Birchenall. The ceremony included

the athletes' parade through the stadium, music from the recently reformed New Beautiful South and the lighting of the Special Olympics Flame of Hope. The Prime Minister, who attended the ceremony with his wife Sarah, said: "These Games are a hugely important part of Britain's commitment to achievement in sports and to providing every possible opportunity for those with learning disabilities.

The preparations for the table tennis event were coordinated by our own Mike Smith, the Secretary of the BTTAD.