



Under 19 Welsh Juniors Excel in Prague

Wales have returned from a highly successful and promising performance at the European Junior under 19s Team Championship 2015, this year staged in Prague, Czech Republic.

A strong selection of boys and girls – comprising Callum Davidson, Emyr Evans, Elliot Morris, Ciara Richards, Lowri Roberts and Liam Eason (who competed in the individual event only) - represented their country in both the individual and team events from March 28-April 5, with some great squash played and exceptional results achieved to build on for the future.



Following an encouraging performance from the team last year in Finland, the under 19s went even better this time around to record some excellent results – especially in the team championship.

Seeded seventh, the Welsh team did remarkably well over the first two days of play to dispose of hosts Czech Republic, Slovakia and the Netherlands – all with resounding 3-0 scorelines – before claiming a great victory over second seeds Spain to finish top of Group B. On the third day of the tournament, the team again started positively with a 2-1 win over Scotland; but were eventually undone by strong Finnish and French outfits to end the championship in a well-deserved fourth place.



In the boys' individual event, Callum Davidson reached round two, but was unlucky to draw first seed and eventual winner George Parker of England (11-1, 11-4, 12-10) while Liam Eason defeated Israel's Noam Peer, before succumbing to Dimitri Steinmann of Switzerland (11-9, 11-4, 11-8) in the third round.

Elliot Morris made the same stage before coming unstuck against Victor Crouin of France (11-6, 11-8, 11-7); elsewhere, seventh seed Emyr Evans performed marvellously to reach the fourth round, only to be foiled by Englishman James Peach in a humdinger of a tie (19-17, 8-11, 11-5, 11-9).



In the girls' event, Ciara Richards did brilliantly to beat higher seed Michaela Cepova of the Czech Republic in round one (11-9, 11-5, 11-13, 11-7), but France's Laura Gamblin proved too high a hurdle in the following fixture (11-6, 11-2, 11-8). Richards ended the tournament on a positive note – defeating Kato Verwilt of Belgium (9-11, 11-8, 10-12, 14-12, 11-7) to claim 29th spot in the championship.

Lowri Roberts gained revenge for her colleague with a comprehensive win over Sarah Mekhalfi of France (11-2, 11-7, 11-7); but fifth seed Cristina Gomez (Spain) proved a step too far in round three (13-11,

11-9, 6-11, 11-4).

The team championships in Prague proved to be a great success for Team Wales, with the prestigious event offering competition at the highest level and experience of winning against some formidable opponents; which will hopefully shape our young stars as they look to forge their future careers in squash. Congratulations to all under 19 players for an exceptional performance in representing Wales in Prague.

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