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Lawn Bowls / Gilor takes silver, leads Israel to third overall

By Norman Spiro

Kiryat Ono's Ruthie Gilor won the silver medal in the singles at the Atlantic Rim lawn bowls competition in Scotland this week and added a bronze in the pairs together with Haifa's Irit Grencel as Israel's women finished third overall among the 13 participating nations.

After a 21-8 win over Ireland in the semifinals and a 21-10 triumph over the United States in the last eight, Gilor finally succumbed 21-15 to South Africa's Colleen Webb.

The overall rankings are determined by a combination of points earned in the four disciplines of singles, pairs, triples and fours, and Gilor's contribution to Israel's best-ever finish at the competition was backed by a strong showing by the team's triples and fours sides.

The triples team of Tami Kamzel, Yael Bar-Ner and Beverley Polatinsky qualified for the knockout quarterfinal rounds and repeated the feat along with Grencel in the fours.

The trips and the fours finished fifth in their respective disciplines, earning valuable points for Israel's overall tally.

England again ended Israel's chances in the triples, as it had done in the 2005 final. England eventually came through for the triples crown for the second successive year when it beat Wales 28-10.

One-shot loss

In the fours, it was a final end, one-shot loss to Scotland after peels at 17-all that denied Israel a semifinal slot.

Scotland was the eventual winner of the pairs when it beat Canada 17-16, while the fours trophy went to Jersey, which beat South Africa by the same score.

Scotland was the overall winner for the second successive year, after edging out South Africa on shot difference. Each team had accumulated 42 points of a maximum of 49.

Israel accumulated 39 points for its third-place finish to come in ahead of England and Canada, each with 38, followed by Ireland and Jersey with 33 apiece and Wales with 26.

The Israeli girls, managed by Yaffa Lavin, must be credited with an all-round outstanding performance, all the more so as the games were

played under severe weather conditions, often including a torrential downpour.

The competition was open to men's teams for the first time this year, but it was not a happy debut for Israel's squad as the team fell far short of expectations.

Israel failed to qualify for the knockout rounds in any of the four disciplines and finished 11th overall.

The triples team of Raymond Sher, Haviv Takin and Arie Ben-Dor came closest to the knockout, needing only a third win in its last sectional round against Guernsey to qualify, but lost out by a single shot (14-13), after losing similarly to Ireland (19-18), the eventual runner-up in the final to Wales.

Not enough

Sher registered two wins in the singles, but that was not enough to advance to the next stage.

Canada's Ryan Bester, the present holder of the world pairs outdoors championships, won the singles crown, 21-15 against Guernsey, after beating England 21-14 and Spain 21-20.

For the pairs and fours teams, success was sparse. The fours combination of Colin Silberstein, Takin, Boaz Marcus and Ben-Dor managed only one win in its five games, while Silberstein together with Marcus failed to record a win in the pairs.

Wales added the pairs trophy to its triples gold by beating Jersey 16-15, while in the fours South Africa beat Jersey 17-15.

For team manager Seymour Fisher and his team, the results were unquestionably disappointing at a tournament where very little went Israel's way under the trying conditions.

Yet Israel's team, each selected according to recognized individual talent, apparently fell short of the combined effort and coordination required to record success.

Wales was the overall winner with 43 points ahead of Jersey with 41, followed by South Africa with 38, Guernsey 35, England 34, Ireland 33, Scotland 32.

Israel finished with 14 points.

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