

Special Olympics tennis players win 12 medals

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The six-strong squad of tennis players representing Special Olympics Great Britain have ended the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games with two medals apiece after Nottinghamshire's Michael Clarke (pictured) won a silver medal in his last men's singles group match on Sunday to complete a superb five days of medal competition for the players and their coaches Lesley and Matthew Whitehead.

Clarke put up a fine effort against his Dutch opponent in his quest to win gold, but had to give best to a better player on the day. After opening wins in the first of their group matches last Wednesday, Wolverhampton's Jayne Hinett and Scotland's Lucy Porteous ended their women's singles campaigns with gold and silver medals respectively, after Hinett beat a player from Kazakhstan in her final group match to follow up her earlier victory over a Moroccan opponent. Porteous was beaten by a player from Colombia in her gold medal match, but she and Hinett teamed up to win gold in the women's doubles after beating an American pairing.

Joseph Eccles, one of three Nottinghamshire players in the Great Britain squad alongside Clarke and Alex Eustace, also played for a gold medal in his men's singles group, but was denied by his last Polish opponent, while Eustace finished his singles matches with victory over a player from the Bahamas to win a bronze medal.

There was a silver medal in the men's doubles for Eccles and Eustace, who played well despite missing out on the gold medal after a loss to a partnership from Monaco. Meanwhile, Clarke and Welshman Shain Lewis ensured they won a doubles bronze medal following a victory over two Spanish players. Lewis ends the Special Olympics World Summer Games with two bronze medals. On one of the hottest days in the Greek capital, Lewis came through a close opening set against his final Chilean opponent on Saturday and went on to comfortably take the second set to end his competitive participation in the Games on a winning note.

Having been among the Special Olympics Great Britain representatives chosen to meet the Prime Minister David Cameron during a visit to Downing Street on his 19th birthday, just days before the 157-strong Great Britain team left for Athens, Lewis has another important engagement on Monday night. He has been chosen by Tim Shriver, Chairman and CEO of Special Olympics, to make a speech on behalf of all the 7,000 athletes from the 180 countries that took part in the Games during Monday

night's closing ceremony at the Panathinaiko Stadium.

The next big competition for British players competing in Athens will be the Tennis Foundation's annual National Learning Disability Tennis Event, which takes place at Nottingham Tennis Centre on 19th and 20th November. -

Final Special Olympics GB Tennis Medals - Athens 2011

Jayne Hinett	Singles: Gold	Doubles: Gold
Lucy Porteous	Singles: Silver	Doubles: Gold
Joseph Eccles:	Singles: Silver	Doubles: Silver
Alex Eustace	Singles: Bronze	Doubles: Silver
Michael Clarke	Singles: Silver	Doubles: Bronze
Shain Lewis	Singles: Bronze	Doubles: Bronze

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