

Higgins in against Haotian in Scottish Open

John Higgins overcame a significant hurdle to progress into the next round of the BetVictor Scottish Open snooker championship, despite concerns about his form.

The Wishaw Wizard, who has won 31 ranking titles, used all his experience and staying power to overcome English player Ricky Walden 4-3.

A 54 break in the seventh and final frame was crucial in a 60-28 win and the 48-year-old Scot now plays 26-year-old Chinese player Lyu Haotian, ranked No 35 in the world, but previously one of the youngest players ever to have played in a professional tournament, aged only 14.

Chester-born Walden, ranked 24 but a man who has reached the world's top ten in previous campaigns, opened with a break of 75 to take the opening frame but Higgins, currently ranked No 12, hit back immediately with one of 81 for a decisive 127-8 win in the second.

However, that failed to rattle the 41-year-old Englishman who won the third 67-61 despite a break of 51 from Higgins.

The steely Scot levelled with a 75-4 win in the fourth, putting together a break of 50, and he took the next 76-8 thanks to another 50-plus break, to move towards the finishing line.

Walden, ranked No 24 in the world, kept his composure and won

the sixth frame decisively, 60-3, to level and set up the nerve-jangling seventh. Higgins (pictured) is scheduled to go to the table at 19.00.

Also on table on Thursday is 32-year-old Glaswegian Anthony McGill, who achieved a career high ranking of No 12 in March 2022 but is currently No 23, plays Sanderson Lam (19.00). Leeds-based Lam, ranked 69, turned professional in 2015.

Englishman Martin O'Donnell, currently No 80 in the world, who put out world champion Luca Brecel in the previous round, goes in against Leicester-born Tom Ford, who is 18th in the rankings, also at 7pm.

Holder Gary Wilson, the world No 20, faces Joe O'Connor, 16 places below him in the rankings, in a repeat of last year's final which Wilson won 9-2. O'Connor will be out to turn the tables this time.

That match is scheduled on table at 14.00 and 61-year-old Jimmy White, who once reached No 2 in the world, goes in against 51-year-old Welsh cureman Dominic Dale, nicknamed The Spaceman, who is a commentator and presenter for the BBC and Eurosport. Dale won his match against fellow Welshman Jamie Jones with a fluke.

RESULTS: Chris Wakelin 4, Sam Craigie 0; David Gilbert 3, Kyren Wilson 4; Stuart Bingham 4, Aaron Hill 2; Si Jiahui 2, Zhang Anda 4; Gary Wilson 4, Joe O'Connor 3; Rory Thor 4, Ashley Carty 3; Dominic Dale 4, Jimmy White 1; Andrew Higginson 2, Zhou Yuelong 4; Sanderson Lam 4, Anthony McGill 1; Lyu Haotian 2, John Higgins 4