

Wilson scrapes through but world champion is out

Gary Wilson continued the defence of the BetVictor Scottish Open title with a narrow victory over Xing Zihao at Meadowbank in Edinburgh, but he was under real pressure and came from two frames down to clinch a place in the next round thanks to two 100-plus breaks.

Zihao, who was 19 in November, looked to be heading for victory when he led 3-1 but Wilson, ranked No 20 in the world, dug deep.

The Chinese player, ranked No 91 in the world and with only £20,000 in career earnings, took the first frame 60-5 but the defending champion hit back with a 63 break to take the second 74-57, despite a break of 50 from his opponent.

But he ran into trouble after that as Zihao, who was in the last 16 of the Northern Ireland Open this year, rattled in a break of 90 to claim the third frame 98-0 and he took the next 63-18 to have the Tyneside-based cuedan looking down the barrel.

A 63-18 win in the fourth put the Chinese professional on the brink but Wilson rallied. A sensational break of 130 won him the fifth 130-0 for 3-2 and he levelled with another 100-plus

break in the sixth, this time 125, in a score of 133-0.

And his form continued in the next with a 66 break for a 66-1 win and victory, but it was a close shave.

World champion Luca Brecel was involved in a major shock when he was knocked out of the event by Martin O'Donnell, ranked No 80 in the world, despite getting off to a flying start by winning the opening frame 81-24 with a break of 57.

English professional O'Donnell bounced back to win the next three 99-29, with a break of 59, 76-0 thanks to a break of 75, and 70-17. He had a 70 break in that frame.

Belgian-born Brecel, ranked No 4 in the world, won the fifth 73-37 but 37-year-old O'Donnell, held his nerve to take the next 110-5 with the help of a break of 82.

Other results so far today: Joe O'Connor 4, Scott Donaldson 1; Thepchaiya Un-Nooh 2, Chris Wakelin 4; Julien Leclercq 2, Si Jiahui 4; Gary Wilson 4, Xing Zihao 3; Yuan SiJun 0, Sam Craigie 4; Robbie Williams 3, David Gilbert 4; Jamie Jones 3, Dominic Dale 4; Jordan Brown 0, Kyren Wilson 4; Mark Davis 1, Andrew Higginson 4; Manasawin Phetmakaikul 0, Stuart Bingham 4; Napon Saengkham 4, Ali Carter 2; Martin O'Donnell 4, Luca Brecel 2.

Meanwhile, the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association (WPBSA) held their annual meeting in Edinburgh during the BetVictor Scottish Open.

Mark Davis, Sean Murphy and Matthew Selt were elected to the board and WPBSA governance chairman, John Ferguson, said there was a turnout of 80 per cent and added: "Snooker has never been bigger globally than it is today.

"During this season it has been fantastic to see the return of major tournaments to China on the World Snooker Tour, as well as key steps being made at amateur level with the expansion of

the WPBSA Q tour.”

The draw has also been made for the German Masters and the home nations top player, Lukas Kleckers, will play Bristol-born Judd Trump in the first round in Berlin. The event runs from January 29 to February 4.