



Pitchford and Drinkhall awarded Olympic grants

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Posted On: April 03, 2019

Liam Pitchford and Paul Drinkhall have been awarded Olympic Solidarity grants to help their qualification bids for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

The duo were among nine British athletes selected by the British Olympic Association to receive the \$400 a month funding, which lasts until August 31, 2020, just after the Tokyo Games.

The grants were awarded under the International Olympic Committee's Olympic Solidarity plan, which helps elite athletes with grants which can be used towards aspects of their preparation, including training facilities, medical and scientific assistance.

The BOA selected athletes who it felt the bursary would prove to be most beneficial to in their day-to-day training.

Mark England, the BOA's Tokyo 2020 Chef de Mission, said: "The primary role of the British Olympic Association is to take a team to the Olympic Games and Tokyo 2020 is now our absolute focus. Olympic Solidarity plays an important role in allowing us to help competitive athletes and their sports create opportunities where otherwise they might not exist.

"As a member body it is vital for the BOA to support the British Olympic governing bodies in any way it can to help deliver important grants to its athletes, so they might realise their Olympic dreams. The IOC's Olympic Solidarity provides monthly grants, which can be put towards important training requirements and helps these athletes in the ever-competitive elite sporting environment."

British Table Tennis Federation and Table Tennis England Director of Sport, Simon Mills, said: "We are delighted that two players can benefit from additional support in their preparation and qualification for Tokyo and look forward to continuing to work with them to maximise their opportunities."

Pitchford and Drinkhall both competed at the Olympics in London 2012 and Rio 2016. Both were members of the British team which reached the quarter-finals in Rio, losing to champions China. Also in Rio, Drinkhall became

only the third British athlete in history to reach the last 16 of the singles.

The other athletes to be awarded grants are: William Bosi (sport climbing), James-Andrew Davis (fencing), Charlotte Hope (karate), Chris Langridge (badminton), Bryony Pitman (archery), Kate Shortman (artistic swimming) and Isabelle Thorpe (artistic swimming).

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