



## Pitch ready to prove his World-class credentials

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Liam Pitchford is looking forward to a new challenge as one of the top seeds at the World Championships, which start in Budapest on Sunday.

He will be 15th seed in Hungary, meaning he will skip the qualifying rounds and go straight into the main draw. It means his tournament will start later than his team-mates, but the England No 1 is not fazed by that.

"I'm not going to put myself under pressure, but it's an opportunity to go out there and show what I can do again, and pick up good ranking points," he said. "I'll be a higher seed than before, but I'm not thinking about that, I'll just try to play my game."

"You can say having a lower seeding sometimes means less pressure, but as a higher seed maybe you get a better draw. But I want to be the best in the world and it's one of those things you just have to deal with."

"There are no easy matches and if you want to go far in the tournament, you have to beat the best players anyway. I know that, and I'll be focused on every match."

Pitchford has just finished a pre-Worlds training camp alongside the rest of the England men's team – Paul Drinkhall, Sam Walker and Tom Jarvis – plus players from Sweden, Portugal and the USA.

He said: "We've had a good few days at the training camp. It was a good mix of styles and it was good to get out of the normal training regime and do something a bit different. I enjoyed it and the other lads did too – it's always good when we get together."

"The others will have to qualify, but they'll be ready for that and it gives them a few matches hopefully to get on a roll and they'll be looking to get a shot at one of the top seeds. They've shown they can perform at that level."

Pitchford will also play men's doubles alongside Jonathan Groth of Denmark – they will be seeded 15th. Pitchford said: "We're very good friends. He lives in Copenhagen with me and we used to live together in Germany."

“We haven’t played much together but I’m not worried about that. He’s a very good doubles player, one of the best in the world. I’m not used to playing with left-handers but I’ve been practising for that and I think we’ve got a good chance.”

Tin-Tin Ho and Maria Tsapsinos will also be competing for England in Budapest in the women’s singles and as a pair in the doubles. Drinkhall & Walker feature in the men’s doubles, while the English mixed doubles pairs are Walker & Ho and Jarvis & Tsapsinos.

You can follow all the latest from the championships on our website and social media channels. The championships will also be shown on Eurosport and on the ITTF’s official live streaming platform, itTV – [click here for more information](#).

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