



England to face Japan at ITTF Team World Cup

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England were grouped with familiar foes – and hosts – Japan, along with Austria in today's draw for the ZEN-NOH ITTF Team World Cup.

England will start their campaign in Group B against the hosts at 2am UK time tomorrow. You will be able to watch the match live via the ITTF website. The tournament is also due to be broadcast on Eurosport.

Japan face Austria later in the day, with the final group match between England and Austria at 1am UK time on Thursday.

The England squad comprises Liam Pitchford, Paul Drinkhall, Sam Walker and Tom Jarvis, all of whom were part of the squad at the last edition of the Team World Cup in London last year.

England met Japan in the Copper Box on that occasion, losing 3-1 in the group stage, with Pitchford's stunning 3-0 defeat of Tomokazu Harimoto the highlight. Japan went on to lose to China in the final, while England had to settle for bronze medals, being defeated by China in the semis.

Two months later, England turned the tables on Japan at the World Team Championships in Sweden, winning 3-1 as Pitchford defeated Harimoto and Jun Mizutani and Walker overcame Koki Niwa.

Japan are second seeds and Harimoto (WR5), Niwa (WR11) and Mizutani (WR13) are all in the squad again, alongside Maharu Yoshimura (WR48) and Jin Takuya (WR52).

Austria, the 2015 European champions, are less familiar opponents for England, although there have been recent individual meetings. They are seeded eighth, just one place above England, and their squad comprises Robert Gardos (WR33), Daniel Habesohn (WR43), Stefan Fegerl (WR81) and Andreas Levenko (WR159).

England's current rankings see Pitchford at No 19, Drinkhall at No 79, Walker at 90 and Jarvis at 169.

Full draw

Men

Group A: China, Chinese Taipei, Nigeria

Group B: Japan, Austria, England

Group C: Germany, Brazil, Australia

Group D: South Korea, Sweden, USA

Women

Group A: China, Ukraine, Egypt

Group B: Japan, USA, Austria

Group C: Chinese Taipei, Romania, Vanuatu

Group D: Hong Kong, South Korea, Brazil

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