



England's Felix cooks up a culinary fundraiser

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Young England player Felix Thomis is hoping to find the right fundraising recipe with a star-studded table tennis cookbook.

The idea of *Chop, Slice, Smash then Serve* started during the first lockdown when 15-year-old Felix, who is part of the England Junior Squad, wanted to learn more about cooking and athlete nutrition.

He also wanted to do something to help raise money for his school – Ackworth School Table Tennis Academy – and for charity, so the idea to make and sell a recipe book was born.

With help from Ackworth coach Eli Baraty and Table Tennis England, he and his family – mum Yasmin and dad Andy – have managed to get culinary contributions from some big names in the sport.

They include African champions Quadri Aruna and Dina Meshref, European legend Vladimir Samsonov, Portuguese star Marcos Freitas, Luxembourg's Sarah Nutte and 2003 World Championship silver medallist Joo Se-Hyuk from South Korea.

Home-grown talent also plays a part, with favourite recipes from England coach Gavin Evans, players Sam Walker, Tin-Tin Ho and Maria Tsaptsinos, Paralympic champion Will Bayley and Table Tennis England Chief Executive Sara Sutcliffe and Chairman Sandra Deaton.

There is some musical stardust from singer Zak Abel – who is a former table tennis cadet national champion – while there is even a contribution from the corridors of power thanks to instructions for chocolate oat cake straight from No 10 Downing Street.

Mark Bates, managing director of National Championships sponsor Mark Bates Ltd, has also contributed a recipe.

Proceeds from the book will help to fund training at Ackworth after the covid restrictions are lifted, including bringing in some top-quality sparrers to train with the players based there, and also helping the players with

accommodation, travel, food and camp costs.



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Chocolate Oat Cake

Ingredients

4oz butter
2oz caster sugar
4oz self-raising flour
3oz quick oats
2 rounded tablespoons of cocoa
Pinch of salt

Melt the butter in a saucepan. Mix the dry ingredients and add to the melted butter. Stir to combine. Press the mixture into a 7" square tin. Bake in a moderate oven for 25 minutes.

Icing (optional)

Sieve 4oz icing sugar and 2 rounded tablespoons cocoa together. Mix with 2 dessert spoons of orange juice into a coating consistency. Spread over the hot cake and leave to cool.

The recipe from 10 Downing Street

Felix said: "It started from having not much to do in lockdown and watching a couple of YouTube videos on how to make pancakes.

"My dad's quite a good cook and he helped me along the way, and then me and my mum thought it would be a good idea to start a cookbook with recipes from players all over the world.

"We'll be raising money for Ackworth and also helping out charities for the elderly and homeless. We'll have to see how it goes but hopefully we'll raise a bit of money."

The book costs £10, plus £2.95 postage and packing and will be available after November 30. If you would like to order a copy, please contact Yasmin Thomis via andythomis@gmail.com and she will pass on details about how to pay by bank transfer.

Meanwhile, even though the book has been finished, Felix is continuing to learn and improve in the kitchen and said: "I've definitely got more experience now – I can make eggs in three different ways and I'm starting to be able to bake quite well. My chicken in thyme sauce is quite good!"

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