

New Names On The Trophy

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Posted On: March 03, 2011



A raft of new doubles partnerships have formed for this years senior men's doubles event, guaranteeing a new home for the title.

This has been spurred on by changes at an international level where the emergence of Liam Pitchford as a contender on the international circuit and the return to the England squad of Andrew Baggaley, has given selectors a broader range of choices.

It seems the long-standing team of Paul Drinkhall and Darius Knight is no longer guaranteed domestically or internationally, for the first time since 2006 they will not be aiming to clinch the title together. Drinkhall will join up with half of last years winning partnership, Liam Pitchford, to be ranked as top seeds. Although this is a new pairing, it is not untested as the two worked well together at the English Open.

In uncharted waters are Darius Knight with Matt Ware and Chris Doran alongside Danny Reed. Personally I am sad to see that Ware and Doran will not be heading to the table together, as when two of arguably the most vocal and enthusiastic players played alongside each other it produced some of the most compelling games for a spectator! It will be interesting to see how these two new pairs gel together, with both Knight and Reed being quieter calmer players than their new extrovert partners, there is also the fact that Ware will have to adapt to playing with a left-hander! Will it work? We will just have to wait and see.

There are a lot unknowns heading into this event, the only thing for certain is there will be new pair of title holders!

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