



## ParalympicsGB names 13 athletes in para table tennis squad for Tokyo 2020

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ParalympicsGB has selected a talented squad of Table Tennis players for Tokyo 2020 including two defending Paralympic champions.

Rio 2016 Paralympic gold medallists Will Bayley (men's class 7) and Rob Davies (men's class 1) will defend their titles and are joined by fellow Rio medallists Ross Wilson and Aaron McKibbin, who won bronze in the men's class 6-8 team event alongside Bayley.

He was involved in one of the stand-out moments of Rio 2016 when he stood on the table arms aloft following his dramatic victory over Brazilian Israel Pereira Stroh to claim a career first Paralympic gold medal.

Will Bayley said: "When I won the final in Rio I realised a dream that I had been going to sleep thinking about since I was 18 years old because it doesn't get any bigger than winning a Paralympic gold medal. I had always said to other people that I could do it but in the back of my mind I didn't know so I was relieved and a bit surprised; it was a special moment and something I will never forget.

"It means everything to me to compete for my country; to represent GB is what I live for and what I train for every day; I get an extra bit of energy and drive to go for these moments because I know these chances don't come around very often. I'm playing the best table tennis of my career so I know this is a great opportunity for me and I want to show people what I can do. It helps that I've got such amazing players around me who have got great opportunities as well and are really hungry for success. We have a team that can be really successful and that drives me on as well. I feel that I've got a lot to prove as an athlete – I still don't feel I have achieved everything I can achieve so I'm excited to try and do that."

They are joined by fellow Rio 2016 athletes Sue Bailey (formerly Gilroy), who will be competing at her sixth Paralympics, Paul Karabardak and David Wetherill, who have both been selected for their fourth Games and Ashley Facey Thompson and Jack Hunter-Spivey who will be attending their second.

Making their Paralympic Games debuts are Tom Matthews, Megan Shackleton, Billy Shilton and Joshua Stacey.

Megan Shackleton said: "It means so much to me after years of growing up watching my idols on screen and imagining myself in the team kit, to have actually earned my own kit and to be wearing it soon and representing Great Britain at the pinnacle of my sport. My family has seen the work that it has taken behind the scenes, as well as my friends and the rest of the team, and I know that everyone is going to be just as excited for me out there as I am for myself. Having gone through qualification for Rio and seen what the guys did in preparation has helped me massively; it was obviously difficult to miss out on qualification last time, but I trusted in the process that in four years' time it would all work out for me and I feel in good stead. I feel that I know what to expect and it is just about getting out there now and hopefully putting in some good performances."

Gorazd Vecko, Table Tennis Team Leader said: "After all the challenges of the last 18 months I am so proud that we have 13 athletes selected to represent ParalympicsGB in Tokyo, including four who will be competing in a Games for the first time. Together with Poland we will have the most athletes in Europe competing in table tennis in Tokyo and the fourth biggest squad in the world behind China, Korea and Brazil. This is a massive achievement and would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of everyone in our team. Our athletes have been training hard and we are fully focused on making the country proud in Tokyo."

Penny Briscoe, ParalympicsGB Chef de Mission at Tokyo 2020, said: "Table Tennis has qualified a brilliant group of athletes with an exciting mix of experience and new faces to the team."

"I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the athletes and support personnel who have worked so hard to ensure they are as well prepared as they can possibly be in these challenging times. The excitement is building as we are just weeks away from the start of the Games and I cannot wait for the action to begin."

Around 230 athletes from 19 sports are expected to make up the British team that will compete in Japan, with further names to be announced in the coming weeks.

ParalympicsGB captured the imagination of the British public at London 2012 winning 120 medals in front of sell-out crowds with countless memorable performances.

The team eclipsed that performance at Rio 2016 winning an outstanding 147 medals including 64 golds to finish second in the overall medal table. The rescheduled Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games will be staged from 24th August to 5th September.

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#### Para Table Tennis Athletes for Tokyo

##### **Aaron McKibbin:**

London (home town)

Sheffield (lives)

Events: men's class 8 singles and men's class 8 team

##### **Ashley Facey Thompson:**

London

Sheffield

Events: men's class 9 singles and men's class 9-10 team

**Billy Shilton:**

Stonehouse (Gloucester)

Sheffield

Events: men's class 8 singles and men's class 8 team

**David Wetherill:**

Torpoint

Events: men's class 6 singles and men's class 6-7 team

**Jack Hunter-Spivey:**

Liverpool

Sheffield

Events: men's class 5 singles

**Joshua Stacey:**

Cardiff

Sheffield

Events: men's class 9 singles and men's class 9-10 team

**Megan Shackleton:**

Todmorden

Sheffield

Events: women's class 4 singles and women's class 4-5 team

**Paul Karabardak:**

Swansea

Events: men's class 6 singles and men's class 6-7 team

**Rob Davies MBE:**

Brecon

Events: men's class 1 singles

**Ross Wilson:**

Minster

Sheffield

Events: men's class 8 singles and men's class 8 team

**Sue Bailey MBE:**

Barnsley

Events: women's class 4 singles and women's class 4-5 team

**Tom Matthews:**

Aberdare

Events: men's class 1 singles

**Will Bayley MBE:**

Groombridge (Tunbridge Wells)

Sheffield/Brighton

Events: men's class 7 singles and men's class 6-7 team

**About the British Paralympic Association and ParalympicsGB**

The British Paralympic Association is the National Paralympic Committee for the UK, responsible for the promotion of the Paralympic movement in Great Britain and selecting, entering and funding the Great Britain and Northern Ireland Paralympic team.

ParalympicsGB is the Great Britain and Northern Ireland Paralympic Team competing at the summer and winter Paralympic Games. We know that the outstanding performances of our athletes have a powerful impact on the British public and can shift perceptions of disability in society, helping to inspire a better world for disabled people.

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