



Payet joins Olympians for return to international circuit

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Liam Pitchford, Tin-Tin Ho and Denise Payet are back on the international circuit at the WTT Contender Budapest event, which starts in the Hungarian capital on Sunday.

Payet begins in the qualifying rounds while Ho and Pitchford are seeded into the main draw from next Tuesday – Pitchford is the top seed, ahead of the likes of Quadri Aruna of Nigeria, Ruwen Filus of Germany and India's Sathiyam Gnanasekaran.

Pitchford and Ho were last in action, of course, at the Tokyo Olympics and Liam has spoken of the importance of [getting matches under his belt](#) after a difficult build-up to the Games.

Payet is also short of matches and will go straight from Budapest to the Czech International Open – her first big competitions since the Mark Bates Ltd Senior Nationals in March 2020.

The 20-year-old from Enfield has spent much of the pandemic training at the University of Nottingham under elite sport protocols, but has since the end of term been back on home territory and training at Ellenborough TTC.

She said: "I feel quite relaxed and I'm also excited about the competitions. These are my first two competitions for a long time, so I'm going to try not to put too much pressure on myself. I'm feeling good and I think I have a different and better outlook these days. I just want to enjoy it more.

"My aim is to get into the main draw, but whatever happens will be my starting point for the year and hopefully I can go on to achieve good things throughout the year.

"It's about me showing what I have got now and trying to improve from there. I feel I'm in a good mental state and confident in myself.

Payet, who will partner Andrea Pavlovic of Croatia in the Women's Doubles, added: "Ellenborough have been so good with the booking system and helped me a lot – it's been very good to be back there and to see everyone again and I've been able to train every day.

"It's been nice to be at home as well as training hard and I think I've grown in the past month."

As well as Payet, Ho will also play in the Czech International Open in Olomouc, starting on August 21. They will be joined by Maria Tsaptsinos, Emily Bolton and Charlotte Bardsley in the women's events and Sam Walker in the men's.

Ho is likely to be fifth seed and Walker third in their respective singles competitions.

Ho & Tsaptsinos and Payet & Bardsley are the Women's Doubles combinations, while Walker will partner Sweden's Truls Moregard in the Men's Doubles. Walker & Ho are slated to enter the Mixed Doubles.

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