

2011 European Championships Preview

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The INTERSPORT 2011 European Championships begin tomorrow in Gdansk-Sopot, Poland from 8th-16th October with the English team sending seven members to compete at the event.

The favourites for the men's team title are Germany who are led by the World number three Timo Boll as well as World number 13 Dimitrij Ovtcharov. They are defending the title they won in Ostrava, Czech Republic last year.

However, before they can get their hands on the trophy they will face strong opposition from the Belarusians, the French and the Czech sides. Belarus, losing finalists last year, will boast the second highest-ranking player in Vladimir Samsonov (World number eight).

Boll will also be searching for his fifth singles title after winning last year against his teammate Patrick Baum 4-3 in the final.

The women's team title is a much closer affair with last year's champions Netherlands facing a real battle to retain their title. They will face stern opposition from Romania and Belarus, the latter powered by the 2010 European Champion Viktoria Pavlovich. They might also struggle against the host nation Poland who will look to take full advantage of home soil with a set of very dangerous players.

There will be 41 nations competing in the men's team event while 31 sides will challenge for the women's team title. This year is the last time the Championships will be played under the current format so with the number of qualification spots being reduced, there will be an extra motive for all the national associations to bring their strongest players.

The English selectors have sent Paul Drinkhall, Liam Pitchford, Darius Knight, Daniel Reed, Joanna Parker, Kelly Sibley and at short notice; Emily Bates. Last year the English team pulled off a few scalps including Pitchford's 3-2 victory over World number 115 Constantin Cioti (who was ranked over 200 places higher).

The 11,000 seat venue, the ERGO Arena, will play host to the INTERSPORT 2011 European Championships with coverage being provided online in the UK at [LAOLA1.tv](#).

The ETTA will also be providing its now usual Twitter and Facebook coverage alongside its tournament reports on the main site.

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