Andrew Baggaley looking for shocks in London

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Andrew Baggaley is sure his best times are to still to come and that's also good news for his doubles partner at this week's ITTF Pro Tour Finals at ExCel in London.

The 28 year old and his younger partner from Derbyshure, Liam Pitchford are it seems, the perfect combination, Liam 19, is the current English No 1 and Andrew the British No 1 after his success on the international scene.

It means the fans who have a ticket for today's doubles matches are certain to get value for money. Remember that two years ago the same combination took India by storm when they took the bronze medal at the Commonwealth games in Delhi.

"When we played then we got on very well, so there's no reason why we can't do the same again.," said Andrew whose world ranking has rocketed to 142 which thrust him into the British big time.

Both players have improved beyond all recognition since then, so stand by for some superb table tennis.

But the Milton Keynes player also has other ambitions – to get selected for the Olympics.

"That's the big one, no doubt about it. I'm in the best form of my life and I reckon my best year will be from now until my mid thirties.

"Everything is dropping into place. I know exactly what I have to do. I've beaten some of the world's best players but I need to get a good run – that's what I've been short of – a good run, " he says somewhat ruefully.

The Olympics is obviously the main aim for Andrew and he's hopeful that he'll get into the squad when it is announced early next year.

"It's important, of course it is, its everyone's dream to be part of the world's greatest sporting occasion. But I'm a professional and I have to look further ahead than that."

Andrew's rise through the rankings has come from his success in the various Pro Tours although his win over former world No 1 Jean-Michel Saive twelve months ago did a lot for his confidence.

"I've only been playing the Tours for a year, so compared with a lot of my colleagues I've got a lot of catching up to do.

"I've got the best years of my life still to come and I mean to make the most of them."

By Jim Beckley

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