

Champs Director welcomes School Games boost

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After yesterday's announcement from Sport England that the School Games will receive an additional £32 million boost for the tournaments between 2012–2015, we wonder what effect this will have on the table tennis event held during the Games.

The School Games can provide an important link for players to get into the national arena and gives many players a great opportunity to gain valuable tournament experience.

Diccon Gray, the 2012 table tennis Championship Director, has welcomed the extra funding with open arms.

He said: "It's terrific! It will help sustain and confirm the continuation of the School Games and enable confidence for future planning.

Table tennis has been included within the School Games since their inception. It provides table tennis with fantastic opportunities for our elite young people and great publicity and awareness for our sport within the whole school sport infrastructure which has many implications to propel table tennis forward."

The money alone, however, does not equate to an automatically successful event. Despite the funds from the Department of Health, Sport England and the National Lottery, it takes a lot of behind-the-scenes preparation to run a large national event such as the School Games.

Gray acknowledges this fact after his involvement last year proved to be an ideal opportunity to learn about the competition.

He said: "It was a learning curve for me last year. This year I am Championship Director and will play a central role. Last year's event was a big success though table tennis needs to use the games more to develop young officials."

Gray added: "A big effort goes into planning and staging the School Games. Although it is well worth it we need to be wary of our staffing capacity."

Even with the problems that an event organiser faces before, during and after this type of competition, Gray is still looking forward to the next installment of the School Games dynasty.

He beamed: "I'm absolutely looking forward to the 2012 School Games particularly as it will take place in ExCeL – the venue for the 2012 table tennis events at the Olympic Games and Paralympics.

It's a good opportunity to link the four levels from local to national competition."

For more news on the table tennis event at the 2012 School Games keep an eye on the ETTA website while for general School Games news you can [click here for the official site.](#)

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