

GB Paralympic table tennis squad announced

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Posted On: January 27, 2012



Picture courtesy of GB Paralympics

The British Paralympic Association confirmed today that the first ten table tennis players have been selected for ParalympicsGB at London 2012.

The ten players have all qualified by right through regional championships and world ranking lists and are one of the youngest squads in the world at the moment. They include Will Bayley who recently became world No.1 in his class, a feat that only one other British disabled table tennis player has achieved in recent times. They could still be joined by up to four athletes as a result of bipartite commission places when these are decided later in the year.

ParalympicsGB Chef de Mission Craig Hunter said "I'm delighted to welcome this group of athletes to ParalympicsGB. To have all ten all ranked within the top eleven in the world shows that there is real potential within this squad and tribute should be paid to the governing body for supporting the development of these athletes, six of whom will be competing in their first Paralympic Games."

The athletes have been under the guidance of Performance Manager Gorazd Vecko, who was recruited by the British Table Tennis Association for Disabled People following a disappointing performance in Beijing where the sport failed to medal, having consistently won at least two medals in the previous four Games. Vecko took over the plan prepared by his predecessor, Steve Ward, which had prepared for the sport to be based out of the EIS in Sheffield and he brought with him a new regime, even encouraging his players to move there by sharing his house with them.

Vecko commented "I am very proud that this young squad have earned their place at the Paralympic Games. Paralympic Table Tennis is very competitive and so to have this many players well placed as we go into a home Games is a great situation to be in."

The full list of players is:

Men Class 1

Rob Davies

Paul Davies

Men Class 6

David Wetherill

Men Class 7

Will Bayley

Paul Karabardak

Men Class 8

Ross Wilson

Men Class 10

Kim Daybell

Women Class 3

Sara Head

Jane Campbell

Women Class 4

Sue Gilroy MBE

The announcement tops off a great start to the New Year for Will Bayley, who in addition to securing the No.1 world ranking slot has also celebrated his 24th birthday. On hearing the news he said "I am really proud to have been selected for ParalympicsGB. Our team live and train together, and we have been working really hard to prepare for London 2012. I know that with the support of ParalympicsGB we will be well prepared for the Games.

"I am really looking forward to playing in front of a home crowd in London and playing in front of my friends and family – I will only be 40 minutes from home! It is also a really exciting opportunity to raise the profile of the Paralympics and to give people the opportunity to see what a great sport this is."

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