

Olympic Shortlist Announced

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Joanna Parker and Na Liu have made the Olympic shortlist

by Russell Moore

The London 2012 Olympic Games table tennis shortlist has been announced, which has seen the previous 16 hopefuls culled to just ten final competitors in with a chance of fulfilling their dreams and playing at the Olympics in their own backyard.

Just six men and four women remain in the hunt for Olympic places in the Team Great Britain squad which will consist of three male and three female players.

Leading the six list of six men are Andrew Baggaley and Paul Drinkhall from England. Baggaley, who turns 29 this month, has recently reached the highest world ranking of his career at 119th in the world while Drinkhall has equally continued his rise to 134th.

Joining them are Scotland's number one Gavin Rumgay as well as a trio of young English talent with Daniel Reed (21 years old), Darius Knight (21 years old) and Liam Pitchford (the youngest member at 18 years old) all still in contention for a place at the ExCeL in London's Royal Docklands this coming July.

This means unfortunately that both Chris Doran and Gavin Evans will miss out on representing their country at the Games. Both are in the process of recovering from long-term injuries and while both players are still young, they still have every chance of qualifying for Rio in 2016.

In the women's list only four hopefuls remain.

Led by England's number one and two; Joanna Parker and Kelly Sibley respectively, the four women are battling it out for just three places for London 2012.

Joining the top English pair are Ireland's Liu Na and Wales' Naomi Owen. Na was part of the squad that played at the Olympic test event as part of the exhibition at the ITTF Pro Tour Grand Finals in November while Owen has risen a dramatic 32 places in the latest world rankings – considerably helping her chances for selection in May.

The players who miss out are; England's Hannah Hicks and Emily Bates, Guernsey's Alice Loveridge and Wales' Charlotte Carey. All the four players again are very young and are likely to have better chances when the Olympic Games go to Brazil in 2016.

The final list won't be made until sometime in May during which time the players can focus on refining their games to ensure a place is guaranteed. The English National Championships are being played from 2nd-4th March (with entries still open – [click here for an entry form](#)) which could prove decisive in the selection panels decision process.

However, some of the players may qualify out of their own right when they attend the European Olympic Qualifying tournament in Luxembourg from 11th-15th April. At this event many of Britain's top table tennis talents will hope to qualify by right and forego the need to be selected by a panel of their peers.

All this information can be found on our London 2012 site which you can [access here](#).

Full shortlist (alphabetical order):

*English unless stated

Men:

Andrew Baggaley

Paul Drinkhall

Darius Knight

Liam Pitchford

Daniel Reed

Gavin Rungay (SCO)

Women:

Liu Na (IRL)

Naomi Owen (WAL)

Joanna Parker

Kelly Sibley

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