

Nationals Q&A: Andrew Baggaley

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In the run-up to the 2012 Senior National Championships we have conducted a number of question and answer interviews with the seven English players competing at the Championships this weekend who are all still part of the Olympic Shortlist.

First up is Andrew Baggaley who celebrated his 29th birthday on Sunday and has hit form to become the highest ranked British player in the world this year. A three-time National Singles Champion, Andrew is in search of more glory ahead of the Olympic Games in July.

Don't forget, all of the seven profiles can be seen on our Nationals site along with previous results and the draw for this year's event. [Click here for the Nationals website.](#)

Name: Andrew Baggaley

Age: 29

Home town/County: Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire

What are you expecting from yourself for this year's championships?

"On form I have an excellent chance to win the Men's Singles National title and this year the event forms part of my preparations for the London 2012 Olympics."

Is success the only option?

"Success at the English National Championships is certainly not my biggest priority this year as the main target is qualifying and peaking at the London 2012 Olympics. This event is England's most prestigious tournament and for me personally a very special event as I have enjoyed amazing experiences and success at these championships."

How important are the next couple of months for you?

"The entire build up in qualifying and competing at London 2012 is important. It's all about being in peak physical condition, highly confident with good performances under your belt and essentially keeping healthy and injury free."

Do you get nervous ahead of an event such as this?

"I have played well on the big stage from my junior days winning medals at the European Youth Championships to becoming Britain's leading table tennis medalist of all time at the Commonwealth Games so therefore events like the English National Championships are very exciting. I believe I thrive on the atmosphere of the big events and use the adrenalin to play at my best!"

It's a great competition to play against your peers. Who are you most looking forward to facing and why?

"It certainly adds an extra dimension to a match when you have regularly practiced/trained with an opponent and therefore when I am up against any English National team player it is guaranteed to be a good match!"

What does it take to win a title at these championships?

"I believe I know what it takes to win a title at the English National Championships having won the Men's Singles National title on three separate occasions (2002, 2008, 2010) and also the Men's Doubles National title. If you

prepare well and have total self belief in your own ability you have a massive chance to perform at your peak level.”

Finally, with all the English players improving over the last year, does that create increased pressure on yourself or do they spur you on?

“My motivation for success on the international/national stage is not motivated by other English players but by personal targets and goals. I have risen to British No.1 player by having excellent results in a relatively small amount of World/Pro Tour events and am very satisfied with my efforts, but I believe there is a lot more to come! Equally, it’s great for English table tennis to have other ambitious national team players performing well at international events; this can only be good for our sport as it will lift the overall standards and public perceptions of table tennis in the UK.”

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