

Nationals Q&A: Darius Knight

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Our second Q&A piece ahead of the Nationals is from Darius Knight. Still only 21 years old, Darius has already won one mixed doubles national title, three men's doubles titles and two under-21s Championships from the Senior Nationals.

However, the men's singles alludes the youngster from Battersea who will be hoping that this year he can 'complete the set' ahead of the Olympic Games in July.

Name: Darius Knight

Age: 21

Home town/County: London/Battersea Surrey

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

Well to go down in history, of course I want to win it but I've never been in the final before so first it would be good to get there but just to take one match at a time.

Is success the only option?

Of course... why else would I be doing this?...I wouldn't live abroad in Austria and train all these hours, live away from my family if I didn't think I could be successful!

How important are the next couple of months for you?

It's important for everyone who is trying to compete but it isn't the end of my career. I'm 21 and I'd hope I can kick off my career as a senior (no more under-21 events) in London, my home town, for the 2012 Olympics. But, it's all about delivering more in the next couple of competitions coming up. I'm in Austria working hard and planning on being here for years, I'm in a good young environment where the guys here are really hungry with some highly experienced coaches!

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

I get more nervous in England more, as everyone is here and there are more expectations but I enjoy it. I'm nervous to know the outcome of the match or competition.

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

Paul Drinkhall, well we've had many battles over the years and I think it's like a tradition that we compete in a competition if we both play in England.

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

Consistency, tactics, focus, heart of a lion and a weapon that you can count on.

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

Of course it does but only positive pressure where you have to rise up or step down. It makes me want to work harder and smarter than you do to keep up or improve more. Table tennis is a marathon not a sprint!

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