

WTTTC: The Challenge Ahead

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The Liebherr 2012 World Team Table Tennis Championships begin in Dortmund on Sunday with eight English players representing their country on one of the biggest international stages.

The question is, what challenges will the English sides face in Germany?

We already know the English men's and women's teams (Paul Drinkhall, Andrew Baggaley, Liam Pitchford, Daniel Reed, Kelly Sibley, Joanna Parker, Hannah Hicks and Jessica Dawson) but who will they face?

The men are the top seeds in their group and while they will face tough players such as Liu Song (95, Argentina) and William Henzell (152, Australia) it's against Egypt where they will face their biggest test.

The Egyptians have a number of top class players with Ahmed Ali Saleh (121), El-Sayed Lashin (137) and Omar Assar (145) all selected to make a strong trio for the English players to contend with.

If they manage to top the group, the boys will face the likes of other top seeds Romania, Brazil and Ukraine. Romania have called upon Adrian Crisan (26) who will be the highest ranked player the men are likely to face if they progress, while Brazil have called up Gustavo Tsuboi (96). Ukraine have a trio of competent players with; Yaroslav Zhmudenko (110), Oleksandr Didukh (118) and Lei Kou (142) all likely to cause problems.

The girls meanwhile are second seeds in their group to Italy. The Italians pose the greatest threat to our squad in the group stages with the others sides lacking in big name players.

However, Italy can boast Tan Wenling (98) in their ranks for the match which is scheduled for Tuesday. England will be boosted by Italy not naming Nikoleta Stefanova (96) in their team.

If the English girls win their group they might face some of the top seeds from groups F, G and H in the shape of Slovakia, Lithuania and Portugal. While Portugal have called up their top player Maria Xiao (136) both Slovakia, in Eva Odorova (102) and Lithuania, in Ruta Paskauskiene (84), have left their highest ranked players at home.

With both English teams pushing for promotion to the Championship Division you can keep track of the tournament with the [live stream on itTV](#) as well as our regular reports here on the ETTA.

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