

King's Torch Relay dream rekindled

Author: Russell Moore

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Young English international Yolanda King's Olympic dream has been rekindled after torch relay organisers changed her route to fit in with her international commitments.

The seventeen-year-old from East Sussex can now take part in both the European Youth Championships, which begin tomorrow in Schwechat, Austria, as well as the Torch Relay when she runs in Bromley on the 23rd of July.

Originally King was due to carry the Olympic Torch on the 18th of July, right in the middle of the European Youth Championships that run from July 13th – July 22nd.

After being told she would not be allowed to re-locate, the 2011 UK School Games Singles Champion was 'frustrated, disappointed and upset', but now she can look forward to a positive outcome this summer.

King said: "I have been very lucky. It is unusual for the organisers to change their minds. I'm obviously grateful and elated as it has enabled me to be able to take part in a once in a lifetime opportunity."

She added: "I don't know why they have now decided to change my slot but I'm guessing it was due to media pressure."

Her story received a lot of coverage with her appeal for help reaching the front pages of the English Table Tennis Association, the International Table Tennis Federation and the European Table Tennis Union's websites as well as an article in the Daily Telegraph among others.

When the news came, King was once again in the process of widening the reach of her appeal on BBC Radio.

She explained: "I missed a phone call from torch bearer operations last Thursday when I was training at Sheffield. It also happened to be the morning of the day I had the interview with BBC1 Radio, who were surprised to hear about the sudden change in events.

The torch bearer operations team left a message saying that they would like me to ring back to organise my torch relay slot. I was very surprised.

I rang back and they asked when I was able to run with the torch and it was organised from there. At this moment it is very unclear why they changed their minds and I doubt I'll ever know. I'm just glad they have!"

King can now look forward to competing in Austria as part of a 14 strong England squad hoping to start the summer of 2012 off with a bang.

Yolanda would like to acknowledge and recognise the work of Alan Turing (once lived in St. Leonards) in his centenary year, as his work enabled the development of modern computers, which in turn has helped her via social networks (Facebook, Twitter) and the media.

Full England EYC Squad:

Junior Boys: Sam Walker, Lewis Gray, Igor Morais and George Downing

Junior Girls: Yolanda King, Vicky Smith, Emily Bates and Jessica Dawson

Cadet Boys: Helshan Weerasinghe, Daniel Lawrence and Sam Mabey

Cadet Girls: Tin-Tin Ho, Maria Tsaptsinos and Lois Peake

By Russell Moore

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