

Doran & Walker set for Commonwealths chance

Author: **Paul Stimpson**

Posted On: **May 03, 2013**



England's Commonwealth Championships squad landed in India early on Friday morning ahead of the tournament's beginning on Sunday.

With the selectors unable to call upon Liam Pitchford or Paul Drinkhall for the men's events, the chance to shine falls to youngsters Sam Walker and Chris Doran, who have plenty to prove.

Walker, 17, has had a sensational year with impressive international performances (in Hungary and Czech Republic) capped off by a fine National Championships in March where he not only won the National Under-21s title, but also made the semi-finals of the Men's Singles.

Doran, 21, meanwhile has also stepped up a gear to earn his ticket on the plane to New Delhi with consistent domestic performances while continuing his studies at Nottingham Trent University.

The Northampton-born star not only helped his university to win the BUCS title but has also developed a substantial lead at the top of the Men's Singles rankings for the 2012-13 Grand Prix season – in the process reaching English no. 5 on the rankings list.

After meriting his place in the squad, he hopes to prove his worth in the long term: "I have played very well in the Grand Prix this season, winning four so far, but I always loved playing in any form of team events and especially pulling on the England shirt.

"There's an element of luck in the selection but you make your own luck as well and now I need to prove that I deserve this place. I'll make sure if England come calling in the future I have something to offer."

Progress hasn't always been easy for Doran with injuries affecting his recent career, but he remains positive that he can make the most of his opportunity in India.

He said: "I wouldn't like to say it's a one-shot opportunity but I guess it can be seen that way. I am in the position where, not being an automatic choice, I need to make the most of those that come my way. If I can stay injury and illness free, I see no reason why I shouldn't be aiming to get back in the England fold.

"Just to be included in India was a major privilege but now that I'm going I would love to get a medal in one of the events and I think we certainly have a team capable of doing that.

"I love playing doubles in particular as normally you are playing alone so a medal in the doubles would be especially rewarding."



It'll also be a major championships debut for Walker who remains calm despite his recent rise to the top.

He explained: "I don't see myself as being in the limelight as such. I have felt more confident in my game this season but I don't think that much has changed; I always believed I could make it into the senior squad and now I have.

"My selection has come really suddenly for me and I haven't had much time to think about the pressure of it yet, but I think we have a strong team capable of winning some medals out there."

After playing in New Delhi, Walker will head straight to Paris for the World Championships to test himself further against more top-class internationals. However, he doesn't see the short break between tournaments as any real hindrance.

He said: "It's not the best circumstance as the tournaments are so far apart [in distance], but I don't see it as an excuse to not be fully prepared. As a professional player you have to deal with these sorts of things and I still think I will be fully prepared for both tournaments.

"The next month is important as I want to do my best and get some good international results as an English senior player. I think I will need to do that to prove my selection and hopefully try and cement a place in the team.

"It'd be great for us as a team to win a medal."

The boys' biggest challenge could come from hosts India who have called upon the trio of Sharath Kamal Achanta (world rank 69), Anthony Alamraj (150) and Soumyajit Ghosh (189), while Singapore's Zhan Jian (26) and Li Hu (56) are the highest ranked players competing.

England will have a full eight-player squad for the six-day event with medals available in the Men's & Women's Team, Men's and Women's Singles, Men's and Women's Doubles and Mixed Doubles.

For the latest news on the Commonwealth Championships keep an eye on the ETTA website and follow twitter @ettatabletennis for the latest updates (time differences may affect results service).

England squads for Commonwealth Table Tennis Championships (New Delhi, India 5-10th May 2013)

Men: Andrew Baggaley, Danny Reed, Chris Doran and Sam Walker

Women: Joanna Parker, Kelly Sibley, Tin-Tin Ho and Hannah Hicks

Coaches: Jia Yi Liu, Alan Cooke and Nick Jarvis

Physiotherapist: Katharine Scullard

By Russell Moore

Downloaded From:

<https://newsarchive.tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/archived/doran-walker-set-for-commonwealths-chance>

