

Para GB stars prepare at Czech Open

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GB PLAYERS WARM UP FOR EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS AT CZECH OPEN

Paralympic medalist Jane Campbell, who won a bronze medal in London in the class 1-3 women's teams event with Sara Head, is one of four members of the GB Para Table Tennis Team Performance Squad that will compete in this week's Czech Open in Ostrava (September 12-15).

London-based Campbell will be looking for some valuable match practice ahead of the European Championships in Italy later this month having missed some of the earlier tournaments this season due to injury. She took bronze in the women's class 3 singles in Germany in June as well as gold in the women's class 1-3 teams event and is currently world ranked 7 in her class.

"I'm hoping to get some good match practice before the Europeans," said Campbell. "I played really well in my last tournament and I'm hoping that this week will reinforce that and I can go to the Europeans with confidence."

Fellow Paralympian David Wetherill, from Torpoint, also missed the early part of the season but has been in good form since his return, taking gold in the men's class 6 teams event in Germany and reaching the final of the men's class 6 singles at the Korea Open in July. In both events Wetherill recorded wins over the 2012 Paralympic champion Rungroj Thainiyom from Thailand, including an emphatic 3-0 victory in Korea.

"Competing in Ostrava will be great preparation for the European Championships," said Wetherill. "In the past I have sometimes taken a while to get the feel for playing matches in tournaments and so hopefully I can play well this week and get some momentum going into the Europeans."

Also competing in Ostrava will be two of the Performance Squad's promising young players Ashley Facey-Thompson and Jack Hunter-Spivey, who are both aged 18.

Facey-Thompson, from London, has recently moved to Sheffield to train full time at the squad's base at the English Institute of Sport and has three bronze medals to his credit this season including a bronze in the men's class 9 singles in Hungary.

Hunter-Spivey, from Liverpool, has also had some good results this season with a win over the world number 4 and bronze medals in the men's class 5 singles in both Hungary and Slovakia.

"This will be a very valuable tournament for these players," said GB Performance Director Gorazd Vecko. "Jane and David need some match practice before the European Championships and both Ashley and Jack will benefit from getting more experience against international opposition and hopefully winning a few matches."

The players from the GB Para Table Tennis Team Performance Squad competing in the Czech Republic are:

Jane Campbell (Lives: London) – Class 3

Ashley Facey Thompson (Based: Sheffield; Lives: London) – Class 9

Jack Hunter-Spivey (Lives: Widnes) – Class 5

David Wetherill (Lives: Torpoint) – Class 6

They will be joined by one of the young players from the GB Pathway Squad, 19-year-old Martin Perry, from Paisley, who will be competing in the men's class 6 event.

Written by Francesca Bullock (September 9 , 2013)

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