

# Pitchford shatters world top 100 in latest rankings

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England's no.1, 20-year-old Liam Pitchford, has reached a new career high of 54th place in the December 2013 world rankings.

The reigning National Champion's gigantic leap from 125th in November came as a result of two terrific performances on the ITTF World Tour in [Poland](#) and [Germany](#) where the youngster demolished a number of the world's top players including world no. 16 Gao Ning and world no. 18 Kenta Matsudaira.

After breaking into the world's top 100 for the first time in his career, Pitchford becomes the highest ranked Englishman since Matthew Syed (best of 24th) was positioned at the same spot in May 2001.

The Chesterfield-born star was unaware of his place in history but that didn't stop him from setting his sights on becoming just the fifth Englishman to be the new world no. 1 (after Victor Barna, Fred Perry, Johnny Leach and Richard Bergmann).

He said: "I didn't know that but it's nice to know! I have some small goals set for myself for the next months and years but ultimately I would like to be at the top of the rankings – it will be tough but nothing is impossible.

"In the past I have tended to have good wins but just one at a time. I guess now I have a lot more good practice under my belt. Also in the last year or so I have felt my level of practice has increased massively and I am feeling confident so now it's paying off!"

His outstanding World Tour form has since been carried into his domestic matches for German Bundesliga side TTF Liebherr Ochsenhausen where he has beaten both Adrian Crisan (ROU, 30) and Tiago Apolonia (POR, 36) to establish himself as a real threat on the European scene.

He said: "It is good to get the big wins in the German league and not just internationally because sometimes it can be a totally different sort of pressure. They've helped me massively and I guess it's one of the main reasons I have improved so much. It's a great set up in Ochsenhausen and I hope I stay for longer."

With the Commonwealth Games just around the corner in Glasgow 2014, the new European no. 19 admits he has now become one of the favourites for the gold medal after beating two of his main rivals, Gao Ning and Yang Zi from Singapore, in the last month.

He said: "I think I will be one of the favourites but there are a lot of strong players playing. I have beaten him [Gao Ning] twice now, but in table tennis nothing is certain. I will be going to Glasgow with a lot of confidence!"

Written by Russell Moore (December 4, 2013)

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