

# China trip sharpens up rising stars

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Maria Tsaptsinos

Four England youth players have recently returned from a month-long intensive training camp at the Shanghai University of Sport.

Tom Jarvis, Alex Ramsden, Maria Tsaptsinos, Lois Peake and National Talent Coach Matt Stanforth travelled to Shanghai as part of the Cultural Exchange Programme.

They were joined by 16 other players from across the world. Each session saw every international player train with one of the Chinese players, which included two players who were former national squad members.

The standard of practice was high, with a very high level and discipline and intensity at all times. Our players were able to play against a combination of tight and left-handers, penhold and shakehand styles, defenders and combination attackers.

Training sessions included combinations of regular and irregular training drills, mulitball and matchplay.

Our players also did additional service and receive practice and had physical conditioning each morning at 7am, covering endurance training, core stability and speed/agility.

Sessions took place from 8.30 to 11.30 and 2.30 to 5.30, six days per week, with some of the sessions not being table tennis, but Chinese language and heritage lessons.

Matt Stanforth said of the trip: "As well as the high level of training the players have been exposed to, it has also allowed them to experience the level of discipline and intensity they will need if they are to be successful senior international players of the future.

"The players worked very hard and will hopefully see the improvement they have made this season."

**By Matt Stanforth**

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