

# High-class field ready for Sainsbury's School Games

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Maria Tsaptsinos will be back to defend the singles title she won last year

Dozens of young players will be battling for supremacy on the tables when the Sainsbury's School Games 2014 gets under way in Manchester this week (September 4-7).

A high-calibre field of both able-bodied and para athletes has been assembled for team and individual table tennis competitions.

The Games give youngsters the fantastic experience of playing on a big occasion, with intense competition and a sizeable crowd expected at the venue, with Manchester Football & Tennis Centre at the Etihad complex in the shadow of the home of Premier League football champions Manchester City.

After practice sessions on Thursday, the event gets under way on Friday with the team competition, which sees five English regions take on teams from the other Home Nations.

Every team includes players with a standing disability, a learning disability and a wheelchair player, plus a team manager and non-playing captain to help with coaching and support.

The South East team will be looking for a repeat of their double triumph last year, when both the boys and girls finished top of the pile.

Danny Lawrence and Marcus Giles return this year after being part of last year's victorious team, and are joined in a strong line-up by Gabriel Achampong and Luke Savill.

The main rivals for the boys are again likely to be the Midlands, who they beat in a thrilling final last year. Tom Jarvis, Sam Mabey and Alex Ramsden survive from the 2013 team and are joined by Miles Dak Hay Chan.

On the girls' side, the champions can again call on Tin-Tin Ho – who has added a Commonwealth Games silver medal to her achievements since last year – and Lois Peake. Hiba Feredj and Ella Patel join the girls' roll-call. Jed Thirkettle, Daniel Williams and Nicko Anderson are the South East para athletes.

The final positions in the team event will be decided on Saturday afternoon, and the individual competition starts soon after and runs into Sunday.

Tin-Tin will be anxious to make amends for last year, when she suffered a surprise semi-final defeat to Yuki Wat, who then went on to be defeated by Maria Tsaptsinos in the final.

Last year's champion will not give up her trophy without a fight, and the two are seeded to meet in the final.

In the boys' contest, picking the winner is a tough task. Last year's champion Helshan Weerasinghe is not in the field, meaning the likes of Lawrence, Mabey, Jarvis and Savill will be eyeing glory – and that is not to mention the claims of Achampong, Giles, Ramsden, Alec Ward, Hugo Pang and Scotland's Alasdair Rennet, who will also be confident of making the latter stages.

The disability individual event also features some stellar names, with GB Para Table Tennis team's rising stars Billy Shilton, Daniel Bullen and Megan Shackleton in the field.

Tickets are still available for the event and can be purchased on the door or online – [click here for details](#).

Table Tennis England will provide full coverage and pictures from the event over the course of the weekend. You

can follow updates on Twitter (@TableTennisENG) or stay in touch using the hashtag #SSGtabletennis or via Facebook.

You can see a full version of the Sainsbury's School Games Table Tennis Programme by [clicking here](#)

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