

Bayley & Co can't wait to get started in China

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Will Bayley

With three days to go before the start of the 2014 ITTF Para Table Tennis World Championships the GB players are looking forward to the challenge of taking on the best players in the world in the home of table tennis.

The team arrived in Beijing on Tuesday morning and has settled in well at the Chinese Centre for Disability Sport, the impressive purpose-built venue on the edge of the city that is hosting the championships.

London 2012 Paralympic silver medalist Will Bayley sums up the mood in the team when he says that everyone is now ready for the competition to start.

"I think we've all settled in really well," said the Sheffield-based world No 2 from Tunbridge Wells. "The buzz around the camp is really positive and I'm really happy to be here.

"The facilities are brilliant – the competition hall is one of the best I've played in so I can't wait to play matches in there. China is a massive table tennis country and it is their national sport so they know what they are doing when it comes to table tennis and the environment here is perfect.

"I think it will really suit the best players in the world and that is what it should do because the World Championship is as big as it gets."

With more teams arriving every day final preparations are being made by the organisers before the tournament begins on Monday.

While Bayley competed in the Paralympic Games in Beijing in 2008, world No 1 Rob Davies is making his first visit to China and is relishing the experience.

"The jet lag strategy we followed has really worked for me and I'm really enjoying it at the moment," said the Welshman, who is bidding to add the world crown to the European title he won last year.

"I've come prepared and I'm playing well so I'm just trying to chill out and get ready for the tournament. I can't wait for it to start now.

"Training has been going really well – the staff and coaches have prepared us well and it feels like being at home to be honest, which is a good thing."

GB Performance Director Gorazd Vecko is happy with his team's preparation. "All the athletes have recovered well from the long flight here and we have had some good training sessions since we arrived," he said.

"As you would expect the facilities here are first class and ideal for players to produce their best. Now we are just waiting for the competition to start and whatever happens here it will be great experience for all the athletes as we continue to work towards Rio."

The opening ceremony takes place on Sunday and the championships begin with the group stages of the singles on Monday with the finals scheduled for Wednesday and the team competition due to start on Thursday.

The full GB squad for the World Championships is:

Will Bayley (class 7)

Jane Campbell (class 3)

Rob Davies (class 1)

Kim Daybell (class 10)

Sue Gilroy (class 4)
Sara Head (class 3)
Jack Hunter-Spivey (class 5)
Paul Karabardak (class 7)
Aaron McKibbin (class 8)

By Fran Bullock
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