

Daybell and Wilson aim for polished French performance

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Posted On: October 16, 2014



Kim Daybell (Photo courtesy of ITTF)

London 2012 Paralympians Kim Daybell (class 10) and Ross Wilson (class 8) are among a team of 10 young players who will be representing GB in the Cote d'Azur 2014 International Para table tennis tournament in Hyères les Palmiers next week (October 23–26).

Daybell, 22, a Leeds University medical student from Sheffield, impressed at the World Championships in China last month and will be looking to build on that performance in France.

"I feel the World Championships was a big stepping stone for me," said Daybell. "By making the quarter-finals and only losing to the world No 1 and No 2, I proved to myself that I can compete with the best players in the world and it has given me belief that I can go on and achieve in Rio in two years' time.

"Since the Worlds I have been training hard to compete well in France and although it has been difficult as I have resumed my studies I think I have now reached a stage where I can manage study and training in a productive way."

Sheffield-based Wilson, from Minster in Kent, will be competing internationally for the first time since winning a bronze medal in the team event at the London 2012 Paralympic Games and the 19-year-old is understandably happy to be back in action after two years on the sidelines due to a shoulder injury.

"Although I haven't been able to train full time I've still been putting in a lot of work in the gym and on the technical aspects of my game," said Wilson, "and that has improved me a lot as a player even though I wasn't able to play.

"It's been quite hard mentally getting back into full-time training but I've put in a lot of hours in the training hall and I've played a couple of national able-bodied competitions so I'm looking forward to getting out there. I'm ready for it and I'll enjoy it."

Also competing in France will be two more members of the GB Performance Squad – 19 year old Sheffield-based Londoner Ashley Facey-Thompson (class 9) and Megan Shackleton, 15, from Todmorden (class 4) – together with GB Pathway squad members Daniel Bullen, 16, from St Neots (class 5), Tom Matthews, 22, from Aberdare (class 1), Martin Perry, 20, from Paisley (class 6) and Billy Shilton, 16, from Stonehouse in Gloucestershire (class 7).

The team is completed by two self-funded players – Craig Allen from Birmingham (class 9) and Rajan Waterhouse from Bristol (class 10).

You can follow the GB Para Table Tennis Team on Twitter @gbparatt

Fran Bullock

October 16, 2014

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