

Review of 2014: Memories of a golden year for England

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The England Commonwealth Games squad

It has been an incredible year for the England squad at all levels, headlined by that memorable 1-2-3 in the Commonwealth Games mixed doubles, which led to the rare sight of three St George's Cross flags hoisted in the venue.

But that was by no means the only success for England's stars at Senior, Junior and Veteran levels, plus in the para-sport world.

Paul Drinkhall, Helshan Weerasinghe and Tom Jarvis all won international tournaments, while Drinkhall and Liam Pitchford soared into the top 50 in the ITTF world rankings. There was also a host of honours for English officials.

Here, we look back on some of the highlights of 2014, with links to our website coverage at the time.

While several individuals performed well at tournaments in the early part of the year, it was from April onwards that medal-winning performances became increasingly commonplace.

The England Girls' team of Tin-Tin Ho, Emma Torkington, Maria Tsaptsinos and Yuki Wat [scooped the bronze medal at the ISF World Schools' Championships](#) in Clermont-Ferrand.

That was the prelude to an incredible month which saw Paul Drinkhall become the first Englishman since 1996, and only the second in history, to win an ITTF World Tour event when [he won the Spanish Open](#).



Paul Drinkhall on the podium in Spain

That was followed up by the England men's team of Pitchford, Drinkhall, Danny Reed and Sam Walker [winning the Challenge Division at the World Team Championships](#) in Tokyo to ensure England will play in the top flight for the first time in almost two decades when the 2016 championships are held.

In May, Jarvis became the second Englishman to reign in Spain as he [took the Spanish Youth Open](#) title.

He followed up by helping England's boys to the [bronze medal at the Cadet Six Nations](#), held at Lilleshall, alongside Luke Savill, Alex Ramsden and Hugo Pang.

Special mentions too for Members of the Veterans English Table Tennis Society, who returned home with a [collection of medals from the World Veterans Championships](#) in New Zealand, and for Alex Mercer, who was [selected to umpire at the Youth Olympics](#).



Alex Mercer

The following month, Mercer was one of seven national umpires who [joined the ranks of the ITTF international umpires](#), while Table Tennis England Board member Mike Smith was one of three members of the table tennis family chosen to [take part in the Queen's Baton Relay](#).

Pitchford helped his TTF Liebherr Ochsenhausen team to the [final of the ETTU Cup](#), but despite an impressive win for Liam over Bojan Tokic in the second leg, he could not prevent defeat.

July saw the England team warm up for the Commonwealth Games with a [demolition of Australia at an](#)

[international match](#) in Preston. On an individual level, Sam Walker [lifted the Heritage Oil Open title](#) as the latter stages were shown on BT Sport. Kelly Sibley was runner-up in the women's event.

Up in Glasgow, the [men's team took silver medals](#) behind Singapore for the second Games running.

This was a prelude to huge success in the singles and doubles. [Pitchford took a historic first individual medal for England by claiming bronze in the singles, while the clean sweep of the mixed doubles](#) saw Paul and Joanna Drinkhall take the gold ahead of Pitchford & Tin-Tin Ho and Reed & Sibley. The series of impressive results saw [Liam and Paul move to career highs](#) in the world rankings.

They were not the only English successes at the Games, as [tournament referee Stuart Sherlock](#) had the reins of a highly successful competition.

September saw No 1 Junior Weerasinghe claim his first international title, [winning the Madeira Open](#). He followed that up with the [doubles gold and singles silver](#) in Croatia.



Will Bayley

But even that remarkable achievement was overshadowed by [Will Bayley becoming World Champion](#) in the men's class 7 event at the Para Table Tennis World Championships in Beijing.

October saw Ho and Jarvis acquit themselves well at the [Europe Youth Top-10](#). Away from the tables, our Chair Sandra Deaton was elected to head up the key [European Table Tennis Union Youth Committee](#), and umpire Mercer won the [Young Official of the Year Award](#) in the Sports Officials UK annual awards.

Paul Drinkhall came so close to following up his Spanish Open victory at the Russian Open in November, [defeating three top-25 players en route to the final](#), where he was beaten by Japan's Koki Niwa. His exploits moved him to a [career high of No 45 in the world](#).

Another notable table tennis figure from the north east, Alan Ransome, was [presented with an honorary degree by Teesside University](#) in recognition of his lifetime of service to the sport.

And in Scotland, the England squad of Chris Doran, David McBeath, Karina Le Fevre and Emma Vickers carried all before them in the [Senior Six Nations](#) to win every trophy on offer.



England's all-conquering Six Nations squad

And finally, Drinkhall this month became only the second English player to qualify for the [ITTF Grand Finals](#). Although he was beaten in the first round by Peng Tang of Hong Kong, it was a fitting conclusion to a great year.

There is plenty to look forward to next year, not least the inaugural European Games in Baku, Azerbaijan. Follow all the latest news on our website, follow us on Twitter (@TableTennisEng) or on Facebook.

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