

Helshan and Tin-Tin aim to show Mastery

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Tin-Tin Ho is aiming to defend her Junior Masters title (picture by John Upham)

The new year starts with a bang as 24 of the best young players in England travel to Harlow for the Junior Masters this weekend.

Batts TTC is the venue for girls' and boys' events which both feature 12 top players battling for supremacy in the round-robin format.

Last year's champions Helshan Weerasinghe and Tin-Tin Ho are back to defend their titles against some of the top-ranked players of the Junior age-group.

On paper at least, the boys' event is stronger, with 12 of the top 13 in the rankings set to be present in Harlow.

Among them are Marcus Giles – beaten by Weerasinghe in the final of the Junior Nationals in November – and last year's Cadet Masters winner, Tom Jarvis.

But with such an array of talent in the line-up, surprise results are almost inevitable – the other seven players to directly qualify are Sam Mabey, Danny Lawrence, Luke Savill, Gabriel Achampong, Alec Ward, Alex Ramsden and Billy Forster, with wildcard entries Hugo Pang and Omar Khassal completing the list.

The qualifying process on the girls' side of the competition has produced a more diverse field. As well as Ho, Lois Peake and Denise Payet have qualified by rights, while National champion and last year's Masters runner-up Maria Tsaptsinos relies on a wildcard.

Amy Humphreys is the second wildcard pick, while the qualifying list is completed by Olivia Churchill, Bethany Farnworth, Isabelle Joubely, Kate Cheer, Amy Blagbrough, Katie Barlow and Stephanie Cross.

The action gets under way at 11.30am on Saturday – for regular updates follow us on Twitter @TableTennisEng and check out our Facebook page.

There will also be full reports and pictures on this website.

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