

Kelly's keeping an eye on young challengers

Author: Paul Stimpson

Posted On: February 24, 2015



Kelly Sibley in action at last year's Nationals

Kelly Sibley may be No 1 seed and favourite to win the Senior National Championships Singles title, but she is taking nothing for granted.

The Leamington Spa player goes into the tournament at Redbridge this weekend looking to claim her fifth Singles title, which would put her level with Nicola Perry and Andrea Holt in third place in the all-time standings.

The absence of defending champion Joanna Drinkhall, who is expecting her first child, makes 26-year-old Sibley the only former champion in the field.

But she knows there are still players who can derail her bid to complete a nap hand of Singles titles.

"I've been working hard and putting in extra time in the gym to get myself as fit as I can be," she said.

"I feel like my table tennis is going well, I've been playing well in France and have had variation of practices, so I feel like I'm ready.

"There's more pressure being No 1 seed but I feel like I have to play my best and have to be fully concentrated because the younger girls are coming through, like Tin-Tin (Ho) and Maria Tsaptsinos.

"Hannah Hicks is a difficult opponent, you've got Karina (Le Fevre), Emma Vickers and Yolanda King – they're all capable of causing upsets, so I need to forget the seedings and focus on my game and focus point by point on what I do well."

Drinkhall's absence means Sibley will not be playing in the Women's Doubles, but she has a chance to revive memories of her Commonwealth Games bronze medal as she again partners Danny Reed in the Mixed Doubles.

"Jo is my doubles partner," she said. "When I had my hip operation, she didn't play doubles that year. We've always said we're a pair and it wouldn't feel right playing with anyone else.

"But it gives me more focus on the Singles and the Mixed Doubles. I feel ready and hopefully I'll get the results."

Paul Stimpson

February 24, 2015

Downloaded From:

<https://newsarchive.tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/archived/kellys-keeping-an-eye-out-for-young-challengers/>