

Cooke ready to play his part in Baku medal bid

Author: Paul Stimpson

Posted On: June 10, 2015

Alan Cooke believes big things lie ahead for the Team GB table tennis contingent at the European Games.

The six-time national singles champion, now national performance coach at Table Tennis England, is in Baku to support the team from the coach's seat.

And helping the players to help themselves is very much his ethos. "My role is to make them self-sufficient and able to think for themselves," he said.

"It's about empowering them to make decisions, but if there's that little thing I can say in the heat of battle which makes a difference, I will do my utmost to deliver."

Cooke has been working with the men's team for two years, having previously coached the women and, as well as the successful 2014 Commonwealth Games campaign, oversaw the men clinch promotion back to the top league at last year's World Team Championships.

"It's been an exciting challenge," he said. "We started off fantastically, getting into the top division at the Worlds and winning the medals at the Commonwealths.

"It's great to be working with the best players in the UK. They're hard-working and it's a pleasure to work with them.

"We're looking for that difference between being great players, which they are, and winning medals. It's ongoing work. They have shown they can beat the best in the world.

"There's a lot of strength in depth in Europe. Rio is a big goal and this is a great opportunity to add experience as part of one Team GB."

Cooke believes the European Games is a good addition to the sporting calendar.

"It's a new event and a new experience and it looks like a lot of teams (in other sports) will be giving their youngsters an opportunity," said Cooke.

"In table tennis that's more difficult because to get to the top takes a lot of years. Saying that, we've still got a relatively young team.

Downloaded From:

<https://newsarchive.tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/archived/cooke-ready-to-play-his-part-in-baku-medal-quest/>