



National Championships draw is revealed

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The draw has been made for the National Championships, with some intriguing matches set to thrill spectators.

The members of the England Leopards squad currently performing at the World Team Championships in Malaysia are the plum draws for the other competitors at the Hertfordshire Sports Village in Hatfield.

In the Men's Singles, Liam Pitchford, going for a fourth successive title, starts against Alim Hirji. Top seed Paul Drinkhall faces Liam McTiernan in his first-round match.

Sam Walker, the third member of the England team currently performing in Malaysia, starts his quest against Mitchell Jones. Third seed Andrew Baggaley was handed an interesting-looking tie against Para GB star Kim Daybell.

In the Women's Singles, top seed and defending champion Kelly Sibley has a bye into the second round, where she will begin her quest for a sixth title with a match against the winner of the first-round tie between Evie Collier and Karina Le Fevre. Last year's beaten finalist Tin-Tin Ho starts against Kate Hughes.

Top seed Tin-Tin Ho begins the defence of her Under-21 Women's Singles crown against Nicole Bird, while there will be a new winner of the Under-21 Men's Singles as Sam Walker is not defending the title. Top seed Tom Jarvis and last year's beaten finalist Helshan Weerasinghe receive byes into the second round, while arguably the pick of the first-round ties will see National Cadet champion Alex Ramsden take on Under-13 title-holder Ethan Walsh.

In the doubles, the defending champions start against some youthful combinations as Drinkhall & Pitchford face Harry Dai & James Garrod in the men's, while Ho & Maria Tsapsinos play Charlotte Bardsley & Sophie Barlow in the women's, which has been redrawn.

Ho and Walker, the Mixed Doubles champions last year, open their defence in the second round against the

winner's of the match between Matt Ware & Karina Le Fevre and McTiernan & Naomi Jackson.

For the first time, the event includes a Para competition, which features a number of Paralympic medallists, plus a test team event with four men's teams.

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