



Twelve GB table tennis aces named for Rio Paralympics

Author: Paul Stimpson

Posted On: March 08, 2016

The British Paralympic Association (BPA) today announced a 12-strong table tennis squad for the Rio 2016 Games.

The line-up of athletes includes current world No 1s Will Bayley and Rob Davies, with the team brimming with experience gained from London 2012.

Current Paralympic bronze medallists Paul Davies, Sara Head, Jane Campbell, Aaron McKibbin and Ross Wilson return for their second Games, while Sue Gilroy MBE, Paul Karabardak, David Wetherill and Kim Daybell proved their case in a competitive selection process and earn their place on the team.

Liverpool's Jack Hunter-Spivey also impressed during selection and is now set to make his Paralympic debut in Rio.

All the English members of the team will be in action at the PG Mutual National Championships in Hatfield – the para competitions are on Saturday March 19.

Will Bayley, the 28 year old from Tunbridge Wells now based at the EIS in Sheffield, took silver in the singles in London, losing an emotional final to double Paralympic champion Jochen Wollmert from Germany.

He has since become world champion in China in 2014, defeating Wollmert along the way, and is the current world No 1 in men's class 7.

“Being selected for another Paralympic Games means everything to me – it's my life. I love table tennis and to

be selected to compete for your country at a Paralympic Games is the pinnacle of any player's career," he said.

"London was special. It sometimes felt like an out of body experience, but I performed well under tremendous pressure. I learned so much and feel stronger mentally because of it."

Rob Davies, the 31-year-old former rugby player from Brecon, was disappointed to be knocked out of the singles competition at London 2012 in the group stages but has since fought back to become double European champion and is the current world No 1 in men's class 1.

He said: "After working so hard, it's a relief to be selected and I'm really excited to be part of the team for Rio, it's another chance for me to prove that I can produce my best on the biggest stage. Not many people get to put that GB kit on and I want to do everyone proud.

"It was London that definitely inspired me and I've improved so much since then. Before London I was an outside chance but in Brazil I will go in as one of the favourites. Like every athlete I want the gold medal but the competition will be really tough."

Penny Briscoe MBE, ParalympicsGB Chef de Mission for Rio 2016, said: "These talented players have put a huge amount of hard graft in to earn their selection, and I'm delighted to announce that they're now part of the ParalympicsGB team for Rio.

"Paralympic table tennis is fiercely competitive and huge credit should go to Performance Director Gorazd Vecko and his team who have continued to build on the work that resulted in four medals at London 2012.

"These players are very bright prospects for Rio, and behind them are the next generation of athletes for Tokyo 2020, so it's a hugely exciting time for this sport."

Performance Director Vecko said: "Four years ago we had nine players qualified for London and we now have 12 players qualified for Rio so we are in a better position than we were in 2012 when we won four medals.

"Our target is four to six medals and we are on track to achieve that. For the first time we have two athletes who are world No 1 in their class – Rob Davies in men's class 1 and Will Bayley in men's class 7 – and we have three other players in the top five in the world.

"The players are working hard and have also been training abroad which will bring them to a higher level but we should not forget that other countries are also working hard and it will be a massive challenge for us. We are doing everything we can to ensure our players are ready in September and we hope the results will be there."

Squad: Will Bayley (class 7), Jane Campbell (class 3), Paul Davies (class 1), Rob Davies (class 1), Kim Daybell (class 10), Sue Gilroy (class 4), Sara Head (class 3), Jack Hunter-Spivey (class 5), Paul Karabardak (class 6), Aaron McKibbin (class 8), David Wetherill (class 6), Ross Wilson (class 8).

Downloaded From:

<https://newsarchive.tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/archived/twelve-gb-table-tennis-aces-named-for-rio-paralympics/>