



Bayley delighted to share Nationals spotlight

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The PG Mutual National Championships includes a landmark para section this year – and world champion Will Bayley is delighted.

No fewer than eight of the Paralympics GB team for Rio will be competing – Bayley, Aaron McKibbin, David Wetherill and Ross Wilson will face each other in the men's class 6-8 competition; Kim Daybell is in the class 9-10 event; Jack Hunter-Spivey in the men's class 3-5; and Jane Campbell and Sue Gilroy in the women's class 3-5.

All the competitions are round-robin and take place on Saturday – and will be featured on our live streaming coverage from 4pm.

World champion Bayley is delighted that he and his fellow para athletes have the chance to show what they can do in front of a sell-out crowd at Hatfield.

And he believes England's success at the World Team Championships this month, and the fact that ITV4 are covering the latter stages of the Nationals, will help the sport to develop further, benefitting both able-bodied and disability players.

"It's great to compete here and to show how far we've come in the last few years," said the 28-year-old from Tunbridge Wells.

"Able-bodied player winning medals would really help to push our sport forward, and more TV time would as well. If a sport's in the public eye, people take a massive interest in it, but we go a bit under the radar at the moment."

The Nationals for Bayley is another stop on the road to Rio, where he will be looking to add Paralympic gold to the silver and bronze medals he won at London 2012, plus that world title he won in China in 2014.

"Winning the Worlds was a special one because you never know if you're going to be one of the best in the

world,” he said. “When you’re training, you tell yourself you can be and that you can beat anyone, but deep down you don’t really know.

“If I could have a perfect year, it would be to win every tournament between now and Rio and then to win Rio, but it’s not as easy as that.

“If I lost every match between now and Rio but then won the gold, I’d snap your hand off – I’d take that, 100%, because the gold is something I’ve always wanted.”

Recently Will Bayley joined the TableTennisDaily podcast where he talked about his life as a world class disability athlete and his preparations for the Rio Paralympics – you can listen to the podcast below.

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