



English school teams ready to take on the world

Author: Paul Stimpson

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London Academy and Grantham College will represent the English Schools' Table Tennis Association (ESTTA) in the International School Sport Federation (ISF) World Schools' Table Tennis Championships in Israel next week.

This is the second successive ISF Championships where the Academy has been selected to represent their country – they are once again looking forward to the challenge.

London Academy will be represented by Theo Achampong, Eren Gozcu, Omar Khassal and Valentin Sepsi and Grantham College by Emily Bolton, Beth Cook and Grace Potter in the nominated School Team competitions.

They will be joined by Kate Cheer (Ifield Community College), Gauri Duhan (Hymers College, Kingston upon Hull), Letitia McMullan (Barton Peveril College, Eastleigh) and Denise Payet (Enfield County School) in the Girls' Nationally Selected Team event – an event in which the England team won bronze two years ago in France

Meanwhile, Billy Forster (Egglescliffe Sixth Form College, Stockton), Tom Jarvis (Skegness Grammar School), Alex Ramsden (Northampton School for Boys) and Alec Ward (Middlesbrough College) make-up the Boys' Nationally Selected Team.

Teams from Armenia, Belgium French Community, Brazil, Bulgaria, China PR, Chinese Taipei, Czech Republic, England, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, India, Ireland, Israel, Poland and Turkey will take part in the event in Eilat from April 2 to 8.

Umpires Nico Caltabiano and Alex Mercer will also be in the English contingent.

It was a Patronage event organised by ESTTA in 1993 in Birmingham that persuaded the ISF to add the sport of Table Tennis to its regular biennial calendar of some 13 sports.

This six-day team and individual event, including opening and closing ceremonies together with a cultural visit and activities, complements the ESTTA programme of team, individual and Home Country international championships.

Gail Johns, in her new role as ESTTA Head of Delegation, having attended all previous events as a Non Playing Captain said: "I am particularly hopeful that the Girls' National Team of very experienced players could gain a medal position – but first they have to overcome teams from China PR, France, Guatemala and India in their group.

"Similarly, the Boys' National Team led by Tom Jarvis who is the current ESTTA Under 19 Individual Champion, will be looking to qualify from their group which includes teams from China PR, Israel, Brazil and India to reach the knockout stages of the competition."

The Girls' School Team are in the same group as Chinese Taipei, Greece, Armenia and Israel II, while the boys will play Czech Republic, Belgium and Poland.

Johns added: "The School Teams will also face stiff competition – there are no easy matches at this level of competition but both have capable, well balanced squads supported by experienced Non Playing Captains."

ESTTA acknowledges the support from Butterfly, Heritage Oil and Table Tennis England, without which participation in this prestigious event would not be possible.

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