



Daybell benefits from full-time approach

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The Paralympics get under way on Wednesday, with 13 Paralympic GB table tennis players travelling with high hopes of a big medal haul.

Continuing our countdown to the big day, today we feature four players who will play in both singles and team events, including Ashley Facey Thompson, who was a late addition to the squad, benefiting from the ban on Russian athletes.

Kim Daybell (24, Sheffield)

Classes: SM10 and TM9-10

"I feel the best prepared physically and mentally that I can be going in to Rio. The experience of London is going to help massively. I thought I was ready for London but we've come a long way since then – particularly off the table.

"Everything surrounding us is really professional and every part of our lives is taken care of and I feel that we are in good shape.

"Having been able to train full time in the last year I have really been challenging the best players; I've beaten some of the top players and I feel comfortable in their company and I think that puts me in good stead.

"We've all got lots of expectations but I just want to go and do myself proud and my country proud. I want to play at the level I know I can play at and if I do that I don't see why I can't be in among the medals."

Ashley Facey Thompson (21, London)

Classes: SM9 and TM9-10



"It was frustrating to miss out on qualification by one point and now to be in the team for Rio is amazing.

"I've been training with the rest of the team throughout the summer so I feel prepared but now I've been selected and I'm in the team I feel really happy.

"The Paralympic Inspiration Programme in London helped me a lot and that was great preparation for Rio but to be a Paralympian is going to be great.

"Words can't describe how I feel to have the opportunity to represent GB at a Paralympic Games – especially for my Mum and my family and everyone who has helped me.

"I'm really excited but I'm going out there to do a job and represent my country so I'm going to enjoy the experience but also do what I need to do, which is play my best table tennis and give it 100%."

Paul Davies (age 49, from Bridgend)

Classes: SM1 and TM1-2

Won singles bronze at London 2012



"I'm training hard as usual and I'm on target after recovering from injury so I can't wait – bring it on.

"In London the public was behind us whereas in Rio they will be behind the Brazilians, which is understandable. If I can block out 6,000 people in the Excel in London then it is not going to bother me in Rio no matter how noisy the crowd is.

"I'm looking forward to the challenge. I would be lying if I said that I didn't want to bring home a medal but getting selected is an achievement after what I've been through so a medal would be the icing on the cake."

Rob Davies (32, Brecon)

Classes: SM1 and TM1-2



“I’m really happy with how everything has gone with my preparation. I don’t think it could have been any better – everything has come on in leaps and bounds.

“The coaches and the rest of the team behind the team have upped their level as well and that has made a massive difference and I’m hoping that is going to make a difference out in Rio. I’m feeling fit and ready and I want to get out there now.

“I’m in a completely different place to where I was in London – I’ve got to use that disappointment of the loss I had there to fire myself up. I don’t want to be in that position again. I’m looking forward to going out there and making it a different ending.”

The table tennis tournament begins on Thursday – reports on this website and keep an eye on our Twitter feed for the latest news.

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