



## Young Ambassador Blogs #1 – Kin Fung Chan

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**Posted On:** [September 15, 2016](#)

In the early summer of 2016, I applied to become one of Table Tennis England's Young Ambassadors, with the intent of shaping table tennis amongst a generation up and down the country. Having played table tennis for over 7 years now, I thought it would be a great opportunity to make an impact on a sport that I am passionate about. Whilst applying for the role, I had my CV in mind, knowing how it may improve job prospects in the future. When I received the phone call about my successful application, I was elated and eager to get started.

On Saturday the 10<sup>th</sup> of September, I travelled to Willen Lake Watersports Centre to be greeted by other selected Young Ambassadors as well as Caroline Howkins; the Children & Young People Manager at Table Tennis England. I was happy to see some familiar faces, but a relaxed atmosphere allowed everyone to feel comfortable as we began to find out more about each other. With my new peers coming from different parts of the country it was interesting discussing and listening to their experiences as well as being able to share some of mine.

Despite the heavy rain and cloudy setting, everyone was still enthusiastic to get outside and start our team building exercise of designing and building a raft consisting of barrels, wood logs and rope. We received a "crash course" in creating the rafts and then split up into two teams of four and five. My team consisted of Hugo, Simon and Carys, with a four man team we had the disadvantage of having less people to build, but this would soon turn into an advantage as we soon found out. With a little guidance from the staff at the Lake, both teams managed to get their rafts tied up and ready to go. There was a sense of anxiousness amongst both teams as the rafts were lifted into the water. The first step in the murky Willen Lake water sent shivers down my spine as I, as well as other ambassadors found out how cold the water truly was, even in summer. With four in my team it was clear what the seating plan would be with one person in each corner, however the other team had five. This was unfortunate for our rivals with Paul spending more time in the water rather than on the raft. Following a bit of shouting and screaming, both teams seemed to find their bearings and how to manoeuvre the rafts. This allowed us to have a quick game which consisted of throwing an American football into the square shaped gap created between each of the rafts. This led to some frantic paddling, as well as paddles being swung around in the air in a bid to hit the football. Despite being on the losing team, I found the activity extremely entertaining

and definitely worthwhile even with the onslaught from the clouds.

After cleaning up, and getting rid of the never ending mud and stones in our shoes we congregated in the adjacent pub to sit down for a well-deserved lunch. During lunch we got time to find out even more about each other with a spectrum of stories being told. In the afternoon, we took the official photos as well as recording an introduction video. Throughout the filming of the video we did not have one clean run-through without one of us bursting out into laughter or forgetting our lines, but this just added to the hilarity of the day. Some of us were much more comfortable in front of the camera...Omar..., but everyone seemed to come out of their shell in the end. Following an eventful photoshoot, we sat down to brainstorm some ideas for our branding and designing of a kit. We all agreed on the name of Young Ambassadors as it portrays us for who and what we truly are. Succeeding this we debated how we could present table tennis in a better light for the younger generation with aid of social media. A variety of memorable hashtags were created, my favourite being #OurVoiceYourChoice. Everyone around the room seemed passionate to really make an impact on changing people's perceptions of table tennis to a more respected and professional sport.

As the meeting came to an end, there was a real sense of satisfaction as the day had been very productive. I personally felt pleased with the start that had been made and optimistic for what lies ahead. Our bid to change a generation's attitude with the use of the sport table tennis has just begun and I am sensing a more pro-active future.

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