



## Drinkhall 'honoured' by place in new league

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Paul Drinkhall will battle some of the biggest names in the world for a share of a \$1.5 million prize fund in a new table tennis league launching next year.

The England No 1 is among 13 players announced to compete in the T2 Asia-Pacific Table Tennis League in Hong Kong in 2017.

A total of 24 players – 12 men and 12 women – will make up the field for the inaugural event, reputed to be the richest in table tennis history, and which promises a series of innovative features.

These include a player draft system, time limits on matches and a 'unique' scoring system which is said to provide a level playing field and ensure matches are more unpredictable.

Drinkhall was among five male players announced, alongside former world No 1 Vladimir Samsonov of Belarus, Joo Saehyuk of Korea, Chen Chien-An of Chinese Taipei and Russia's Alexander Shibaev.

Drinkhall said it was Samsonov who first approached him about competing and added:

"I don't know the whole format yet but I'll be going out there about once a month from June, and five or six times in total. There's going to be some good matches and individual results are going to add up to team results as well.

"I'm all for trying new things which make the sport better for spectators – and they've said they are going to make it quite a spectacle. If it takes off, which I think it will, it will be good to be part of something that will really raise both my profile and the sport's profile.

"It's an honour to be asked, and I can't wait to compete."

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