



Shilton and Matthews join performance squad

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European medallists Tom Matthews and Billy Shilton have been named in the British Para Table Tennis Performance squad for 2017.

Matthews, 24, joined the British Pathway squad in 2013 and partnered Paralympic champion and fellow Welshman Rob Davies to win the men's class 1 European team title in 2015, having also taken bronze in the singles event.

After narrowly missing out on qualification for Rio 2016 he missed most of last year after breaking his leg in the spring but returned in December to take gold in the US Open, beating the Korean world No 5 and Rio bronze medallist KiWon Nam in the final.

Shilton, 18, also joined the Pathway squad in 2013 and made rapid progress to take bronze in the men's class 7 singles and silver in the men's class 7 teams at the European Championships in 2015. The Gloucestershire teenager missed out on Paralympic qualification after being reclassified as a class 8 athlete but went to Rio as part of ParalympicsGB's Paralympic Inspiration Programme.

BPTT Performance Director Gorazd Vecko said:

"Both Tom and Billy have been selected for the Performance Squad because of the potential they have shown over the last two years.

"Tom just missed qualification for Rio and then lost eight months away from the table following an accident but before that he had beaten top 10 players in the world and was starting to beat top five players in the world.

"His performance in winning gold in Las Vegas in December showed that he will soon become a World top 10 athlete. I believe that Tom will be a future medallist for GB in major championships and he is a great prospect for Tokyo 2020.

"Billy has been part of the programme now for the last four years and he has shown consistent improvement. He moved to Sheffield last year, which was the first big step for him towards joining the Performance squad, and now he has shown that he is a performance athlete and he understands what he needs to do to be a future medallist at the major competitions.

"He also played really well in the US Open at the end of last year and it is looking strong for the programme that we can take players from the Pathway squad to the Performance squad and this is how it should work."

The full BPTT Performance Squad for 2017 is:

Will Bayley MBE (class 7)
Paul Davies (class 1)
Rob Davies MBE (class 1)
Kim Daybell (class 10)
Ashley Facey Thompson (class 9)
Sue Gilroy MBE (class 4)
Jack Hunter-Spivey (class 5)
Paul Karabardak (class 6)
Tom Matthews (class 1)
Aaron McKibbin (class 8)
Megan Shackleton (class 4)
Billy Shilton (class 8)
David Wetherill (class 6)
Ross Wilson (class 8)

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