



Paralympic champs lead squad for Germany

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Paralympic champions Will Bayley and Rob Davies head a team of 13 British athletes that will compete in this week's PTT Bayreuth Open in Germany.

The squad also includes Rio team bronze medallists Aaron McKibbin and Ross Wilson as well as recent World Team medallists Paul Davies, Tom Matthews, David Wetherill, Paul Karabardak, Martin Perry and Megan Shackleton.

Bayley took bronze in the Slovenia Open last month – his first international competition since the Rio Paralympic Games – and is hoping to build on that performance in Germany.

"Training has been going really well," he said. "I'm playing well and practising hard. I was a bit disappointed with the way I played in Slovenia but it was good to get some match practice under my belt and feel that I can progress and start to play some of my best table tennis."

"I'm hoping to have a good run in the singles in Germany; it will be a tough tournament because there are lots of good players so I'll take it one match at a time and hopefully get some good match practice and get some confidence before the Europeans."

Davies was beaten in the final of the Slovenia Open by the experienced Italian Andrea Borgato and is focused on retaining his European title in September.

"Training has been going pretty well," said the Welshman. "I've just been enjoying my table tennis and trying to improve my level."

"I was quite happy with Slovenia – it was my first competition since Rio and I didn't expect to get to the final if I'm truthful so I was happy with silver and I'd like to go one better in Germany."

"I'm going there to have fun, enjoy my table tennis and do my best. Hopefully that will take me to the final – that is where I want to be and winning the gold medal if possible."

"Germany will be a tough test for the players," said British Para Table Tennis Team Performance Director, Gorazd Vecko. "We are preparing them for the European Championships in September so this is still early in the season but performances here will show us how we stand with the other nations and what we need to work on over the next few months."

The full squad is:

Rob Davies – Class 1 (Brecon)
Paul Davies – Class 1 (North Cornelly)
Tom Matthews – Class 1 (Aberdare)
Megan Shackleton – Class 4 (Todmorden)
Paul Karabardak – Class 6 (Swansea)
Martin Perry – Class 6 (Paisley/Sheffield)
David Wetherill – Class 6 (Torpoint)
Fliss Pickard – Class 6 (Burnley)
Will Bayley – Class 7 (Tunbridge Wells/Sheffield)
Aaron McKibbin – Class 8 (London/Sheffield)
Billy Shilton – Class 8 (Stonehouse/Sheffield)
Ross Wilson – Class 8 (Minster/Sheffield)
Ashley Facey Thompson – Class 9 (London)

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