

English Open named best of the season by ITTF

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Paul Drinkhall at the 65th English Open in Sheffield

The UK's first Pro Tour table tennis event for over 10 years, the English Open, which was supported by UK Sport's National Lottery funded World Class Events Programme last year, has been awarded the International Table Tennis Federation's (ITTF) trophy for the best Pro Tour event of the 2009/10 season.

The ITTF uses a standard scoring system to assess all of its events with the highest score ever attained being 9.0. The Pro Tour hosted in Sheffield last year scored 8.8 to take the trophy which was presented by Adham Sharara, the ITTF President, to Alex Murdoch, English Table Tennis Association (ETTA) Chairman, and Mike Holt, ETTA Vice Chairman (Marketing).

Holt said: "This is a tribute to everybody who worked on the event and it was well deserved for the team effort that everybody put in."

The English Open event was up against stiff competition from the likes of Germany, China, Japan, Korea and many other countries who staged events throughout the 2009/10 season.

UK Sport's Events Consultant Esther Nicholls said: "This award is well deserved by the ETTA, who delivered an excellent all round event in partnership with UK Sport, Sheffield City Council and Yorkshire Forward.

"The event was possible due to the catalyst of the London 2012 Games. This recognition achieved by ETTA bodes well for the sport's future prospects of bringing world class table tennis events to the UK, which is great news for our athletes ahead of London, as well as for building capacity within the sport to stage events up to 2012 and beyond."

The ITTF has already allocated the ETTA a date in January 2011 to host another Pro Tour event and a bid is underway to host a disability table tennis competition in the same year.

UK Sport, via its Lottery funded World Class Events Programme, is aiming to bring 60 major sporting events to the UK between 2010 and the beginning of the Games in 2012, in what is thought to be the most comprehensive lead in events programme any host Olympic nation has staged.

Events being hosted across the UK in the next two months alone include the Laser World Championships in Largs, the Wheelchair Basketball World Championships in Birmingham, the Samsung Hockey Champions Trophy in Nottingham, the Triathlon World Championship Series in London and the Disability Athletics Challenge in Gateshead.

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