



England line-up revealed for Team World Cup

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Posted On: January 16, 2018

Four teenagers feature in a 10-strong England squad for the ITTF Team World Cup at the Copper Box Arena.

Tom Jarvis, 18, is in a strong men's line-up, alongside Paul Drinkhall, Liam Pitchford, Sam Walker and David McBeath.

England No 1 Tin-Tin Ho, 19, leads the women's squad and is joined by Kelly Sibley and Maria Tsaptsinos, plus 16-year-old Denise Payet and 15-year-old Charlotte Bardsley.

They will take on 11 of the world's top teams in the prestigious event, which is from February 22-25 at the iconic London 2012 venue on the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

It kicks off a busy period for the England stars, including the Commonwealth Games in Australia in early April. The full team for that event will be named in the next few weeks, Drinkhall and Pitchford having already been confirmed.

The players are relishing the chance to step out in front of a big home crowd in a venue dubbed the Box That Rocks during the Olympics and Paralympics.

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Pitchford, part of the trio who won World Team Championships bronze in 2016, said:

It's always nice to compete in front of a home crowd, I'm really looking forward to it.

Anything is possible after the World Championships bronze medal, we proved on our day we can compete with any country in the world.

It's not going to be easy, the countries at the World Cup are very strong, but if we are in good shape and prepared well, we can definitely get to the quarter-finals – and then we'll see.

Ho, who will be playing not just in her home country but also in her home city, said:

I'm really excited because we get to play the best players in the world in London. It will be such a cool experience.

Hopefully we can get some upsets if we perform to our best and as a team. We've got a good team spirit, so we can put pressure on our opponents – and having a home crowd will help us.

I'm really excited for my family and friends as well, to be able to come and support us. My family always watch online when I play abroad so it will be nice for them to experience the atmosphere.

Sibley, who played at the London 2012 Olympics, added:

It's fantastic to be playing in such a huge event as the Team World Cup on home soil. It brings back memories of the London 2012 Olympics, even more so because it's being held at the Copper Box on the Olympic Park.

It's an amazing opportunity for us. We'll be going into the competition as one of the underdogs and whoever we get to play in the draw is going to be tough. We're going to have to produce some high-level table tennis to get close to them, because they are the top players in the world.

Table Tennis England Head of Talent & Performance, Simon Mills, said:

We're taking the opportunity of the biggest event in England to support our players' preparations for the Commonwealth Games and providing an opportunity for some of our younger players to be exposed to the best in the world in their home environment.

The other competing nations have named their squads, and it is shaping up to be a thrilling event featuring some of the biggest names in the sport.

They include the 14-year-old Japanese phenomenon Tomokazu Harimoto, while Germany have named world No 1 Dimitrij Ovtcharov and world No 3 Timo Boll. The women's event also features some strong line-ups, notably Japan and Singapore.

[Click here to view the squads](#)

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