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NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS



University of
Nottingham Sport



David Ross Sports Village,
University of Nottingham
March 3-5, 2017



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#PGMutualNationals

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Sandra Deaton

Chairman, Table Tennis England



I am very pleased and honoured to be able to extend a warm welcome to our players, their coaches, families, friends, officials, volunteers, partners and spectators.

The PG Mutual National Championships, this year here at the University of Nottingham, is our premier national event and it is wonderful to be able to provide such a stage to showcase our elite athletes.

Being invited to play in this event is in itself an honour and a tribute to the years of practice, training and dedication our athletes have already committed to be the best in the country.

I am pleased that this year we are able to extend the invitation to an equal number of men and women, as well as inviting some of our most successful Paralympians to take part. It truly is a celebration of the diversity of talent we have across the depth and breadth of our sport.

We are always looking at ways to improve the presentation of our sport and these Championships and we are excited that we have re-introduced the group singles and added the excitement of wild-card entries.

We are also pleased to be working with SportBible so we can capitalise on the reach of the media, and broadcast coverage of the final matches to a wider audience around the world.

The strength of our sport begins with our clubs and leagues and we never underestimate the importance of this structure. The Pride of Table Tennis Awards, which received a huge number of entrants, will take place during the weekend, rewarding and recognising the importance of our volunteers.

These events would not take place without the assistance and support of many people. Our thanks go to officials, volunteers, partners, and Table

Tennis England staff for their work at this event.

A particular vote of thanks is owed to Mike Perry of PG Mutual who has returned for a second year to sponsor our National Championships.

I hope you all have a very enjoyable weekend.



Mike Perry
CEO, PG Mutual



It is a privilege to welcome you to the PG Mutual Nationals 2017.

You may ask yourself, why do PG Mutual sponsor the Table Tennis National Championships?

Of course there are commercial reasons which benefit PG Mutual. We know the exposure of our Income Protection Plus product, which assists many families when an income is lost, can gain more interest via the PG Mutual website.

However, Table Tennis is a great example of a sport that can be enjoyed by all ages, abilities and is suitable for our key audience, families.

By sponsoring the National Championships, we are supporting table tennis, which has previously

struggled for national recognition and regular TV coverage, but which still continues to grow in popularity within the UK and remains a beneficial sport for health as well as developing long-standing friendships.

Coaches, volunteers and parents, with the support of Table Tennis England, are building on the international successes at the World Championships and

Rio 2016.

I hope this helps answer the question, please have a look at the PG Mutual website, thank you for your support by attending the PG Mutual Nationals and I look forward to seeing you over the three days.



Dan Tilley

Director of Sport, University of Nottingham



Welcome



The University of Nottingham is incredibly excited to be hosting the 2017 PG Mutual National Championships here at our new flagship £40 million venue.

Here at University of Nottingham Sport, we are very proud of our sector-leading table tennis performance programme and world-class competition facilities and it is an honour to be chosen as the 2017 venue by Table Tennis England.

For our students and coaching team competing over the weekend, the opportunity to compete in front of a home crowd is invaluable. For our aspiring players, the chance to watch the country's top players in action at the PG Mutual

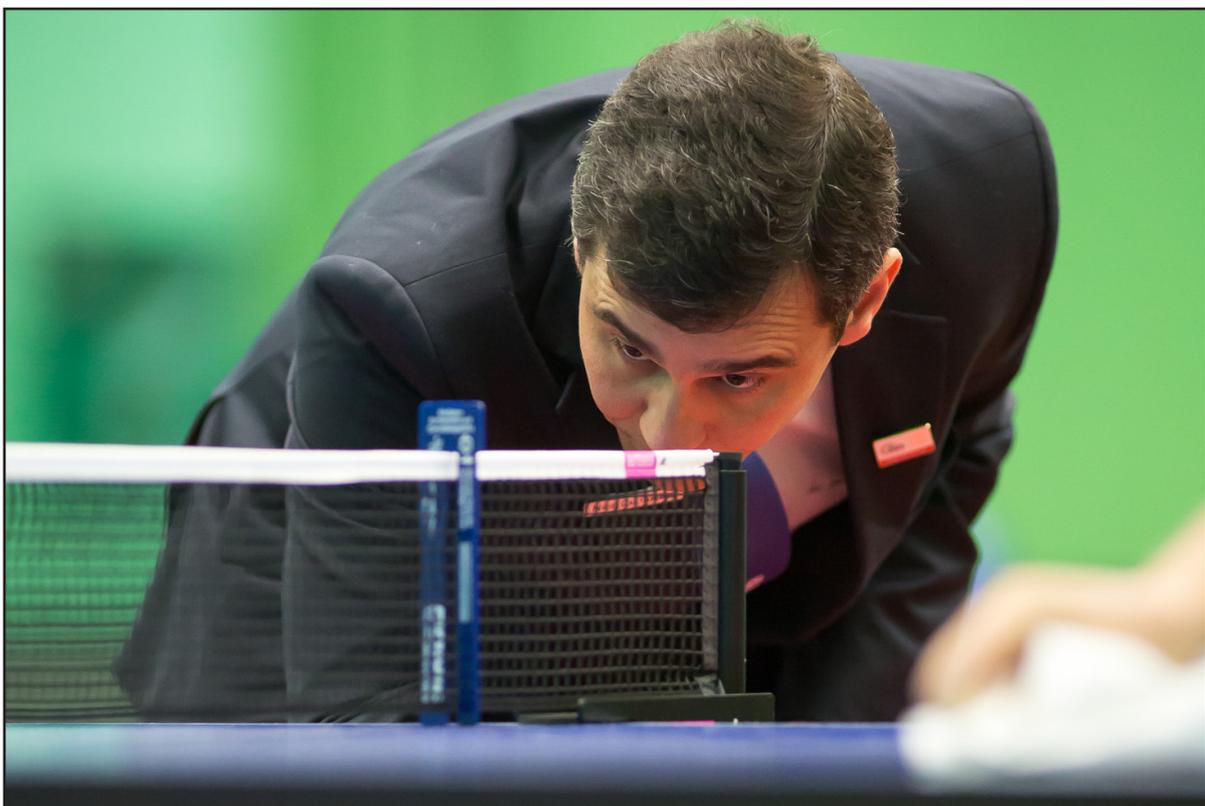
Championships is hugely inspirational.

We have a great partnership with Table Tennis England and are very grateful for their continued support. Moreover we'd like to express our thanks to PG Mutual, who are an integral part of making this event a success.

On behalf of the university, may I welcome all the players, coaches, support staff and spectators to the David Ross Sports Village and wish you all a successful tournament and visit to Nottingham.



**University of
Nottingham Sport**



Patron

HM The Queen

Programme editor: Paul Stimpson

Contributor: Diane Webb

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Table Tennis England

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Alex Mercer, Kim Mudge, Eric Pentland,
Lynda Reid, Joshua Reynolds, Derek Sidaway,
Lester Smith, Russell Sutcliffe, Alan Thomas,
Brian Watkins.

Photography and filming

By purchasing a ticket, all spectators have agreed that they may appear in event photographs and/or TV broadcasting. Should anyone feel uncomfortable about this, or wish to report any concerns, please speak to your nearest volunteer or staff member.

Please note, flash photography is prohibited.

Live streaming of this event via Periscope or similar platforms is strictly prohibited. Anyone found doing so may be asked to leave the venue.



Friday March 3

1pm	Under-21 Men's Singles group match 1 Under-21 Women's Singles group match 1
2pm	Under-21 Men's Singles group match 2 Under-21 Women's Singles group match 2
3pm	Under-21 Men's Singles group match 3 Under-21 Women's Singles group match 3
4pm	Under-21 Men's Singles round 1; Under-21 Women's Singles round 1
4.45pm	Men's Singles group match 1; Women's Singles group match 1
5.45pm	Men's Singles group match 2; Women's Singles group match 2
6.45pm	Men's Singles group match 3; Women's Singles group match 3
7.45pm	Men's Doubles last 16; Women's Doubles last 16

Saturday March 4

9am	Mixed Doubles last 16
9.30am	Men's Singles last 16; Women's Singles last 16
11am	Under-21 Men's Singles quarter-finals Under-21 Women's Singles quarter-finals
11.45am	Mixed Doubles quarter-finals Para events start
12.15pm	Men's Doubles quarter-finals; Women's Doubles quarter-finals; Para matches
1.45pm	Under-21 Men's Singles semi-finals Under-21 Women's Singles semi-finals Para matches
3.15pm	Mixed Doubles semi-finals
3.45pm	Men's Doubles semi-finals; Women's Doubles semi-finals
4.15pm	Men's singles quarter-finals; Women's singles quarter-finals; Para matches (also at 5pm, 5.45pm and 6.30pm)
7.15pm	Under-21 Men's Singles final; Under-21 Women's Singles final
8pm	Presentations

Sunday March 5

9.30am	Women's Singles semi-final 1
10.15am	Men's Singles semi-final 1
11am	Women's Singles semi-final 2
11.45am	Men's Singles semi-final 2
12.30pm	Mixed Doubles final
1.15pm	Women's Doubles final
1.45pm	Presentations
2.15pm	Men's Doubles final
3pm	Women's Singles final
4pm	Men's Singles final
5pm	Presentations

Please note, exact times may vary. See draw pages in this programme for full details

Men's Singles



Paul Drinkhall
 Aged 27, from Loftus
 Seeded: 1

In Rio last year, Paul became only the third Brit ever to reach the last 16 of the Olympic Games singles.



Liam Pitchford
 23, Chesterfield
 Seeded: 2

Liam became the first English athlete to win an individual Commonwealth Games medal at Glasgow 2014.



Sam Walker
 21, Worksop
 Seeded: 3

Sam's dramatic victory over Simon Gauzy of France put GB into the team quarter-finals at the Rio Olympics.



David McBeath
 24, Southampton
 Seeded: 4

Notched his biggest career win in November, beating world No 24 Maharu Yoshimura at the Swedish Open.



Tom Jarvis
 17, Skegness



Helshan Weerasinghe
 19, Tonbridge



Michael O'Driscoll
 45, Shepreth



Craig Bryant
 31, Crawley



Matt Ware
 26, Poole



Lorestas Trumpauskas
 47, Berrmondsey



Kim Daybell
 24, Sheffield



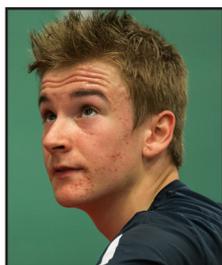
Adam Harrison
 20, Grantham



Luke Savill
 17, Maidstone



Gabriel Achampong
 19, Edgware



Matt Leete
 17, Grantham



Alim Hirji
 27, Totteridge



Jack Bennett
 19, Eastbourne



Stephen Beerling
 34, Hertford



Andrew Baggaley
 34, Milton Keynes
 Seeded: 5

Has represented England at every Commonwealth Games since table tennis was introduced in 2002.



Chris Doran
 25, Cogenhoe
 Seeded: 6

Chris reached the quarter-finals of the World Championships of Ping Pong in January.



Danny Reed
 27, Hutton Rudby
 Seeded: 7

His bronze alongside Kelly Sibley at the 2014 Commonwealth Games ensured England completed a podium 1-2-3.



Darius Knight
 27, Battersea
 Seeded: 8

A European Junior and Youth Olympic champion, Darius made his senior England debut at the age of just 14.



Mohammed Emran Hussain
 25, Poptar



James Hobson
 17, Wakefield



Liam McTiernan
 21, Reading



Dominic Sussex
 22, Plymouth



Mitchell Jones
 19, Marston Moretaine



Alec Ward
 17, Middlesbrough



Josh Bennett
 17, Eastbourne



John Taylor
 35, Nottingham



Ethan Walsh
 14, Stevenage



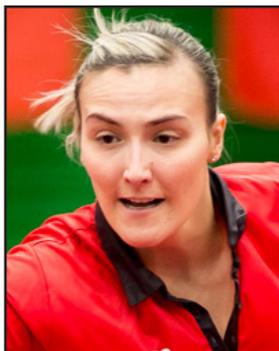
Joe Clark
 16, Billingham

Men's Doubles pairings

Paul Drinkhall & Liam Pitchford
 David McBeath & Sam Walker
 Danny Reed & Darius Knight
 Alim Hirji & Mohammed Emran Hussain
 Tom Jarvis & Helshan Weerasinghe
 Luke Savill & Matt Ware
 Jack Bennett & Josh Bennett
 Shaquille Webb-Dixon & Matt Leete

Craig Bryant & Lorestas Trumpauskas
 Dominic Sussex & Mitchell Jones
 Shayan Siraj & Harry Dai
 Luke Walsh & Ethan Walsh
 Mike O'Driscoll & Chris Doran
 Liam McTiernan & Gabriel Achampong
 Joe Clark & Olly Tyndall
Draw on page 24

Women's Singles



Kelly Sibley
 Aged 28,
 from Leamington
 Seeded: 1

Only two women in history can boast more than London Olympian Kelly's five national singles titles.



Tin-Tin Ho
 18, Paddington
 Seeded: 2

A Commonwealth Games silver medallist in 2014, Tin-Tin won six of the seven national singles titles available to her last year.



Karina Le Fevre
 23, Stockton-on-Tees
 Seeded: 3

An England regular and part of the squad which performed well at the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealths.

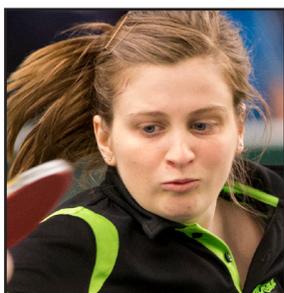


Maria Tsaptsinos
 19, Reading
 Seeded: 4

The reigning U21 national champion Maria has won the last two Women's Doubles titles, alongside Tin-Tin Ho.



Emily Bolton
 19, Askam-in-Furness



Abbie Milwain
 22, Derby



Evangeline Collier
 22, Brentwood



Kate Cheer
 16, Crawley



Charlotte Bardsley
 14, Stourbridge



Denise Payet
 15, Enfield



Kate Hughes
 34, Droitwich



Letitia McMullan
 18, Fareham



Mollie Patterson
 14, King's Lynn



Isobel Ashley
 20, Chesterfield



Bethany Farnworth
 18, Bolton



Zahna Hall
 18, Harefield



Cherith Graham
 31, Netherfield



Nicole Bird
 19, Wellingborough



Hannah Hicks
 25, Leckford
 Seeded: 5

Hannah represented Team England at the last two Commonwealth Games, in Delhi and Glasgow.



Emma Vickers
 25, Derby
 Seeded: 6

A senior England international, Emma has won the Under-21 national title on three occasions.



Yolanda King
 22, Pett Level
 Seeded: 7

A regular winner on the Grand Prix circuit and key member of the successful University of Nottingham team.



Lois Peake
 20, Chichester
 Seeded: 8

Made headlines on her senior England debut by defeating a player ranked 210 places above her in the world.



Gauri Duhan
 15, Hull



Naomi Jackson
 21, Okehampton



Sarah Horsnell
 38, Camberley



Amy Humphreys
 18, Nottingham



Amy Blagbrough
 16, Basingstoke



Sophie Barlow
 16, Billingham



Danielle Kelly
 14, Woking



Hannah Ward
 14, Nottingham



Charlotte Boston
 16, Hail Weston



Emily Haskell
 14, Okehampton

Women's Doubles pairings

Kelly Sibley & Joanna Drinkhall
 Charlotte Bardsley & Zahna Hall
 Tin-Tin Ho & Maria Tsaptsinos
 Kate Hughes & Naomi Jackson
 Evie Collier & Lauren Evans
 Hannah Ward & Darcie Proud
 Karina Le Fevre & Emma Vickers

Amy Blagbrough & Letitia McMullan
 Denise Payet & Kate Cheer
 Lois Peake & Yolanda King
 Abbie Milwain & Hannah Hicks
 Katie Barlow & Sophie Barlow
 Sarah Horsnell & Cherith Graham
Draw on page 25

Para competitions

Men's Class 3-5



Kevin Plowman
 Class 3
 Aged 56, from Halifax



Nicko Anderson
 Class 4
 21, Northolt



Jack Hunter-Spivey
 Class 5
 21, Liverpool



Daniel Bullen
 Class 5
 19, St Neots

Women's Class 3-5



Sue Gilroy
 Class 4
 44, Barnsley



Megan Shackleton
 Class 4
 17, Todmorden

A note on classifications

Classes 1-5 are for physical impairment (sitting), class 1 being the most severely affected and class 5 having the most physical functionality.

Classes 6-10 are for physical impairment (standing), class 6 being the most severe and class 10 the least. These are set by the International Paralympic Committee.

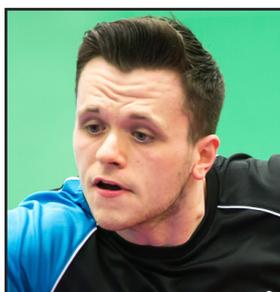
Men's Class 6-8



David Wetherill
 Class 6
 27, Torpoint



Will Bayley
 Class 7
 29, Tunbridge Wells



Aaron McKibbin
 Class 8
 25, Wandsworth



Billy Shilton
 Class 8
 18, Stonehouse

Men's Class 9-10



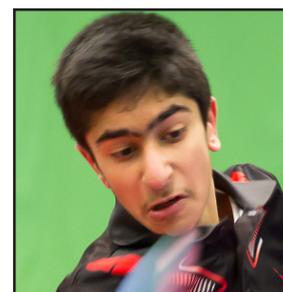
Craig Allen
 Class 9
 22, Bromsgrove



Ashley Facey Thompson
 Class 9
 22, Leytonstone



Kim Daybell
 Class 10
 24, Sheffield



Shae Thakker
 Class 10
 13, Denham

Mixed Doubles pairings

Paul Drinkhall & Joanna Drinkhall
 Sam Walker & Tin-Tin Ho
 Alim Hirji & Denise Payet
 Mike O'Driscoll & Kate Hughes
 Tom Jarvis & Maria Tsapsinos
 David McBeath & Emma Vickers
 Jack Bennett & Lois Peake

Josh Bennett & Kate Cheer
 Matt Ware & Karina Le Fevre
 Shaquille Webb-Dixon & Emily Bolton
 Danny Reed & Kelly Sibley
 Chris Doran & Hannah Hicks
 Liam McTiernan & Yolanda King
 Matt Leete & Hannah Ward

Under-21 Men's Singles entries

Tom Jarvis
 Helshan Weerasinghe
 Adam Harrison
 Luke Savill
 Gabriel Achampong
 Matt Leete
 Jack Bennett

James Hobson
 Mitchell Jones
 Alec Ward
 Josh Bennett
 Ethan Walsh
 Joe Clark
 Shaquille Webb-Dixon

Harry Dai
 Joe Pilkington
 Adam Jepson
 James Smith
 Luke Walsh
 Lucas Papantoniou
 Shayan Siraj

Naphat Boonyaprapa
 Joel Webb
 George Hazell
 Olly Tyndall
 Addi Duhan
 Sam Mabey
 Wing Cheong Kwan

Under-21 Women's Singles entries

Tin-Tin Ho
 Maria Tsapsinos
 Lois Peake
 Emily Bolton
 Kate Cheer
 Charlotte Bardsley
 Denise Payet

Letitia McMullan
 Mollie Patterson
 Isobel Ashley
 Bethany Farnworth
 Zahna Hall
 Nicole Bird
 Gauri Duhan

Amy Humphreys
 Amy Blagbrough
 Stephanie Cross
 Lauren Evans
 Bhavika Mistry
 Sophie Barlow
 Darcie Proud

Charlotte Marsden
 Danielle Kelly
 Hannah Ward
 Charlotte Boston
 Emily Haskell
 Katie Barlow
 Alice Hazell

PG Mutual Nationals – event format

Event	Entries	Group format	KO format	Notes
Men's Singles	32	8 groups of 3, top player qualifies; Best of 5	Best of 7	Top 8 seeds bye to last 16
Women's Singles	32	8 groups of 3, top player qualifies; Best of 5	Best of 7	Top 8 seeds bye to last 16
Men's Doubles	16 pairs	N/A	Best of 5	
Women's Doubles	16 pairs	N/A	Best of 5	
Mixed Doubles	16 pairs	N/A	Best of 5	
U21 Men's Singles	28	8 groups of 3, top player qualifies; Best of 5	Best of 7	Top 4 seeds bye to Q/F
U21 Women's Singles	28	8 groups of 3, top player qualifies; Best of 5	Best of 7	Top 4 seeds bye to Q/F
Para Men Class 3-5	4	Round-robin, best of 5	N/A	
Para Women Class 3-5	4	Round-robin, best of 5	N/A	
Para Men Class 6-8	4	Round-robin, best of 5	N/A	
Para Men Class 9-10	4	Round-robin, best of 5	N/A	

For full draws, see pages 22-28

London teenager juggling her school



To say Tin-Tin Ho has been busy recently is something of an under-statement. The reigning national women's singles champion has A-Levels on the horizon, and is in the midst of all the mocks, revision, university applications and other pressures which add up to one of the most pivotal periods of any young person's life.

Add to that her table tennis commitments – not just training but competitions such as the inaugural European Under-21 Championships which she attended in Sochi last month – and it's easy to wonder how she fits it all in.

Indeed, revising during a tournament is not unknown – as shown by the social media post below, posted during the Junior Nationals last year.

The Londoner, who won mixed doubles silver with Liam Pitchford at the 2014 Commonwealth Games, admitted: "It's been a bit hectic, applying for universities and having a lot of tests and mock exams, but it's only for one year.

"I think I just have to prioritise when it matters. I've had to learn to manage my time and know when is a good time to study and when to play. For example, I knew over Easter last year I had to work more, so I played less.

"School have always let me go to competitions. Even when I'm behind, they always trust that I will catch up and the teachers check I am catching up and help me. I'm quite lucky."

The school in question is the City of London School for Girls, where she is studying Maths, Biology and Chemistry. She has applied to read medicine at university – and with Nottingham one possible destination, she has the chance to experience the facilities this weekend.

"I've applied for medicine and I'd like to be a doctor,

but the options are open," she said. "If I could do that alongside table tennis, that would be great, but I might just do table tennis. It's not decided.

"I'd like to be able to play competitively. I've applied to Nottingham and I think that would be my first choice because I could play table tennis alongside my studies.

"There's the Commonwealth Games coming up in 2018 – I hope I can win some more medals there. And I hope to play more competitions and get my world ranking up in the Seniors."

First comes the chance to add to her astonishing haul of 38 national titles, including the first women's singles crown she won by beating Kelly Sibley 4-2 in the final at Hatfield 12 months ago.

"Just before the Nationals we had played the Worlds in Malaysia and Kelly was so solid and I was looking to her for guidance," said Tin-Tin. "But at the Nationals I was trying to think about my own game. I played her as I would have played anyone else.

"I remember quite a lot about the end of the final because it was my first senior singles title and it was quite a proud moment.

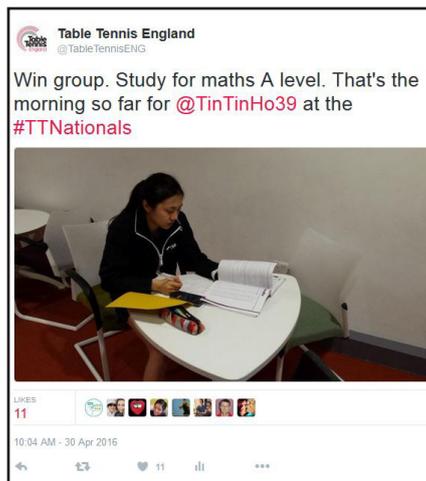
"The match itself was difficult and a lot of the time I wasn't in the winning position. But I just focused on one point at a time and managed to change the

momentum.

"It was quite emotional when I actually won. Because I was down a few times and I wasn't really thinking about winning or losing, I think I was in shock a bit at the end.

"I'd really love to defend it this year and I think I've got a good chance. I'll try to play my best and look at the situations as I face them."

That title was one of six won by the 18-year-old



work with table tennis in A-Level year

Tin-Tin targets a top-class performance

Mathematics	
How Tin-Tin's National titles add up	
<u>2007/08</u>	
U11GS; U12GS; U13GS	3
<u>2008/09</u>	+
U11GS; U12GS; U13GS	3
<u>2009/10</u>	+
U12GS; U13GS; U14GS; U14GD	4
<u>2010/11</u>	+
U13GS; U14GD; CGD	3
<u>2011/12</u>	+
U14GS; U14GD; CGD; JGD	4
<u>2012/13</u>	+
CGS; CGD; JGS; JGD; JXD; U21S	6
<u>2013/14</u>	+
JGS; JGD; JXD; XD	4
<u>2014/15</u>	+
JGD; JXD; U21S; WD; XD	5
<u>2015/16</u>	+
JGS; JGD; JXD; WS; WD; XD	6
	=
	38

last season – a clean sweep of all three available in the Junior age group plus three Senior titles as she also won the mixed doubles with Sam Walker and the women's doubles with Maria Tsaptsinos.

Only the Under-21 singles eluded her as she was beaten by her doubles partner Tsaptsinos in a dramatic final when, at 10-10 in a deciding seventh set, her opponent fell heavily in losing the next point

Physiology

Tin-Tin on her preferred penhold grip

It's an Asian tradition, but I grew up playing that way because my dad taught me.



You can use more wrist action and have a bit more feeling, get good angles and do strange things with the ball that make it awkward for your opponent. I don't know if it's harder to get power . . . perhaps it's a bit more limited. But I like my game now, so it's fine.

and had to take an injury timeout.

When she was able to resume, although still in pain, Tsaptsinos managed to win the next three points and with it the title.

"That was also a difficult final and I'd never really experienced an injury timeout before," said Ho. "I was quite worried about her but thankfully it wasn't anything too serious.

"Of course it would have been really good to pick up all seven available titles but I think I learned from that and it made me more determined to win the women's singles the next day.

"It's fine - I've just about forgiven Maria!"

The pair will once again team up this year to go for a third successive women's doubles crown, while Ho and Walker will be aiming to take the mixed doubles for the fourth year in a row. And there is still the Under-21s to play for.

Who would bet against Tin-Tin adding to her 38 National titles this weekend?

PAUL STIMPSON

Walker ready to take next step

After reaching singles final last year, Sam is gunning for his first senior title

At the age of just 21, Sam Walker has already starred at the Olympics and pocketed World Championships bronze and Commonwealth Games silver medals – now he has his eye on success on the home front.

At last year's PG Mutual Nationals in Hatfield, Walker reached his first men's singles final, beating Liam Pitchford in the semi-finals before losing to Paul Drinkhall in the last match of the tournament.

In some eyes, that was the least of his achievements in a stellar 2016 during which he, Pitchford and Drinkhall powered to that landmark bronze in Kuala Lumpur and delivered Team GB's best ever Olympic results in Rio.

Walker also earned a nomination in the ITTF Star Awards in the Star Point category, and notched victories over top-20 players in pressure-cooker matches at both the Worlds and Olympics.

And while further international success is of course high on Walker's agenda, sealing a first Senior Nationals men's singles title is an ambition he feels he can realise sooner rather than later.

"It's very important and has been for a while," he said. "I've been in three semi-finals and a final, so I'm getting closer and closer.

Hopefully one year soon I can win it and that will be a big moment for me because I will have won every Nationals in the age groups and I would join the long list of top English players who've won it.

"I was disappointed to lose last year, but it was another step closer, so maybe this year I can take that next step.

"I managed to beat Liam for the first time last year, so that was a really positive thing for me. One of my strengths is that I always believe I can beat anyone on my day and when I actually did that, it gave me a lot of confidence.

"I was playing well and thought if I kept playing

well I could win it, but it wasn't to be. But there's always another chance."

The mental strength Walker refers to has served him well, never more so than in beating world No 20 Yuya Oshima in the World Championships semi-final against Japan and then trumping that in sensational fashion against world No 17 Simon Gauzy in Rio when, from three match points down in the deciding set of the

deciding match against

France, Walker reeled

off five in a row

to put Team GB



Celebrating at the Worlds



With Paul Drinkhall at the ITTF Star Awards

into the quarter-finals. Many of the competitors and spectators here this weekend will surely recall their bleary-eyed celebrations of that magic moment from well after 3am UK time.

Walker agrees: “It is self-belief, plus I don’t think too much about the occasion and that helps me a lot.

“This year, the chances I got against the top players happened to be at the two biggest tournaments. I believe I can beat everybody on the day and when I get my chances I take them more often than not.”

That mindset explains why, while many would not have predicted last year’s success, Walker himself does not see it as having come completely out of the blue.

“I always believed I could do the unpredictable and I always believed in myself to do the things that perhaps other people didn’t believe I could do,” he said. “And I work hard to do it.

“So if I’d been talking to someone at the start of 2016 and they said I would win a world medal, get to the Olympics, be nominated in the ITTF Star Awards, get to my first senior Nationals final – well, I’d certainly have taken that but I wouldn’t have said they were crazy.”

So which of those achievements gives him most pride, looking back?

“I think the World Championships medal would be the one I’d put above the others,” he said, “although it was definitely nice to get to the Olympics and to get into the team quarter-finals with arguably the biggest match of my career. But I don’t think anything can top that World Championships medal.”

Walker credits his team-mates and coach Alan Cooke, plus the support structure behind them all, led by Head of Talent & Performance, Simon Mills, as playing key roles both at the Worlds and on an ongoing basis.

“Being in the team with Paul and Liam, who are clearly better in the rankings than me at the moment, it’s a boost to know I’ve got two players in the team who are top, top players in the world. That gives me a

lot of confidence that I know they are behind me,” he said.

“We’ve got that great team spirit and will support each other to the end and that helps me to not have any fear against anyone and to be confident to go on the table and show what I want to show.

“It’s not an easy job for Alan because we’re abroad and travelling a lot and it’s not easy for him to judge how we’re playing. But he does a good job of keeping in touch with us all and bringing plans together with Simon – that’s what they do well – and at the tournaments he’s there helping us.”

A reflection of how that line-up has pushed English table tennis forward came at the ITTF Star Awards, where the England team was shortlisted for the Breakthrough Star Award and Cooke for the Star Coach Award, adding to Walker’s place among the Star Point nominees.

It meant a night on the red carpet for Walker at the ceremony in Qatar, but unfortunately England did not return with any of the trophies.

The Star Point, partly based on a public vote, went to China’s Fan Zhendong for a stunning shot from under the net which rolled on to the table against Simon Gauzy after the Frenchman’s return had hit the net and dribbled over.

That rally lasted a mere three shots, as against the 27 between Walker and Oshima, and a 59-shot marathon between Jun Mizutani and Tiago Apolonia, which was also shortlisted.

“To be honest, I didn’t think my point was the best – that was Mizutani versus Apolonia in my opinion – but you never know, because it’s a public vote,” said Walker.

“It was a nice feeling to be recognised for that point and to get a bit of publicity. It’s not what you play for, but it’s an extra boost, so I’ll take it.

“Those nominations were definitely deserved. I was a little bit disappointed we didn’t win one of the other two

because I thought we just deserved it. We didn’t win, so never mind – like I said, it’s not why we play.

“But it shows that people are recognising we are a force to be dealt with.”

The next chances to show that will be at the World Individual Championships in Germany in May and June and the European Championships in Luxembourg in September. The Commonwealth Games in Australia in April 2018 are also on the horizon.

And it is the latter which dominates Walker’s thinking as he seeks to add to the team silver he won at Glasgow 2014.

“It’s every four years whereas the Europeans and Worlds are big tournaments but are every year, so that’s one reason it’s a big focus,” he said.

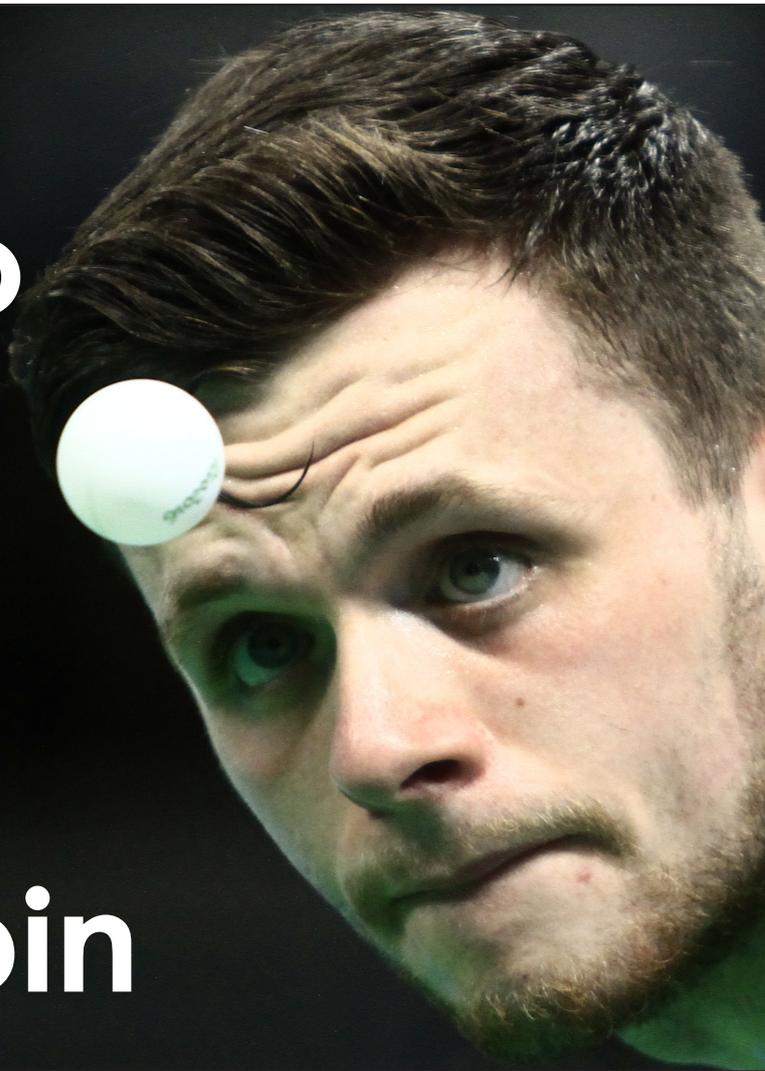
“It’s a year and a few months away and, if I keep working hard and stay fit, I feel I can be one of the top players in that competition. It’s a big goal.

“I definitely believe we can win medals and put on a good performance.”

PAUL STIMPSON

“ One of my strengths is that I always believe I can beat anyone on my day ”

There's more to come, says Rio star McKibbin



Beating a Chinese opponent to win a major medal is the stuff of dreams for most table tennis players – for Aaron McKibbin it became reality.

The 25-year-old Londoner held his nerve against Sun Churen in the deciding set of the deciding match, taking his second match point to seal a team bronze for GB at the Rio Paralympics in Men's Class 6-8.

It put him and team-mates Ross Wilson and Will Bayley on the podium for the second Paralympics in succession, having won the same colour medal at London 2012.

McKibbin has no doubt that 2016 beats 2012, and he also knows there is more to come from the team.

"To win the bronze was a greater achievement this time because the strength of the competition has improved so much," he said. "The teams we had to beat to get into the medal bracket were world class.

"Before the match, with it being against China, we were written off, but we had quite a good record against them so we knew there was an opportunity, but we also knew we would have to perform to our very best to beat them. Not one of us went in not believing we could do it."

It was exactly that belief that helped McKibbin come through on top in that decider – it went to 12-10 in the fifth after Sun had twice levelled the set score.

"It was the most nervous I'd ever been, I wasn't moving great or seeing the ball well," he said. "You just want the world

to swallow you up. But I could see how nervous my opponent was as well and I felt if I could control my calmness that I could find a way to get through it and that my mentality could pull me through.

"We work on a lot of psychological situations and I'd done a lot with Tim (Pitt, sports psychologist) in the build-up to Rio, so that's why I ran over to him afterwards.

"That's what can pull you over the line in a tight situation, it's a big part of the game

"To get a medal and beat China, whenever I think back it's still a great feeling.

"It's a big part of my life and a long part of my life preparing for it, but now I'm looking forwards.

"With us being so young, we've got a lot of potential to push on and look to improve that medal to a silver or gold. We've got the World Team Championships in May and the Europeans in October and those are the two immediate goals for the team."

Before those dates, McKibbin takes on his team-mate Bayley, plus fellow Paralympian David Wetherill and teenager Billy Shilton in the Class 6-8 competition here on Saturday.

And McKibbin, who took up table tennis at 14 after previously playing tennis, is delighted to perform at the same event as the leading able-bodied players.





“With us being so young, we’ve got a lot of potential to push on and look to improve that medal to a silver or gold.”

THE WORLD is not enough

Will's got Paralympic glory in his sights too



Will keeps promise

Will Bayley featured in the programme for last year’s Nationals, when he spoke of his dream to win Paralympic gold in Rio – a dream he duly made come true.

Will said: “I was incredibly proud to win in Rio. It was a highly pressured competition and I had high expectations.

“I felt I performed well and to win was a special feeling.

“My life hasn’t changed much since Rio. I’m still playing the same amount and life is pretty much the same. I’m just focusing on the future now.”

“It’s good for table tennis and to try to build promotion of the sport,” he said. “Not a lot of sports around the world include both codes. We’re very lucky to have very good able-bodied players and world-class para players and we’re in a lucky environment to play at the same event.

“As a spectacle in table tennis, we can compete

with able-bodied. It’s not a million miles away and it’s important to show that and to speak about both codes on the same level.”

Bayley won the class at last year’s PG Mutual Nationals, but McKibbin does not believe it is a foregone conclusion he will defend the title.

He said: “It’s difficult to say who’s going to win. We train with each other all the time . . . maybe me and Will are slight favourites. We beat each other all the time – I could beat him in the morning and lose in the evening, that’s how it is when you train with each other. It’s the same with Liam and Paul.”

The presence of Shilton, who was in Rio as part of the British Paralympic Association’s Paralympic Inspiration Programme, shows how quickly sport can move on – he is here by virtue of climbing above medallist Wilson in the rankings.

McKibbin, who was born with bilateral talipes (club foot), said: “It’s good because it shows our programme is developing and people are coming through. It used to be the same players every year.

“Billy is improving all the time and it’s not going to be a walkover to beat him.

“The Inspiration Programme helped him to see what it’s all about but the bigger thing was moving to the national centre to train with us, to learn what to eat and how to behave off the table. He’s learning fast and loves the sport, which is good for us to be around as well.”

PAUL STIMPSON

Rio remembered

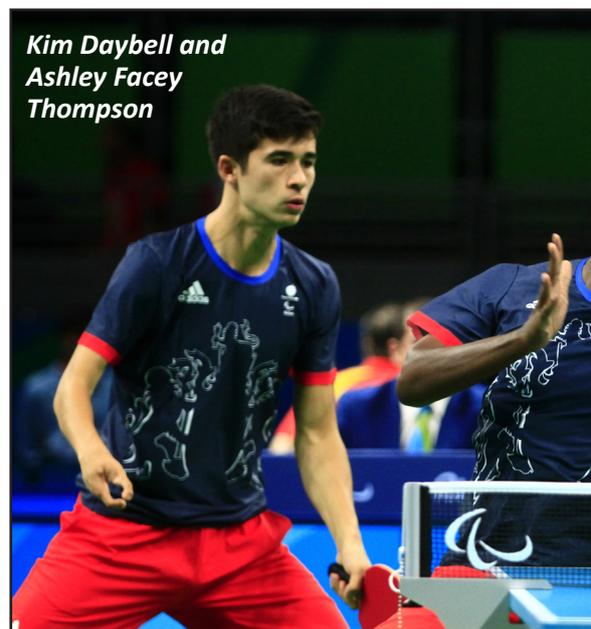


Paul Drinkhall



Liam Pitchford

From Rio to Nottingham: Of the 12 English players who represented GB at Rio 2016, Paul Drinkhall, Liam Pitchford and Sam Walker (Olympics); Will Bayley, Kim Daybell, Ashley Facey Thompson, Sue Gilroy, Jack Hunter-Spivey, Aaron McKibbin and David Wetherill (Paralympics) are all involved here at the PG Mutual Nationals – as is Olympic referee Stuart Sherlock!



Kim Daybell and Ashley Facey Thompson

Rio remembered

Will Bayley,
Aaron McKibbin
and Ross Wilson



Sue Gilroy



Jack
Hunter-Spivey



Stuart Sherlock



Jane Campbell



David Wetherill

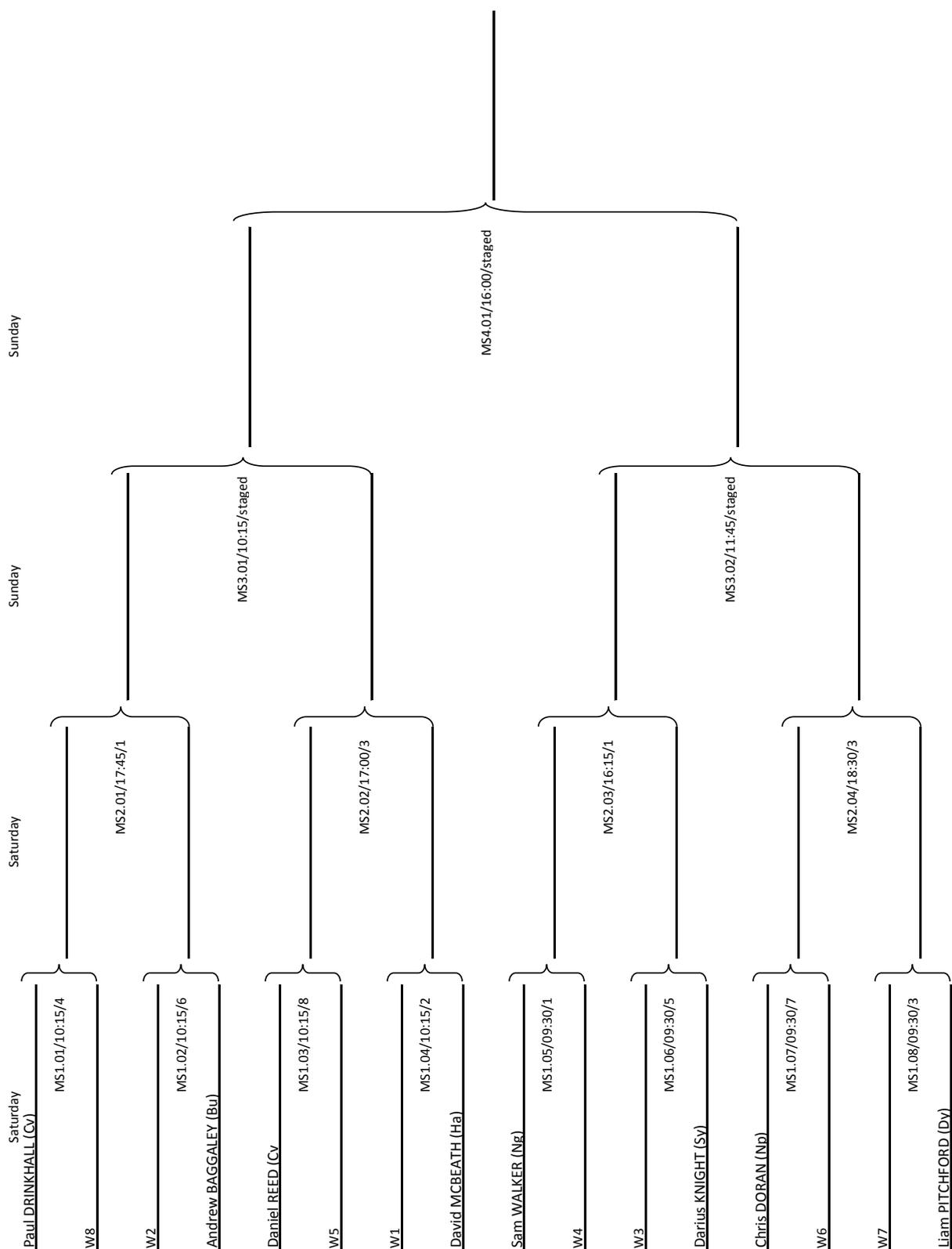


Sam Walker



Men's Singles

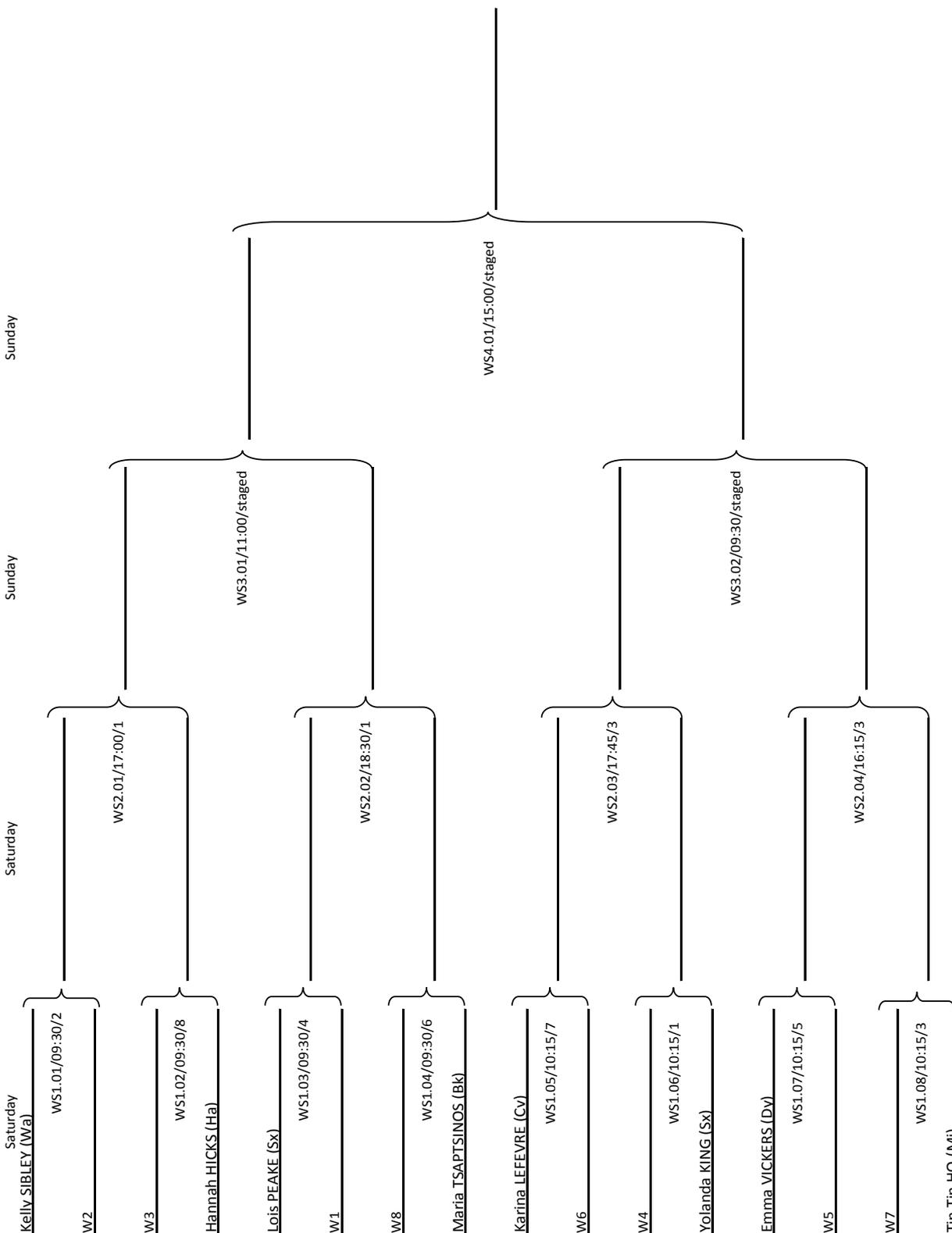
Group 1 1. Tom Jarvis 2. James Hobson 3. Mitchell Jones	Group 2 1. Helshan Weerasinghe 2. Steve Beerling 3. Liam McTiernan	Group 3 1. Michael O'Driscoll 2. Emran Hussain 3. Alec Ward	Group 4 1. Craig Bryant 2. Jack Bennett 3. Dominic Sussex
Group 5 1. Matt Ware 2. Matt Leete 3. Ethan Walsh	Group 6 1. Lorestas Trumpauskas 2. Luke Savill 3. Josh Bennett	Group 7 1. Kim Daybell 2. Gabriel Achampong 3. John Taylor	Group 8 1. Adam Harrison 2. Alim Hirji 3. Joe Clark



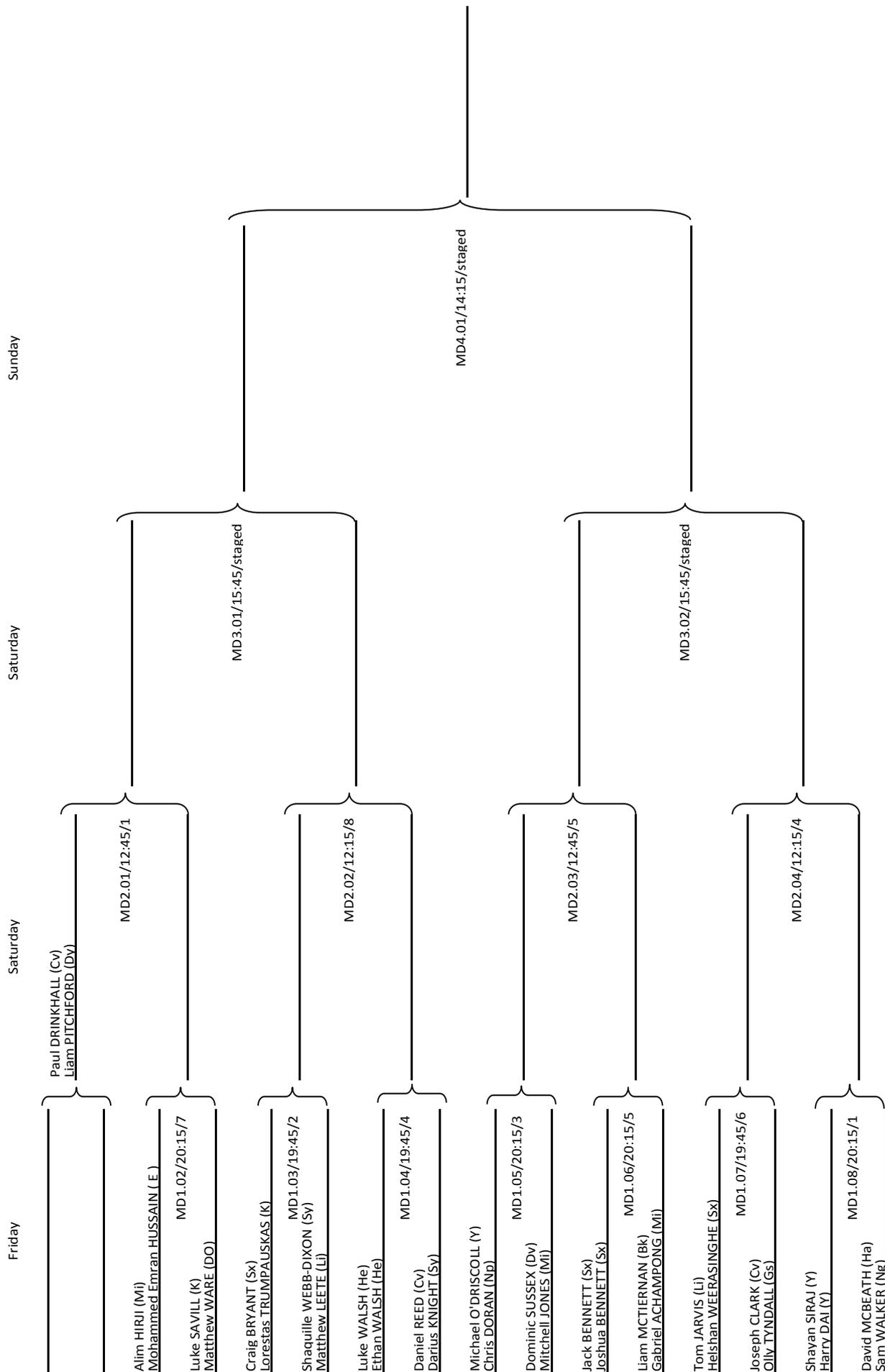
Women's Singles

The draws

Group 1 1. Emily Bolton 2. Gauri Duhan 3. Sarah Horsnell	Group 2 1. Abbie Milwain 2. Naomi Jackson 3. Amy Humphreys	Group 3 1. Evangeline Collier 2. Nicole Bird 3. Amy Blagbrough	Group 4 1. Kate Cheer 2. Cherith Graham 3. Sophie Barlow
Group 5 1. Charlotte Bardsley 2. Zahna Hall 3. Danielle Kelly	Group 6 1. Denise Payet 2. Mollie Patterson 3. Charlotte Boston	Group 7 1. Kate Hughes 2. Bethany Farnworth 3. Emily Haskell	Group 8 1. Letitia McMullan 2. Isobel Ashley 3. Hannah Ward

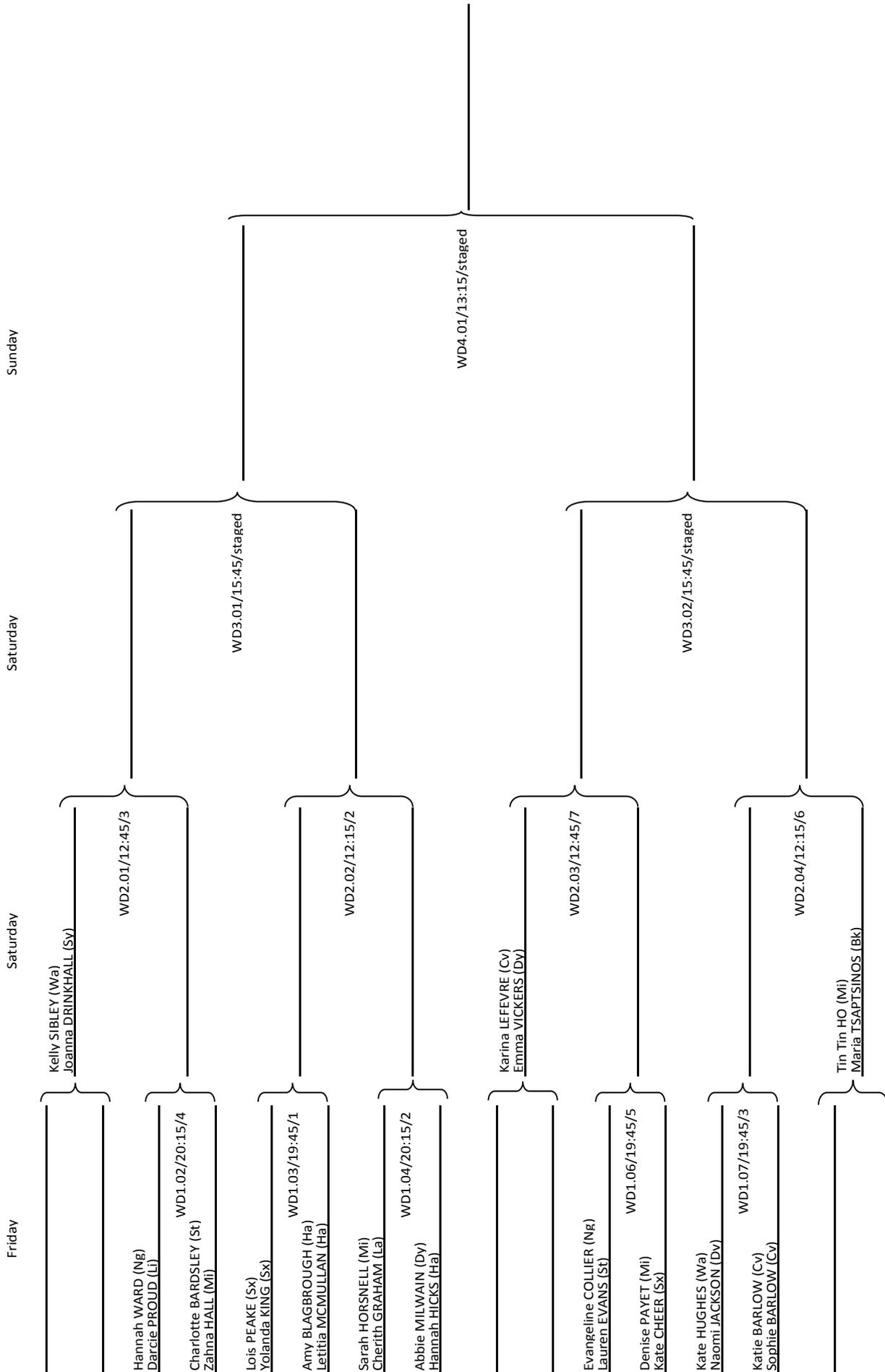


Men's Doubles



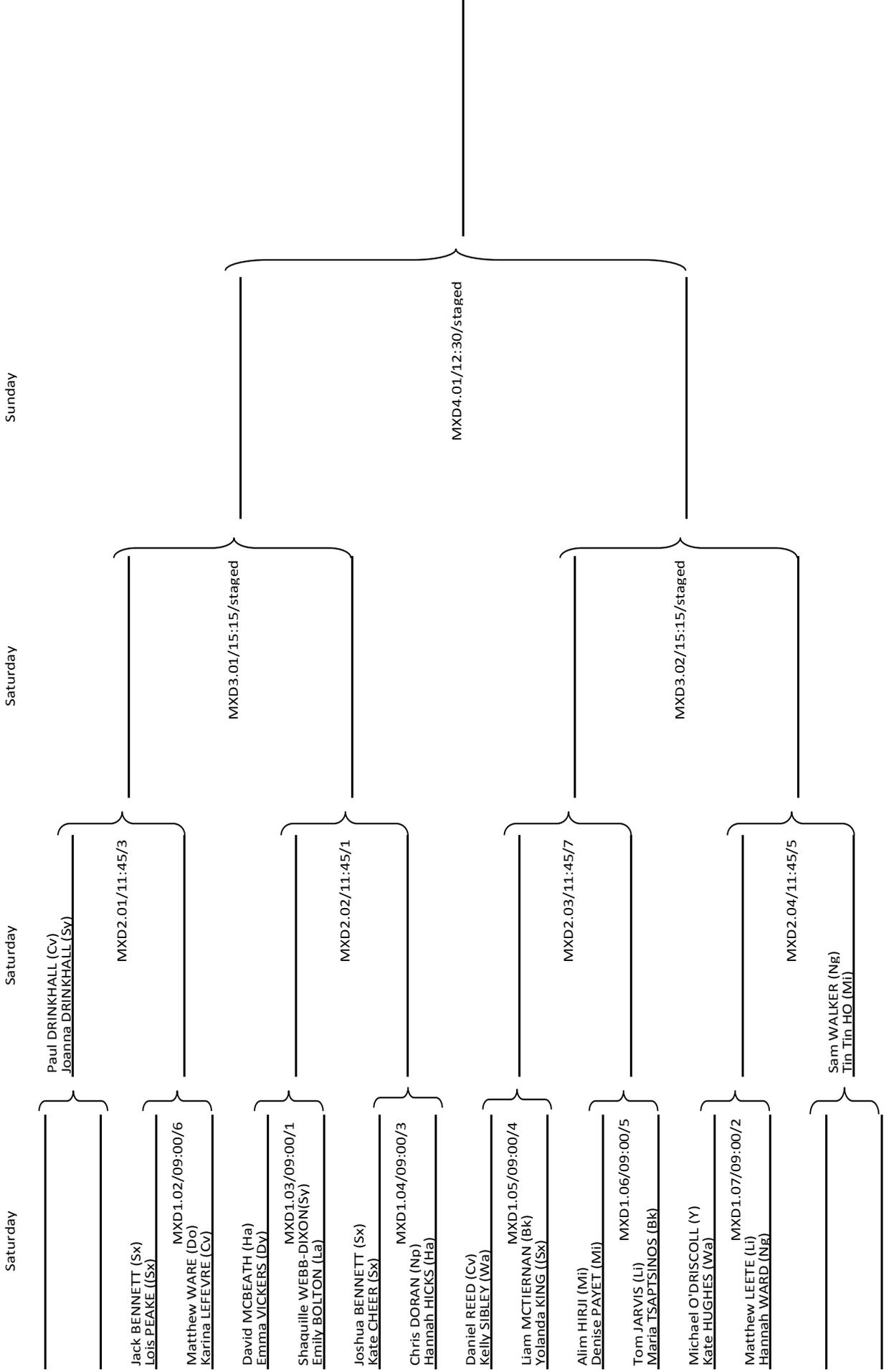
Women's Doubles

The draws



The draws

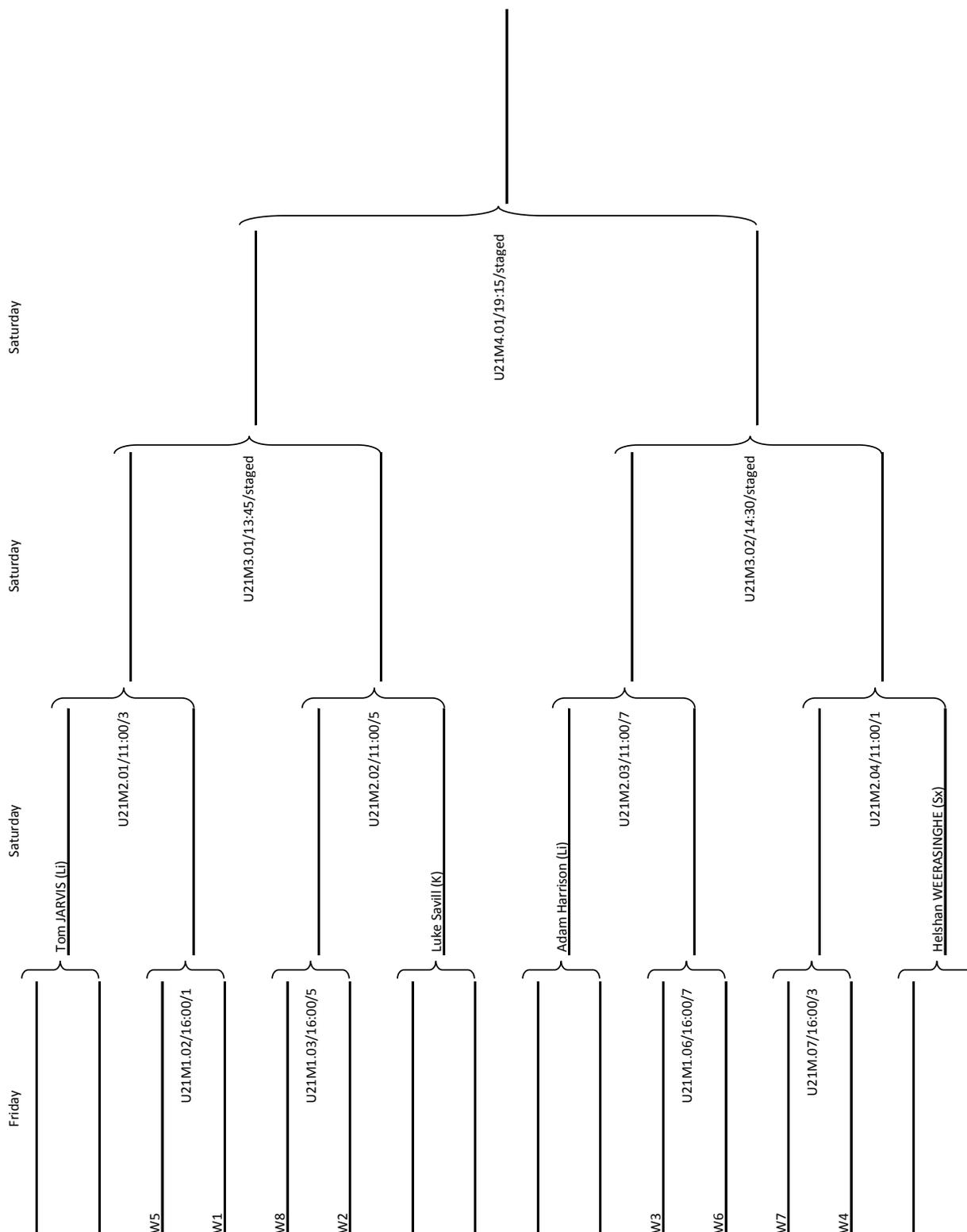
Mixed Doubles



Under-21 Men's Singles

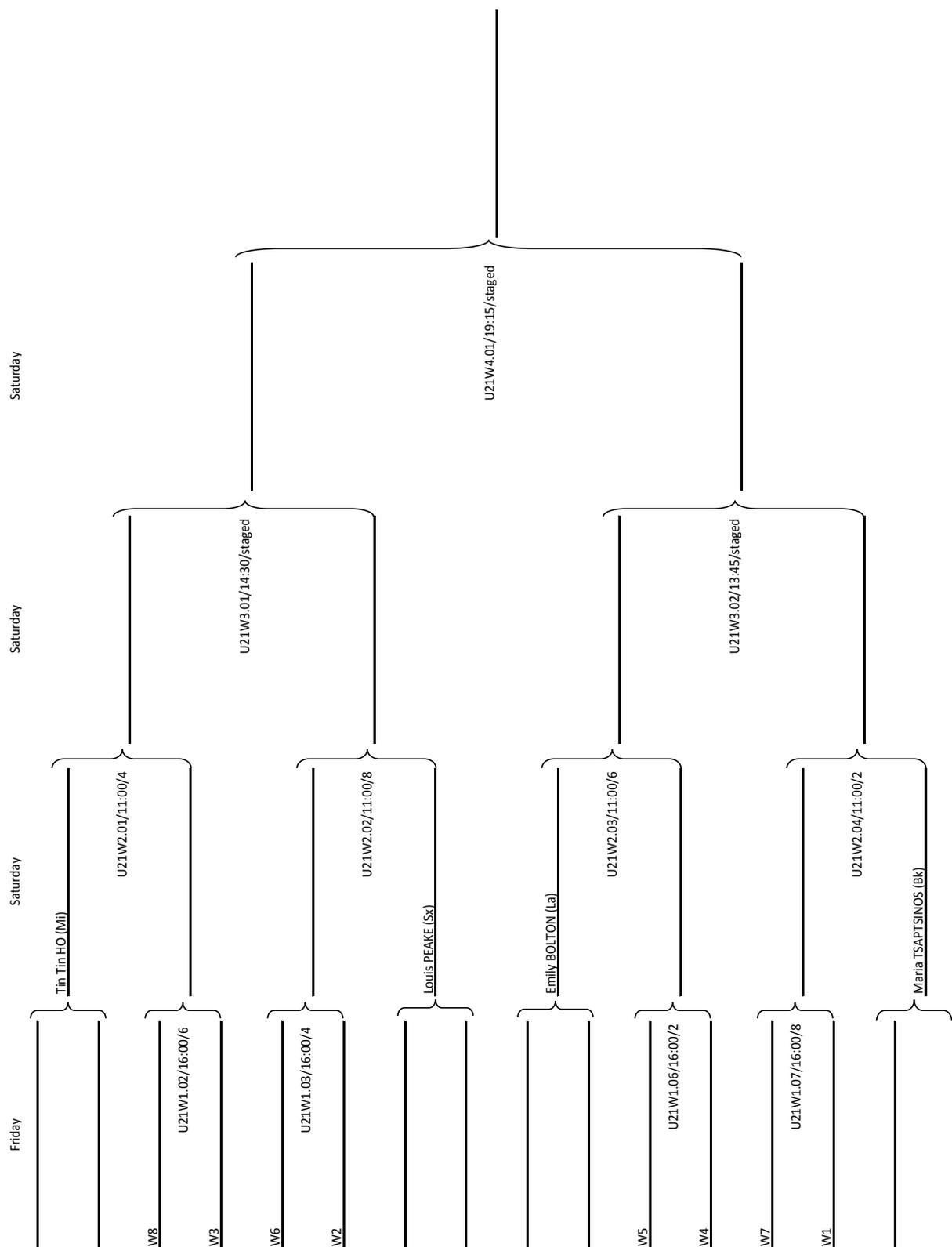
The draws

Group 1 1. Sam Mabey 2. Joe Clark 3. Addi Duhan	Group 2 1. Gabriel Achampong 2. Ethan Walsh 3. George Hazell	Group 3 1. Matt Leete 2. Shaquille Webb-Dixon 3. Wing Cheong Kwan	Group 4 1. Jack Bennett 2. Harry Dai 3. Olly Tyndall
Group 5 1. James Hobson 2. Joe Pilkington 3. Joel Webb	Group 6 1. Mitchell Jones 2. James Smith 3. Shayan Siraj	Group 7 1. Alec Ward 2. Adam Jepson 3. Lucas Papantoniou	Group 8 1. Josh Bennett 2. Luke Walsh 3. Naphat Boonyaprapa



Under-21 Women's Singles

Group 1 1. Kate Cheer 2. Sophie Barlow 3. Danielle Kelly	Group 2 1. Charlotte Bardsley 2. Stephanie Cross 3. Darcie Proud	Group 3 1. Denise Payet 2. Lauren Evans 3. Hannah Ward	Group 4 1. Letitia McMullan 2. Bhavika Mistry 3. Charlotte Marsden
Group 5 1. Mollie Patterson 2. Nicole Bird 3. Katie Barlow	Group 6 1. Isobel Ashley 2. Amy Blagbrough 3. Alice Hazell	Group 7 1. Bethany Farnworth 2. Amy Humphreys 3. Emily Haskell	Group 8 1. Zahna Hall 2. Gauri Duhan 3. Charlotte Boston





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Georgina is star of Under-21s

Nottingham is not only the home of this year's National Championships but Nottinghamshire is the home county of one of our brightest stars from the 2000s in the Under-21 competition.

Georgina Walker has been the only player to win any Under-21 title four times and hails from Mansfield where she started playing at the age of nine years at Huthwaite Table Tennis Club on a summer camp with her sister. Georgina was soon playing with her dad and grandad for the '3 Generation' league team, making it a real family affair. Gordon Fearn coached Georgina from the age of 10 throughout her career, he helped her reach her full potential and kept her positive, becoming a lifelong friend.

For a while Georgina attended the National Training Centre at Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham. She travelled from home to the centre for her daily coaching sessions. Training increased to two sessions a day so Georgina had to stay overnight on occasions, however, she was fortunate that her school, Ashfield Comprehensive, were very supportive.

As well as the training sessions there were psychology lessons, massages, physically demanding fitness testing as well as coaches from various other countries. These were valuable sessions as they gave an insight into other national teams' training and ideas, there was also the opportunity to meet and train with international players.

The benefits of the Academy soon became apparent as Georgina went on to become one of the leading players of her era. She was ranked No 1 at U12, Cadet, Junior, U21 and Senior levels.

Georgina won the first of her four U21 Singles title when she was only 14 years old, At National level she also won five Cadet and Junior titles and two Senior titles in the Women's Doubles. She was also Junior



Georgina Walker in action and (below, second left) at the 2002 European Championships with Kate Steward, Steen Kyst Hansen, Nicola Deaton, Helen Lower, Katy Parker.



Masters Champion in 2003. On the international front Georgina played in three World Championships and three European Championships as well as several European League matches. In the Spanish Open she gained a bronze medal and in the Home Countries/Six Nations, success came with three team titles.

Georgina is proud of representing her country and having had the opportunity to travel the world to play the sport she loved. Regrettably, Georgina gave up playing at a relatively early age, the financial aspect and recognition of female players in England was not high.

A star that shone brightly, whose passion changed from the sport she loved to a career she loves with equal intensity. Now a qualified podiatrist, Georgina's table tennis years are ones she looks back on with much affection and is forever grateful for the lifelong friends she made through the sport.

DIANE WEBB

The U21 events have been included at National Championship events since 1979 and as part of the Senior Championships since 1998. The winners in that first year were Duggie Johnson and Karen Witt and in 1998 Darren Blake and Shelley Ruocco.

The early 2000s were dominated by Nottinghamshire ladies when Louise Durrant took the title in 2001 giving a five-year clean sweep as this added to Georgina Walker's titles in 2000, 2002, 2003 and 2005. Nottinghamshire could also claim some credit for Natalie Bawden's win 2004 as at

that time she attended the ETTA Academy which was based in Nottingham.

Apart from Georgina's success the only female player to have been a triple champion was Emma Vickers, who hails from the next county, Derbyshire.

The men on the other hand have had four three-time champions in the shape of Andrew Rushton, Paul Drinkhall, Darius Knight and Sam Walker.

Of the 14 women who have held the title, all went on to become full senior internationals, as did the 17 men.

‘We owe a massive debt of gratitude to all our volunteers’



As well as crowning our national champions here in Nottingham this weekend, we are also honouring our sport’s unsung heroes and volunteers.

The Pride of Table Tennis Awards ceremony on Day Two of the PG Mutual Nationals sees award winners revealed in a number of categories, with the following shortlisted finalists all invited to join Table Tennis England Board members and other dignitaries at the presentation lunch:

Volunteer of the Year: Dennis Artess, Tony Halse

Young Volunteer of the Year: Naomi Hayes, Liam McTiernan

Coach of the Year: Mark Dare, Daniel Basterfield

Contribution to Table Tennis Award: Brian Hall, Gordon White

Club of the Year: Sycamore TTC, Brandon and Byshottles

Technical Official of the Year: Steve Smith, Margot Fraser

Inclusivity Award: Sanket Shah, Neil Harris

The Pride of Table Tennis Awards were launched this year to enhance the existing Volunteer Awards. Drawing on nominations made by the table tennis family, they recognise individuals and organisations

who are committed to developing and improving participation and performance in the sport.

That might be through breaking down barriers of inclusivity, promoting diversity or nurturing talented youngsters, or positively impacting on people’s lives through table tennis in any other way.

We received more than 200 nominations this year, and a total of 61 clubs around the country also awarded their own Club Volunteer of the Year awards.

A judging panel, which included volunteers Julian Elsbury and Darrel Cresswell, then selected the shortlists.

Table Tennis England Head of Workforce Greg Yarnall said: “We’re delighted to put our amazing volunteers in the spotlight at the Pride of Table Tennis Awards ceremony.

“Picking a shortlist from the huge number of nominations was a difficult process and it shows just how many people are investing so much of themselves into helping others to enjoy our wonderful sport.

“We owe a massive debt of gratitude to all our volunteers, not just those here this weekend, and the Pride of Table Tennis Awards is our way of making sure they are recognised.”

A number of other award winners from the past season will also receive their awards at the Pride of Table Tennis ceremony.

They are:

Ping Personality of the Year: Rob Searle

BBC Unsung Heroes: Viv Woodcock & Sylvia Worth

Victor Barna Award: England Men’s Team of Paul

Drinkhall, Liam Pitchford and Sam Walker (for their success in winning the bronze medal at the World Team Championships 2016)

Johnny Leach MBE Award: Tin-Tin Ho (for outstanding International performances)

Mike Watts Achievement Award: Jasmin Wong, Jonathan Heslop

Nottingham aim success for elite



Home advantage may not be as significant in table tennis as in some other sports, but one group of athletes here this weekend are certainly hoping to make it count.

No fewer than six University of Nottingham students have qualified – Danny Reed, Adam Harrison, Liam McTiernan and Gabriel Achampong in the men’s event and Maria Tsapsinos and Yolanda King in the women’s.

Add head coach Kelly Sibley to the line-up and it means more than 10% of the combined men’s and women’s singles fields are competing at their home venue, the magnificent new David Ross Sports Village.

This success should not come as a surprise, given the depth of talent in the university’s table tennis programme and the way the programme is geared up to help the athletes exceed their potential.

The university’s Assistant Director of Sport (Performance) is Alex Perry, himself a two-time men’s singles national champion. He has big ambitions for the years ahead, building on an impressive table tennis heritage which includes alumni such as the Olympic great Deng Yaping, Nicola Perry (former five-time singles champion) and Alex himself. He said: “We

want to be the top institution in higher education for table tennis in Europe and to win medals at international level – as well as supporting the under-21 and senior England teams.

“Under the leadership of previous head coach Nicola Perry, the table tennis club at the University has developed incredibly well over the last seven years. To go from a club with three or four teams in BUCS (British Universities & Colleges Sport) leagues to now entering 10 teams this year, with 28 England ranked players and a huge number of national titles, shows how far things have come.

The goal of competing with the best in Europe is definitely achievable.

“We are looking to attract students with a good academic background who we can give top level training and support under one roof. “They can study and achieve a good degree from one of the UK’s leading universities whilst improving their table tennis. To achieve that, the vision was getting a world-class facility to develop world-class coaching and to provide scholarships to support talented athletes. One big



to tie up future student players



University of Nottingham Sport

piece of that is this facility. The main hall is one of the largest sports halls in Europe, which supports us hosting world-class events.

“In addition to that is the training facility, which is table tennis specific in design with a Taraflex floor and a huge amount of access on a weekly basis. The High Performance zone also provides elite level strength and conditioning space for our top teams and scholars to train in, with a 60m sprint track included.”

“Our scholarships support talented junior athletes as well as established senior internationals. We’ve got more and more young England players and we can give them table time of 20-25 hours a week.”

As for the coaching set-up now, Commonwealth Games bronze medallist and five-time women’s singles national champion Sibley is the head coach.

The students also get to work with the likes of Table Tennis England Head Coach Alan Cooke and other leading coaches from the governing body, plus visitors of the calibre of Ryan Jenkins, arguably the greatest Welsh player ever.

Perry said: “We’ve got a range of coaches in the programme, from current players, retired players and experienced performance coaches, and we also have good links with Table Tennis England and their coaches. There is also the opportunity for our students to develop as coaches. I think it’s important

The training hall here at the David Ross Sports Village (above left) where the likes of Yolanda King (left) and BUCS champions Danny Reed and Haoyu Liu (above right) hone their skills



not to lose our top players from the sport if they don’t go on to be senior internationals, and to give them the opportunity to develop themselves.”

International links are also an important component, with Deng Yaping scholar Haoyu Liu bringing a different dimension to training and also playing an important role in the university team which recently won four of the five gold medals on offer at the British Universities Championships.

She and England international Reed – currently studying for a PhD here – were the respective women’s and men’s singles champions at that event.

Little wonder Sibley says: “It’s undoubtedly the best place for table tennis out of all the universities in the UK. They can literally play seven days a week if they want, which they couldn’t do at other universities, and the hall we’ve got is absolutely brilliant. We’re really lucky we can spend all our time training in the same venue and get such good quality practice.

“Moreover, with our campus in China, the players have had the opportunity to attend intensive training camps with access to spar against some of the leading young players in China.

“I’ve worked here for two years as an assistant coach and sparrer, so to become head coach was an opportunity I couldn’t turn down.

“I’m really enjoying it. It’s challenging at times, but that’s what you need – if it’s easy then it’s no fun.

“It’s helping my game as well. I feel more relaxed when I come to play my own matches.”

We will find out this weekend whether the training environment here translates into success on the competition tables.

PAUL STIMPSON



RESULTS

Men's Singles: Paul Drinkhall bt Sam Walker 4-2 (9-11, 11-4, 11-7, 3-11, 11-5, 11-8)

Women's Singles: Tin-Tin Ho bt Kelly Sibley 4-2 (5-11, 11-9, 3-11, 11-9, 11-9, 11-6)

Men's Doubles: Paul Drinkhall & Liam Pitchford bt Chris Doran & Mike O'Driscoll 3-0 (11-4, 11-4, 11-7)

Women's Doubles: Tin-Tin Ho & Maria Tsaptsinos bt Karina Le Fevre & Emma Vickers 3-1 (11-2, 16-14, 8-11, 11-7)

Mixed Doubles: Sam Walker & Tin-Tin Ho bt David McBeath & Emma Vickers 3-0 (11-8, 11-6, 11-8)

Under-21 Men's Singles: Tom Jarvis bt Helshan Weerasinghe 4-1 (10-12, 11-8, 12-10, 11-8, 11-5)

Under-21 Women's Singles: Maria Tsaptsinos bt Tin-Tin Ho 4-3 (12-10, 8-11, 8-11, 6-11, 13-11, 11-8, 13-11)

Other winners

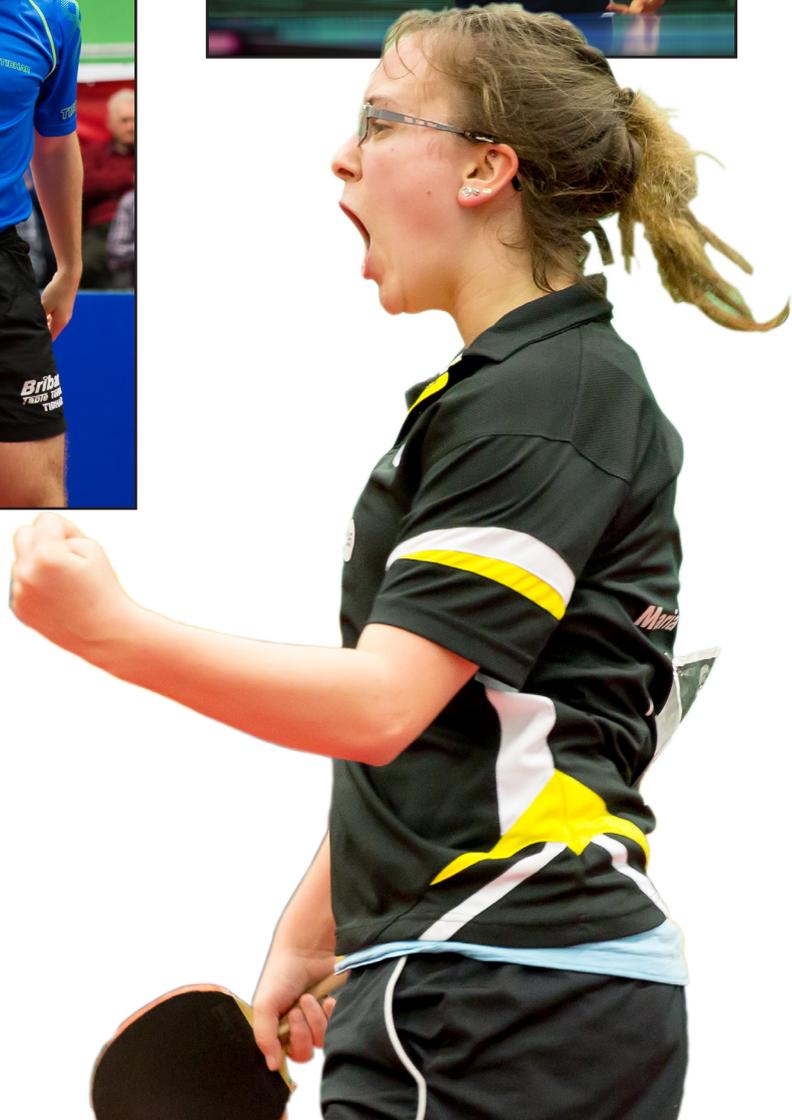
Women's Class 3-5: Sue Gilroy

Men's Class 3-5: Jack Hunter-Spivey

Men's Class 6-8: Ross Wilson

Men's Class 9-10: Kim Daybell

Men's Team: Fusion (Mike O'Driscoll, Lorestas Trumpauskas, Emran Hussain)



Left, from top: Liam McTiernan takes on Helshan Weerasinghe in the Under-21s; Dan Bullen; Fair Play winner Mike O’Driscoll and the crowd at Hatfield.

This page, clockwise: Alim Hirji (inset); Emily Bolton, under-21 singles champions Tom Jarvis; and Maria Tsaptsinos; men’s doubles winners Liam Pitchford & Paul Drinkhall

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England v Netherlands

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- tabletennisengland.co.uk/englandtickets

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Team Qualifiers
2017 ITTF European
Table Tennis
Championships

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 TableTennisEngland

SPORTbible is helping us spread table tennis gospel



The final stages of the 2017 PG Mutual National Championships will be broadcast live on TheSPORTbible, with highlights of the tournament on Sky Sports.

The men's doubles, women's singles and men's singles finals will be shown live on TheSPORTbible Facebook page on Sunday March 5th, from 2.15pm.

The deal builds on the success of England Leopard's European Qualifying match against Greece in November, which attracted a record 2.2million unique viewers on TheSPORTbible Facebook page.

TheSPORTbible is one of the UK's most visited sports media websites. It has more than nine-and-a-half million fans on Facebook.

The production will be provided by 1080 Media via six cameras trained on the court, with full commentary and player interviews.

In addition, highlights of the PG Mutual National Championships will be shown on Sky Sports Mix at a later date.

Sky Sports Mix is a new sports channel on Sky TV which is free to air for many viewers and shows a diverse range of sports.

With English table tennis being showcased to millions of new followers, let's turn up the atmosphere and show them what a great sport this is!



You can keep up with all the latest from the PG Mutual Nationals on the Table Tennis England social media platforms:

YouTube: We will be live streaming a selection of matches on Friday, Saturday and before 2.15pm on Sunday, when we switch the TheSPORTbible. Tune in at [youtube.com/tabletennisengland](https://www.youtube.com/tabletennisengland)

Twitter: Follow @TableTennisEng and look out for the hashtag #PGMutualNationals during the event

Facebook: Visit our page at [facebook.com/TableTennisEngland](https://www.facebook.com/TableTennisEngland)

Instagram: Pictures and video throughout the event at [instagram.com/tabletenniseng](https://www.instagram.com/tabletenniseng)

Website: All the latest results and reports at [tabletennisengland.co.uk](https://www.tabletennisengland.co.uk)

Flickr: Pictures will be uploaded to our Flickr page on the days following the event – [flickr.com/tabletennis](https://www.flickr.com/tabletennis)



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Visit tabletennisengland.co.uk/play/membership and sign up for Player Membership

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