

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Use:** Monday, 7 September 2009

### **Full house for GB Deaflympics tennis players**

Great Britain's tennis players have enjoyed a superb first two days of competition at the 21st Summer Deaflympics in Taipei, with all six members of the squad earning first round wins in their respective singles and doubles events to date.

After Anthony Sinclair, the silver medallist in the men's singles at the last Deaflympics in Melbourne in 2005, won his men's singles opener against Austria's Jurgen Scheutz 6-1, 6-2 on Sunday, fellow Great Britain players Lewis Fletcher and Darren O'Donnell joined Sinclair in the last 16 of the event after impressive wins on Monday.

Meanwhile, Daniel Tunstall and Deaflympic Games debutant Jamie King, the youngest member of the tennis squad at the age of 19, also won their men's doubles first round match on Monday, a day after Tunstall moved in to the second round of the men's singles after receiving a walkover in the first round.

Like King, 24-year-old Fletcher is also making his Deaflympics debut in Taipei, but he was far from being daunted by the occasion or a tough first round draw as he fought back from a set down to beat Austrian second seed Daniel Erlbacher 4-6, 6-2, 6-1 in arguably the most impressive British performance on Monday.

O'Donnell added to the success, beating experienced Italian campaigner and former Deaflympic doubles medallist Gianpaolo Damiani 6-3, 6-1 to put all four of Britain's representatives in to the last 16 of the men's singles.

Third seed Sinclair plays Japan's Reiki Kajishita in the second round, while Fletcher faces the Slovak Republic's Peter Karlik for a place in the quarter-finals. O'Donnell and Tunstall have the toughest of the second round matches, second-time Deaflympian O'Donnell taking on Germany's Gunnar Kett, while Tunstall plays Hungarian top seed Gabor Mathe.

Six-time National champion Catherine Graham, who is the most experienced of the Great Britain players along with Tunstall as they both contest their fourth Deaflympics, began her women's singles challenge on Monday in superb form as she beat Japan's Mizue Tsujioka 6-0, 6-0. A women's doubles bronze medallist four years ago, singles third seed Graham plays Chinese Taipei's Chiu-Mei Ho in the last eight as she bids to go beyond the quarter-final stage that she reached in Melbourne in 2005.

The start of the doubles events brought success for Great Britain as Tunstall and King edged their way in to the second round of the men's doubles with a 7-6(2), 6-4 victory over Australians Jamie Zafir and Peter Lui. Tunstall and King meet Austrian third seeds Erlbacher and Mario Kargl in the quarter-finals.

Fletcher and O'Donnell, Britain's other men's doubles pairing, are the fourth seeds and had a first round bye before starting their doubles challenge on Tuesday against Japan's Kajishita and Tetsuya Matsushita.

Graham and Sinclair are also second seeds in the mixed doubles, an event in which they were semi-finalists in Melbourne in 2005, and they also had a first round bye before taking on Chinese Taipei's Yu-Chen Lai and Ta-Li Kao later in the week.

Four of Britain's six tennis medallists from the 2005 Melbourne Deaflympics are among the squad of six players selected to represent Great Britain in Taipei.

Tennis is one of 17 sports being contested at the 21st Deaflympics in Taipei and one of eight sports in which Great Britain is represented.

More than 4200 athletes and officials from 85 countries will participate in the 21<sup>st</sup> Deaflympics Summer Games.

The Games run from 5 – 15 September, with the tennis competition taking place over eight days, until Sunday, 13 September at the Rainbow Riverside Sports Park in Taipei .

The Summer and Winter Deaflympic Games are the pinnacle in international competition for elite deaf athletes. Under International Deaflympic Committee criteria, to be eligible to compete athletes must have a proven hearing loss of 55dB in the best year.

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