

DRESSE AND MAERE CUPS – ANTALYA, TURKEY 2018

GREAT BRITAIN TEAM PLAYER PROFILES

Lewis Fletcher

Lives: Great Bedwyn, Wiltshire
Age: 33
Trains: Ramsbury Tennis Club
Coach: Catherine Fletcher
Plays: Left-handed



QUOTES:

“The quality of my training has been very good and I feel confident with what I have done. A lot of training has been focused on doubles, which suits me very well. Deaf tennis always has surprises. I’m sure there will be a few of the familiar faces in Turkey, but there are always a couple of players from different nations that are new, or who have worked hard to become better players from the previous year. I would like to think that given the combined experience of old and young and with this being Esah’s first Dresse Cup that we can hope for a top 4 spot.

“I’m very excited to play with Esah, He will, no doubt, be a top three player in the world in deaf tennis if he continues the way he is going. It is nice to have been at the very start of his journey in deaf tennis and to have seen him develop along the way.

“Esah has already got experience of winning in Deaf Junior events and playing some very good matches in senior events. I will no doubt pass on as much experience as I can, but it’s going to be interesting mixing the new and the ‘old’ or the young and the ‘old’!”

Esah Hayat

Lives: East Finchley
Age: 16
Trains: Westway Sports Centre
Coach: Andy Kemp
Plays: Right-handed



QUOTES:

“I am very excited to represent the country at the Dresse Cup, and I hope that my experiences at last year’s Deaflympics and the World and European Championships before that will be useful and help me play well in Turkey. I look forward to playing as a team and competing at the highest level of deaf tennis.

“I have had the chance to see lots of other deaf tennis players from around the world (in the last few years), and so I know about the type of competition I will be up against. They are all strong players, and I know each nation will be trying for the gold medals, but the GB team will be working hard to come out on top.

“I have been doing my GCSE’s this year, so I missed out on the first six months of the season, but since my GCSEs finished, I have been practicing a lot and I have competed in both Grade 2 & 1 Men’s British Tour events (hearing tennis), as well as reaching the semi-finals of multiple 18&U and Men’s grade 3s.

“I look forward to playing alongside someone as experienced as Lewis, and we have been playing together regularly in order to make sure we are as prepared as we can to go and compete in Turkey. Doubles practice is a major part of our team training, and we are becoming a better and better partnership each time we play together so it’s great to be going to Turkey on the back of winning the doubles at the National Championships together.”

Valerie Copenhagen

Lives: Ruislip
Trains/ Uxbridge Lawn Tennis Club/
Club: Eastcote Lawn Tennis Club
Coach: Stuart Wilkinson
Plays: Right-handed



QUOTES:

“I am so excited to be making my Maere Cup debut. I have been working and training hard at our GB National Training weekends and in my training at home. I'm going to Turkey feeling fit and ready to play well and to give it my all with plenty of strategies I've practiced in training and plenty of commitment and passion.

“I have some lovely memories of the European Championships, but I also remember Phoebe and I losing out in the bronze women's doubles bronze medal match and I am determined to make sure that doesn't happen again.

“Tennis has given me structure and has highlighted that anything is possible if you work hard and are committed to it. Being given this amazing opportunity to represent GB at the upcoming Maere Cup is incredible. Tennis at this high level is such an important part of my life and I'm grateful for the opportunities I've had and the amazing, positive people I've met along the way who believed in me and gave me a chance. I am now a Level 1 coach at my club and have a group of young players on a Saturday morning - I love coaching them and hope to inspire them so that they continue to enjoy tennis, but also develop their passion and skills, too”

Phoebe Suthers

Lives: Elland, West Yorkshire
Age: 15
Trains: Huddersfield Lawn Tennis &
Squash Club
Coach: Lawrence Kelly
R/L: Right-handed



QUOTES:

“I’m very excited to make my debut for GB in the Maere Cup. It should be a brilliant experience and I’m very proud to represent my country. I think it’s going to be a tough tournament. From my previous competitions I know there are strong players in both doubles and singles. I’m looking forward to seeing which countries we will play and how they use their tactics. When there is a team playing there can be players of mixed standards within the teams, so I’m interested to seeing how that all works out.

“Training has been going very well with the GB deaf tennis squad. It’s great to have different people to play with other than those I play with back home and I always love the training camps. They have enabled me to improve my game and play practice matches with Valerie (Copenhagen - fellow Maere Cup team member) and we can see the improvements on court through each one of them.

“Winning in Slovenia (at the Slovenia Deaf Open in May) has given me a huge confidence boost for Turkey because now I know what I’m able to do and achieve. My level of play in Slovenia was amazing, and I’m hoping I will play even better in Turkey. I learnt in Slovenia that no matter who you come up against, anything is achievable when you put your mind to it.”