

INTERNATIONAL BLIND TENNIS TOURNAMENT – SPAIN 2017

GREAT BRITAIN TEAM PLAYER PROFILES

Nikhil Nair

Category: B1
Age: 41
Club: Vision4Growth
Lives: Cambridge
R/L: Right-handed



Major achievement: Reaching the singles final of the National Championships for the last three years and winning both singles and doubles titles in 2015.

Nikhil's Story: Blind since the age of nine, Nikhil was Cambridge University's first blind science student, graduating with a double first in 1997. He had been a cricket batsman for 25 years before even picking up a tennis racket, but then a team mate told him there was a tennis club in his home city of Cambridge. He went along and tried it in July 2013, and thoroughly enjoyed it right from the word go!

Quote: *"I've been dreaming about playing international blind tennis since my first National Championships in 2014, so to get that chance now really is a dream come true - as well as an incredible privilege. I'm absolutely delighted to be in the GB team."*

"More than anything else, I'm looking forward to seeing how the playing styles, as well as standards, vary from one country to another."

"Since they're putting the first world rankings together after this tournament, I might just have my beady eye on the currently vacant world No.1 slot!"

Yvette Priestley

Category: B1

Age: 41

Club: Sutton Coldfield

Lives: Birmingham

R/L: Left-handed



Major achievement: Competing at the National Championships has given me the experience of playing against players who have very different tennis styles.

Yvette's Story: Yvette started playing in 2014 when a friend of hers went to a tennis session. She was very curious and went along with her - and has been hooked ever since. She says she is 'one of those odd left-handed characters', which makes some things easier and other things more difficult.

Quote: *"Being selected is brilliant because this event is the first of its kind and to top it off I will be representing GB."*

"I am looking forward to meeting players from other countries and finding out how they learn and train. Apparently the Japanese are the masters in my sight category so it will be interesting getting to know them."

"I hope to reach my potential when I am there, and then bring back what I learn to share back home."

David Deas

Category: B2

Age: 52

Club: North-East Visually Impaired
Tennis Club

Lives: Newcastle

R/L: Right-handed



Major achievement: Mixed doubles national champion in 2014

David's Story: David first got involved with tennis in 2013 after Wendy Glasper (founder of the North-East Visually Impaired Tennis Club and now fellow Great Britain team member) placed a flyer at the Northumberland Tennis Club and a friend told him about it. He rang Wendy and he started practising from there.

Quote: *"Being selected to play for Great Britain has motivated me to train harder, get fitter and practice more, which is improving my game and I am now really looking forward to the challenge."*

"I am looking forward to playing against players from different countries who are an unknown quantity, and also receiving some coaching from Louise Assioun, who I have met recently, I found her suggestions really helpful and I think she can really help my game."

"I hope the team does well and that I can achieve a top 10 world ranking. 'World No.1' has a nice ring to it!"

Wendy Glasper

Category: B2

Age: 57

Club: North-East Visually Impaired
Tennis Club

Lives: Darlington

R/L: Right-handed



Major achievement: Wendy set up the North-East Visually Impaired Tennis Club and gets a big buzz from getting people involved in tennis and really enjoys spreading the word about the game.

Wendy's Story: Wendy first found out that blind and visually impaired people could play tennis in 2007. Not knowing anything about the sport, it took her two years to find out where to order balls from (Visually Impaired players use a foam ball with a bell inside of it so they can hear the bounce of the ball). In 2010 she played in her first tournament, she was buzzing after the experience and after returning from the tournament to set up the North East Visually Impaired Tennis Club (NEVITC). Wendy wanted other partially sighted people to discover tennis as she had. This was one of the first tennis clubs set up for blind and partially sighted people in the country and with Wendy's tireless efforts numbers are continually growing with over 30 members now. Wendy is secretary of the club and as a Level 2 Coach runs coaching sessions and helps organise and run various tournaments throughout the year.

Quote: *"I'm looking forward to going to Spain for the first time to play tennis and feel really proud to represent GB. I don't know the standard of play but I am looking to play the best I can and hopefully win some games. I feel very privileged to be able to do that – ecstatic!"*

Chris Baily

Category: B3

Age: 39

Club: Marefield Lawn Tennis Club

Lives: Uckfield

R/L: Right-handed



Major achievement: 2016 men's singles and doubles national champion, as well as winning the doubles title in 2015

Chris's Story: Chris has been playing tennis since his mid-teens, and has played in club teams in the lower teams. In 2012 he went trekking in the Sahara and met someone who played blind football. They told him about blind/VI tennis – on his return he went to first session at the National Tennis Centre in Roehampton, home of the Tennis Foundation, and loved it. He is also now a Level 1 Coach.

Quote: *"I am keen on sport but have never been really good so I never dreamt beyond my wildest dreams that I would represent GB! I'm looking forward to meeting and socialising with players from other countries, and hoping to go as far as possible in the draw – maybe even win it!"*

Brenda Cassell

Category: B3

Age: 44

Club: Metro Blind Sport

Lives: Leytonstone, London

R/L: Right-handed



Major achievement: 2016 women's doubles national champion; 2015 B2 – B3 women's singles national champion

Brenda's Story: Brenda played VI cricket and then someone in her team suggested she should try tennis. Since starting to play she has gained confidence in herself and feels proud just being able to play tennis let alone compete.

Quote: *“Playing for GB is beyond any dream. Wow somebody pinch me! This is a huge honour and I am truly humbled. Go GB!”*

“I'm looking forward to walking out on the court in my GB gear and meeting other VI players from around the world – and hoping to bring home the winner's trophy!”