



## CAMBRIDGE TOUCH ASSOCIATION

England will be forced to be reckoned with at the European touch rugby championships this week and 16 Cambridge players will be doing their best to ensure the Three Lions come out on top.

The tournament hosts are looking to confirm their position as the stronghold of the game in Europe in Bristol and players from Cambridge, one of the frontrunners in the game nationally, are at the heart of England's quest.

Dave Woolley, Dan Mendis, Daniel Holland and Ed Rawe will line up for England's four-time defending men's open side.

Player-coach Woolley, who will contest his third tournament, knows they will be under close scrutiny from other nations, but is confident six months of preparation will pay off.

"You cannot determine the results, but we've looked at taking the best prepared side we can into the tournament. I'm not sure we could be in any better position.

While expectations are high for fifth men's title on the trot, Woolley added: "We have a young squad. A lot of the squad from the last few years have moved on to the over-30s. Having such a young side is a good thing because, while the older guys know what to expect, the younger players are not aware of that expectation."

Woolley eyes Scotland and Wales as strong contenders, but is not underestimating any country, including their opening opponents on Thursday, France.

"We played them last year and they were not that good, but the year before that they were brilliant. You just don't know what French team is going to turn up on the day."

Mekayla Barker is a member of the open's women's team seeking to win a seventh crown, while England Mixed Open, which includes Sue-Ellen Godde, are vying for a second title.

Colin Hulett, Jon Lovell and Stan Barkhuysen will line up for England Senior Mixed, but the side has been dealt a blow by the late withdrawal of Jean-Francois Popoff through illness.

In the Men's Over-30s, Steve Cleary and Travis Kenny will want to impress, while Russell Gould and John Tate will be doing their best for the Men's Over-35s.

The Men's Over-40s side includes Stuart London, Chris Young and Jo Whitehead and is coached by Simon Yarrow.

Cambridge chief selector Lovell said the number of representatives is testament to development of the game locally.

"The standard of Cambridge touch has grown hugely. The London Super League was previously the only league where you got a high standard but we now have a league which produces some very good teams and players.

"The NTS also means Cambridge players can consistently play at a higher level again."

Referees will also have to raise their game at the Euros where local officials Shane Hills, Uma Ramaswami and Yarrow will be putting their skills to the test.