

# Bloomfield celebrates call to Davis Cup team

Richard Bloomfield was today adamant that he's ready to step up from team cheerleader to team principle should the need arise after being named in Great Britain's Davis Cup squad for next month's Euro-African Zone Group One tie against Holland in Birmingham.

Bloomfield, 23, from Alington, has climbed to 183 in the singles rankings and earned his place on the back of some impressive performances on the Challenger circuit so far this year.

Bloomfield joins Andy Murray and his brother Jamie, another debutant, in John Lloyd's squad along with veterans Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski prior to the first rubber, due to take place at the NEC on April 6.

Bloomfield said: "It's a great honour to be named in the squad and I guess it's recognition for the progress I've made up the rankings in the last year. I missed out under previous regimes and it's nice to be included."

The British No 4 added: "My duties will include knocking up with the likes of Tim and Andy before their matches and being the water boy, but I'm sure the experience will be a good one.

"It's certainly a sell-out crowd for the first day and it will be nice to soak up that kind of atmosphere. "We've got a strong team for this tie against the

Netherlands. It is vital for us to win if we are to work our way back into the World Group."

Henman's inclusion brings an end to his Davis Cup retirement, having called it a day after he last played in the competition against Austria in Portschach in 2004. Henman, whose original retirement announcement was born out of his desire for a more comfortable schedule in the twilight of his career, was persuaded to return after a number of meetings with Lloyd.

After years of carrying the burden of the team's hopes almost single-handedly, he is also known to be excited by the prospect of handing over some of that responsibility to world number 12 Andy Murray.

Meanwhile, Murray's older brother Jamie has been rewarded for his magnificent doubles form with his first call-up. The 21-year-old has risen to a doubles world ranking of 43 after winning two ATP tour titles this season.

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Joining the elite: Richard Bloomfield has been called into the Great Britain squad for the Davis Cup tie against Holland. PHOTO: EN LIBRARY