

Cawley hoping to gain some experience

By Dean Benson

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Young Canberra local, Nathan Cawley, says he is happy just to be participating at the 2010 Athletes with a Disability National Table Tennis Championships despite showing some impressive form early on Day 2.

Cawley, 14, won his A3/A4 Open Standing Singles match against New Zealand representative Mark Wilson 3-0 on Tuesday to boost his confidence ahead of the teams' events.

There he is set to combine with ACT teammate and the tournament's third seed, Patrick Horn.

"Patrick and I are good friends and we train together on Mondays," Cawley said. "I'm looking forward to playing with him and hopefully it will be a good game".

As for the tournament overall, Cawley is excited just to be involved, especially as it is being staged in his hometown.

"It means a lot because it is here in the ACT so it is a home game for me," he said.

The youngster, who only started playing table tennis four years ago when he moved to the capital from South Australia, says that events such as this are vital for players like him to build up their confidence and gain some invaluable experience.

"I haven't been to many tournaments," Cawley said. "So it's good to get some games under my belt and to be able to practice my shots. That's why we're all here... to get some experience".

Cawley's father, Mick, says that despite the competitive nature, the welcoming atmosphere of the tournament is great to be amongst.

"The table tennis community is a wonderful group of people and when you get together it's always in a good spirit," he said. "So it's a wonderful experience for Nathan to meet these people".

But, according to Mr Cawley, the best thing about this tournament is the high standard of skill on offer.

"What always amazes me is that you see some of these athletes come along and the way they can actually play some of the shots is just a hugely impressive experience," Mr Cawley said.

However, Mr Cawley is still hoping the ACT team can hold their own.

"I think the ACT boys will do well but there is some pretty tough competition out there," he said.

Despite the depth of talent, Nathan also wants the tournament to be more than just a fun experience.

"Hopefully I'll come out with a medal," he said.

The finals are due to be held on Wednesday afternoon.