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## **SAMANTHA MURRAY TO LEAD YOUNG GB TEAM AT WORLD CUP #1 IN MEXICO**



**A young eight-strong British team will contest the first modern pentathlon World Cup of 2014 at Acapulco in Mexico that begins Wednesday 26 February**

London 2012 Olympic silver medallist Samantha Murray is, at 24, the most experienced member of a team in which half of the athletes are 21 or younger.

Murray, currently ranked 16th in the world, is joined in the women's team by Kate French, whose 10th place finishes in the individual competitions at last year's World and European Championships saw her climb to 21st in the world rankings.

Two Scots complete the GB line-up for the women's competition – Freyja Prentice, who returned from injury to finish fourth at last year's Europeans, and 19-year-old Jo Muir, who made her World Cup debut in Palm Springs a year ago and now contests her second World Cup.

Former world junior champion Jamie Cooke goes into the opening World Cup of the year off the back of a strong 2013 that saw him win first World Cup gold in Hungary and finish fifth at the World

Championships to end the year ranked fourth.

Twenty-year-old Joe Evans starts his second season competing at World Cup level. He made a stunning start a year ago winning bronze in Palm Springs on his World Cup debut. He tops the world junior rankings and is 13th at senior level.

Sam Curry, also 20, won bronze at last year's European Junior Championships and is fifth in the world junior rankings. He contests his fourth World Cup. Tom Toolis, fresh from winning the men's competition at national ranking competition 2 at the University of Bath this weekend, competes at his second World Cup.

Jan Bartu, Pentathlon GB Performance Director, said: "This is the second year of the Olympic cycle leading up to Rio, so the bar is rising gradually for athletes. They all have a lot more experience than a year ago and we expect them to show a good international standard at the first World Cup of the season."

Bartu said current world rankings – based on results over the last 12 months – should not be considered pointer to performances in coming events. "Each season everyone starts again on zero really, it's an open book. They need to forget what's happened in the past. It's a new season with new dynamics," he said.

Mhairi Spence, Britain's 2011 world champion, and Nick Woodbridge, silver medallist at last year's World Championships, both sit out the Acapulco World Cup. Both are working their way back to full fitness following injury.