



Can you follow our official pathway to the Commonwealths?

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Table Tennis England is launching a series of umpire training courses primarily aimed at under-25s and females and which could open up a pathway to officiating at the 2022 Commonwealth Games and other major international events. #BEPARTOFIT

The intention is to create a bigger and more diverse group of umpires and to encourage younger people to make the step into officiating by making them more aware of the opportunities umpiring can bring.

Those who enrol on one of our upcoming Level 1 courses also have the added incentive of being mentored and trained to be able to step up to Level 2 in time for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, for which a diverse group of English officials will be appointed.

[What does it mean to be an international umpire? Click here to read the personal experiences of two Commonwealth Games umpires](#)

We are also looking to extend the pool of local umpires who can be selected for our PG Mutual National Championships, which will be hosted by the University of Nottingham for the next three years at least.

Our first target area is the Midlands, with courses in Birmingham and Nottingham now taking bookings from women and under-25s on a first-come, first-served basis, with a maximum of 10 places per course. The minimum age is 15.

Anyone from the following areas and counties can book: Birmingham, Cambridgeshire, Derbyshire, Herefordshire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire.

The courses are as follows:

Birmingham Level 1 Course (tutor Alex Mercer)

Day 1: Saturday 2nd February; The Lighthouse Young Peoples Centre, 100 Alma Way, Birmingham, B192LN; 9.30am–4.30pm; Cost £30

Day 2: Tuesday 16th March; Nishkam High School, 20 Great Kings Street, Birmingham, B192LF; 1pm –6pm.

Nottingham Level 1 Course (tutors Alex Mercer and John Mackey)

Day 1: Sunday 5th May; Carlton le Willows High School, Wood Lane, Gedling, Nottingham, NG4 4AA; 9.30am–4.30pm. Cost £30

Day 2: Sunday 19th May; Carlton le Willows High School, Wood Lane, Gedling, Nottingham, NG4 4AA; 10am –3pm

To book a place on a course [please click here](#).

For an informal chat about these courses, please contact Chris Newton on 07904 115138 or chris.newton@tabletennisengland.co.uk. It may be possible to provide help towards expenses and course fees for those attending.

Further courses will be arranged, which will be open to other age groups, later this year.

They are being organised as part of our #BEPARTOFIT campaign, which will aim to increase the number of people involved in the sport ahead of Birmingham 2022. As well as increasing the number of qualified umpires, we will also be looking to engage new tournament organisers and event volunteers in the lead up to the Commonwealth Games.

‘Umpiring puts you at the heart of the game at the highest levels’

Tom Purcell is a Level 4 International Blue Badge Umpire – the highest level of umpiring. He has umpired at major events around the world including: three Commonwealth Games (Manchester 2002, Glasgow 2014 & Gold Coast Australia 2018), two World Championships (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 2016 & Sweden 2018), and the London 2012 Olympic Games.

“The highlight of my career was being selected for the Olympic Games 2012 and also being selected to umpire the Men’s Gold Medal Final,” said Tom.

“When you umpire finals at the major tournaments there may be hundreds or a few thousand in the arena watching the match but for the Olympic Men’s Gold Medal Final there were approximately 7,000 spectators in the arena, but there were millions of people watching on TV all over the world,” he added.

Talking about why others should begin umpiring, Tom said: “Table tennis is a great sport to play and to watch and as an umpire you are at the heart of the game and at the highest levels you see the best players in the world. At local and national levels you also see the best players.”

Harry Jutle is also a Level 4 International Blue Badge Umpire. He took his Level 1 course in 2010 and since then has umpired at major events around the world including: World Veteran Table Tennis Championships (Auckland, New Zealand), two Commonwealth Games (Glasgow 2014 & Gold Coast Australia 2018), Special Olympics World Games (Los Angeles), European Championships (Budapest, Hungary), World Junior Championships (Cape Town), European Championships (Alicante, Spain) and World Tour Grand Finals (Incheon, South Korea).



Speaking about his experience of umpiring at the 2018 Commonwealth Games, he said: "It was a great honour to represent our Association and to umpire the two Australian Women to decide the winner to compete for gold, and the loser for bronze.

Talking about why others should begin umpiring, Harry said: "If you enjoy the sport then you can have the best seat in the house."

FAQs

What do I need to take the Level 1 Umpire Course?

You don't need any qualifications or experience to take the course. However, experience of playing table tennis and an understanding of the basic rules would be beneficial.

How old do I have to be?

Anyone aged 15+ can sign up to the course.

How many places are available on the course?

There are 10 places available on each course and are allocated on a first come, first served basis.

What does a Level 1 course involve?

A Level 1 Course is a two-day process that begins with a training day with an International Standard Umpire. Full knowledge of the main laws of the game will be passed over in a practical way followed by an online test paper.

Day two consists of an assessment of umpiring skills at a table tennis competition. Tutors will guide applicants through this and bring them up to a suitable level.

I can't make the dates. Will there be other opportunities?

More courses will follow before 2021, however these two courses have been scheduled to maximise the training period before the Commonwealth Games 2022, to ensure that the individual reaches the required standard to be able to be selected.

How do I reach the standard to become eligible for selection for the Commonwealth Games?

It's a tough process to become eligible to umpire at a major event like the Commonwealth Games, so a deep level of commitment is required from the individual from now until 2022.

To be eligible for the selection process for the Commonwealth Games 2022, you will need the following:

- Level 1 Umpire qualification
- CPD course completion
- Level 2 Umpire qualification, including:
 - Experience at umpiring at 8-10 events over a two-year period*
 - Exam paper
 - Practical evaluation of skills

Mentoring and support will be provided to those wishing to work towards their Level 2 qualification.

**Please note the Level 2 qualification cannot be taken until significant experience of umpiring at events has been gained.*

How does the selection process work for events like the Commonwealth Games?

Table Tennis England will provide the Commonwealth Games organisers with a list of nominated umpires. It is then the job of the organisers to decide who is approved. For your name to be put forward by Table Tennis England, you will need to have reached the minimum standard of a Level 2 Umpire.

I can't afford the course. Can I get financial help?

A small amount of financial help is available to help those who are unable to cover the costs themselves. However, this is reserved for those who can demonstrate a real passion for both the sport and volunteering, and would be unable to complete the course on their own. To find out more contact Chris Newton, Table Tennis England Volunteering and Development Officer, on 07904 115138 or chris.newton@tabletennisengland.co.uk

What if I already have my Level 1 Umpire Award but want to be considered for Commonwealth Games selection?

You will need to undergo a Level 2 qualification to be eligible for selection for the Commonwealth Games 2020. Table Tennis England staff can support and mentor you on this journey. If you would like to work towards selection eligibility, please contact Chris Newton, Table Tennis England Volunteering and Development Officer, on 07904115138 or chris.newton@tabletennisengland.co.uk

I would like more information. Who can I speak to?

For an informal chat about these courses please contact Chris Newton on 07904 115138 or chris.newton@tabletennisengland.co.uk

I don't want to become an umpire, but I'm interested in volunteering in another way. Are there any other opportunities to be involved?

We are looking to engage new tournament organisers and event volunteers in the lead up to Birmingham 2022. Details of this will be released at a later date. To register your interest and to be first to hear about opportunities, [click here](#) and fill in the form at the bottom of the page.

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