



## Young Ambassador scheme a success

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Young Ambassadors have clocked up more than 500 hours of volunteering in clubs and leagues across the country in less than 12 months!

Table Tennis England launched the Young Ambassador volunteering initiative in June 2018. It aims to give clubs and leagues the tools to grow their volunteer base, while enabling young people aged 14-25 to gain personal skills, qualifications and vital experience to enhance their career prospects.

A total of 22 clubs and leagues signed up to the programme in year one, with 25 young people giving their time, effort and energy towards ensuring new and existing players have great experiences in our sport.

All clubs are eligible to sign up to the scheme, with Premier Clubs receiving part-funding to provide their young volunteers with incentives when they hit the key volunteering milestones of 10, 30 and 50 hours. This includes a £95 bursary for a Level 1 Session Coach course or a full bursary for a Level 1 Umpire course, as well as Table Tennis England branded kit.

So far 11 Ambassadors have received certificates and bursaries for completing 10 hours, and nine of them have booked on to a Level 1 Coaching Course. In addition, seven have hit 30 hours to receive their Young Ambassador T-shirt; and one – Jamie Menzel of Branksome Heath Table Tennis Club – has completed 50 hours to earn himself a hoodie.

Greg Yarnall, Head of Development & Volunteering at Table Tennis England, said: "It has been fantastic to see the enthusiasm shown by our Young Ambassadors. It's vital that the sport engages with young people like this, taking their views on board and harnessing their skills – as well as helping to take the pressure off existing volunteers."

## Meet Young Ambassador Sophie Storey



Sophie became a Young Ambassador in January and has been involved in a project to help more beginner girls at coaching sessions. She has also volunteered at the PG Mutual Senior National Championships as a ball girl, and is currently organising an end of season presentation event for the Weymouth youth players. Sophie was recently presented with her first volunteering certificate from the Young Ambassador Programme by Dorset coach Matt Ware.

Speaking about the scheme, Sophie said: "I enjoy the volunteering and helping young children get involved with table tennis, as there's not as many young people getting involved as in other sports.

"I hope to help increase the number of players and especially help to encourage and inspire young girls in getting further with table tennis.

"I also really enjoyed the opportunity that I had to be a ball girl at the National Championships held in Nottingham, as it was inspiring to see players like Tin-Tin Ho and Maria Tsaptsinos achieve what they can at such a high level and I would like to try and get there one day myself."

Andy Millar, Weymouth & District Table Tennis League Development Officer, added: "The introduction of the Young Ambassador Programme has been an excellent investment for our league coaching programme.

"The Young Ambassadors have all been beginners themselves before and they understand what is required to improve and how they can inspire the next generation of players.

"Sophie has a great rapport with the younger players and she is building up good coaching experience if she wants to take that further."

The Table Tennis England Young Ambassador Scheme will reopen in September 2019 for clubs and leagues to sign up. To find out more about the programme, [click here](#).

Last week, Table Tennis England also launched its Female Ambassador programme, and are searching for great female role models to sign up to help inspire more women and girls to take up table tennis. To find out more and submit an application, [click here](#).

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