



Lyndon joins the elite of world umpiring

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Lyndon Griffiths has reached the highest level of umpiring, attaining his Blue Badge status from the ITTF.

He becomes the seventh English official to currently have Blue Badge status, alongside Nico Caltabiano, Neil Curtis, David Edwards, Harry Jutle, John Mackey and Tom Purcell.

Lyndon, aged 69 and from Sutton at Hone near Dartford, only began umpiring in 2011 when he was coming to the end of his career as a corporate treasurer in the defence industry.

He said: "I wanted a hobby in my spare time. I played in local league at a very average level – I still do – and one of my league colleagues said he had seen an advert for a course.

"So I qualified as a County Umpire, as it was then, and I enjoyed doing it. I probably averaged about one tournament a month after that and after two years I was asked if I was interested in doing the National Umpire course (now Level 2).

"That enabled me to umpire at a higher level, such as the Nationals, and again I thoroughly enjoyed the whole process.

"In 2016 I passed the International Umpire exam and I've done about 12 international events in the past three years – the Team World Cup in London and the European Championships in Alicante in 2018 were the most high-profile."

Lyndon then took his Blue badge exam, which he passed in Austria in November 2018, where he also attended the Advanced Umpire Training Course.

Having passed the exam, he was then evaluated successfully over a number of tournaments to be ranked as 'meets expectations'.

Now Lyndon hopes to umpire at more high-profile events and is encouraging others to take their Level 1 course

and get on the umpiring pathway.

He said: Realistically, I recognise I'm not a young umpire and I don't expect to be able to umpire at the Olympics, but the main aims are to continue improving as an umpire and also to have a higher chance of being selected for more higher-ranking events.

"I would say to young umpires, you need to do more events and pick up experience and valuable advice from the other umpires – there's always something that happens at a tournament that you've never come across before – and you have to be prepared to devote the time.

"The reward is personal satisfaction, and also it's fantastic to be in court. Having played local league level, even as a Level 1 umpire you are umpiring top-20 players in the country and it's quite an experience and a joy to be able to sit so close to the action."

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