



Umpires step into international ranks

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Posted On: April 08, 2020

English umpires Jenny Sanders and Jo Outhwaite have joined the global ranks of officials after passing their International Umpire exams.

The coronavirus pandemic meant the exam was taken online, but that did not stop the duo from passing and stepping up to the next level of officiating.

That means umpiring at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham in 2022 could be on the cards for the duo.

Jo, who has been progressing through the umpiring ranks from county level since qualifying in 2013, said: "I'm chuffed, really pleased, though it was a bit strange sitting it online at home. I'd love to get to the Commonwealth Games, certainly.

"The reason I got involved was my son played a lot and had the benefit of umpires during his junior years, so it was nice to give something back.

"I play and enjoy the game and as an umpire you're often watching very good games and it's a chance to see the best players – so it's part of enjoying the game.

"I think it improves your own game as well, as you're in a position to see different styles and how people deal with them."

Jenny, who has been umpiring since qualifying at County level in 2014, said: "Table tennis has been in the family for a long time. I don't play in tournaments, so I thought I'd try umpiring.

"I'd love to be at the Commonwealth Games in 2022, though I'm a bit scared about doing the later rounds because I'm not sure I want to be on TV!

"I'd like to do some more foreign events. I did the Island Games in Gibraltar, which was a really nice event."

Both Jo and Jenny have been supported through the Table Tennis England umpiring pathway, by the Technical Officials Committee and by individual mentoring.

Jenny added: "I've had some really good feedback from referees and I've had a lot of support from John Mackey and Alex Mercer through the exam, and Steve Smith and Dave Edwards have been helping me too.

"All the umpires like to share their knowledge and give advice."

* Table Tennis England has been promoting training for female and under-25 umpires as part of our officials and umpiring pathway. This area of our work, helping to safeguard the future of our sport, is funded by membership fees.

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