



## The only place is BATTs for TOWIE cast!

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Table tennis got the TOWIE treatment as stars of the hit ITV show filmed at the BATTs club in Harlow ahead of a charity ping pong tournament.

TOWIE – for the uninitiated, that's *The Only Way is Essex* – star Kelsey Stratford set up the tournament to raise money and awareness for Spinal Muscular Atrophy, a condition suffered by her younger sister Kennedy.

Ahead of the tournament, cast members filmed a segment at BATTs in Harlow, where it emerged that one of them, Amy Childs, had represented Essex as a young teenager.

Amy even wore a BATTs shirt for the scene, describing her career and vowing to beat her cocksure fellow cast member Tommy at the tournament.

The filming was done on October 8, under social distancing conditions before Essex entered a local Tier 2 lockdown later that month. The episode was shown on the ITVBe channel on Sunday night.

"They came along one Thursday afternoon at the end of one of our adult sessions," said Andrew Webb, who was the BATTs hall supervisor on the day.

"We provided beginners bats, a multiball bucket and some barriers, as well as the tables. It was all done in a very Covid-compliant way – all the crew wore masks and it was done with the cast 2m apart.

"The characters were doing some practice and there was a little needle between them – taunts were exchanged and challenges thrown out.

"Amy came along with her brother who apparently had played for England as a junior. He looked very rusty but you could tell he had been pretty good in his time, and it was the same with Amy. She didn't have any kit, so we raided the BATTs shop and provided her with a shirt.

"It all worked out very well. We were pleased to have them and it was interesting to observe the filming practices

up close.

“There was a bit of revenue for the club and when they showed it on Sunday night, they had our logo on screen for quite a while at the start of the section, so it was brilliant publicity for us.”

Viewers also watched some highlights from the tournament, which was held at a bar in Brentwood, where the show is largely set. It was duly won by Amy, beating Tommy in the final.



Tommy and Amy contest their match during the ping pong tournament on The Only Way Is Essex Photograph (C) Lime Pictures

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