

EPPA: Record-Breakers

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The English Ping Pong Association proudly declared that they have broken the World Record for the number of consecutive balls hit by different players late on Sunday evening.

Although it is yet to be confirmed by the Guinness World Record authorities it is surely just a matter of time before the new record is recorded and the players officially registered as record-breakers.

Like the previous attempts, it was held in Shoreditch, East London at the Richmix venue by the EPPA. The record was previously held by an academy in China where they recorded 101 successive hits but the players in London managed to raise the bar to the new level of 107 hits.

The evening was not without its drama though as it took several attempts and around four hours to finally break the record's resistance.

John McShane, who participated in the event, said: "After only managing 10-15 hits for the first attempt and then missing the table, it was not a good start. But the people got stronger and there was a feeling that we were going to do it."

He added: "We went away and got to 98 hits which was agonisingly three short but then we went back to just 10-12 shots before a miss."

When the final (and successful) attempt came there was a sense that the record was soon to fall. McShane said: "I was in the queue and there was shouting from everywhere that this time the record would be broken.

My friend from Urban Progress, Rayna Bagchi, was in front of me and she hit the 48th ball on the table before it was my turn, my nerves were all over the place but my ball did go on."

McShane explained how after playing his part, all he could do was sit and wait in hope: "We got back in the queue for another go but this was it as we were on 80 hits. I could not look and I told Rayna not to look but to cross her fingers instead.

Then the cheer went up and we had done it '107 hits – we are now the world record holders of Pongathon'."

McShane hopes this achievement will inspire better things for the development of table tennis in England – with an eye on some big wins at the Olympics next year. He enthused: "I hope that this will inspire our boys and girls that anything is possible if we only try and never give up. If we all work together then great things can happen. Bring on the Olympic Games because we are ready as a nation."

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