

Local officials get chance at Men's World Cup

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Karen Tonge MBE is a regular around the ETTA circuit

With the arrival of the Men's World Cup coming close at hand it's not just the players and spectators who are in eager anticipation of its arrival in Liverpool.

When the Echo Arena opens its doors on the 28-30th September it provides a once in a lifetime opportunity for three local officials to take part in a major international tournament in their own backyard.

Karen Tonge MBE, from Runcorn, will be the Deputy Referee at the Men's World Cup while Tom Purcell and Stan Clarke, both from Liverpool, will also be umpiring at the event.

Tonge, who qualified as an International Umpire in 1988 and International Referee in 1997 said: "This is special honour to be selected by the ITTF to be the deputy referee at the Men's World Cup, which is a very prestigious event on the ITTF calendar."

She added: "This is an amazing opportunity to be given by the ITTF and ETTA.

It is a rare occasion to officiate at this level in ones own country and as North West Regional Chairman of ETTA it is proud occasion, which I will remember for a long time."

Purcell, who has been playing table tennis since he was 12 and who has umpired around the world in events including the European Championships and Men's World Cup final last year was equally enthusiastic about the opportunity.

He said: "Umpiring in my own city is a real bonus. Seeing such a major event in Liverpool allows the people and players of Merseyside and the North West to see the world's top players and allows the spectators to see the standard required for umpires to work at such events.

Hopefully such a prestigious event in our area will encourage new, younger people to become umpires."

Clarke, a novice player whose interest took him into coaching before making the transition to umpiring, hopes that such a big event will attract large crowds to the Echo Arena:

"I am delighted that an event of this importance is being held in my home area and only hope that the local players respond by attending in great numbers."

[To get tickets for the Men's World Cup click here](#)

By Russell Moore

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