

Mackey set for Women's Team Final

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The London 2012 Olympics has provided a real boost to British umpiring with yet another high-profile selection for a British official in ExCeL.

Following Tom Purcell's selection for the Men's Singles Final we have since had Mick Strode, Jonathan Whitaker and now John Mackey taking control of big Olympic matches as the table tennis event comes to its conclusion.

After Strode (ENG) and Whitaker (SCO) both officiated in Women's Team semi-finals, it is now the turn of Mackey (ENG) to lead the way in the Women's Team Final between China and Japan today at 3:30pm.

Mackey was understandably delighted with his appointment: "Being selected for an Olympic Final is the most amazing feeling. It is difficult to describe the joy and the feeling of honour to both myself and British umpiring.

I think it is possibly every umpire's dream to officiate in a final in the world's ultimate multi-sport event but I never in my wildest dreams thought it could happen to me."

His selection has been the culmination of a career in the game and perfectly concludes a year and a half of outstanding international events for Mackey.

He said: "This is the pinnacle of my umpiring career, having officiated in the Men's World Cup Final, Final of the Pro Tour Grand Finals, European Championships Final and the English Pro Tour Final. This honour rounds off an incredible 18 months in which I have been to five major international events and officiated in a final in each of them."

He was also quick to thank those who have helped him to where he is today: "One has to keep one's feet on the ground in order to maintain a high standard of professionalism. This is maybe a good opportunity to express my gratitude to umpires who guided me and encouraged me, especially in my early years after qualifying as a County Umpire in 1996; without them I would not be where I am today. A special thanks to each of them."

Like Purcell, in the Men's Singles Final, Mackey won't be able to take in the atmosphere during the match so his family will be keeping an eye out for him.

He said: "My wife, Sue, will be recording the match for me, and family and friends will be watching. The star of the show is never the umpire, it is the table tennis, and with my Women's Team Final of China versus Japan I am anticipating a thrilling match."

By Russell Moore

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