

World Record attempt at Roundhouse

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The ITV crew were out in force at Roundhouse in Chalk Hill, London for the world record attempt by Mark Smith and Emre Ibatoglu to be shown tonight (Tuesday) on Beat TV, ITV 2.

Beat TV is a series of programmes on ITV this summer that celebrate the social side of the London Olympics, with yesterday's effort by the Focus Table Tennis boys part of their look at cultural events from The Games.

Smith, the London 2011 Champion, and Ibatoglu, the Schools' under-19 Champion, were hoping to break the world record for most table tennis counter hits in one minute, currently held by Japanese world number 149 Mima Ito with a target of 180.

The pair from the Ernest Bevin Table Tennis Club were closely watched under the beady eyes of Beat TV presenter Dave Berry, and Guinness World Records Adjudicator Ben Backhouse.



Dramatic times for Dave Berry (left) and Ben Backhouse (right)

However, after a number of attempts the plucky pair were unable to break the record with 146 hits their recorded best.

Smith said: "I didn't think we'd beat it but I thought we'd have a chance – it was the first time we've ever had a go. I think the sustainability of it for a minute is something we need to train more to do – that's a mission.



He added: "If you look at the first 30 seconds and the last 30 seconds there's a lot of difference. I think we lacked that bit of consistency. We could have gone another 20."

Ibatoglu was also positive after the attempt: "I don't worry about it, I don't see why not – we were not that far off. This is the first time we've trained. If you had a world record outside you would get more people to do it because its looks fun so its good to promote the sport. Like football, people see you playing and it catches on."

Although, after playing for a few hours, it did take its toll: "My wrist is dead, I can no longer use it."

The event was also a good advert for social table tennis, something that is really catching on with the success of Ping! and the sudden reinvigoration of sport in society, of which the Olympics has played a big part.

Backhouse, the record adjudicator, was sure that this exposure will help table tennis in the long-term: "It's great, we've had sporting marathon records and one minute records like this so you can see skills that pass over.

Its always going to raise the exposure of the game, its going out tomorrow (Tuesday) night and I'm sure there's a few people who will say 'oh I fancy having a go at this.'"



Children get involved with ping pong during the event

Equally, Smith was hopeful of another shot at the record and another chance to promote the sport: "If it gets more coverage and it's better promoted, people get more knowledge of the game and that starts the ball rolling. It's about building lots of aspects and then it's about luck, that's when it lights the fire and we've got to believe that.

I'd love to try again. If we get another opportunity to do it I'd train for it like the other one. Its good publicity for the

sport – it's not out of the question to do it."

The programme is on ITV 2 tonight at 6:30pm. For a full photo gallery of the event at Roundhouse [click here](#).

By Russell Moore

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