



## It's official! Stuart is named referee for Rio Olympics

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Stuart Sherlock has been confirmed as the table tennis referee for the Rio Olympics.

The 61-year-old from Blackpool was chosen for the honour by the ITTF from its elite panel of seven officials on the Advanced Referee Group. He also refereed the test event in Rio in November.

It is a step up from deputy referee at London 2012 – although coming from the host country he was not eligible for the top job – and adds to the accolade of refereeing last year's Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

Stuart has known for a few months that he was in line for the job, but the ITTF have now been through the formal process of asking Table Tennis England for permission to appoint him – which has been agreed by Table Tennis England.

"It's excellent, I'm so pleased," said Stuart. "Obviously the information came through about three or four months ago, but until somebody puts it on the dotted line and asks Table Tennis England for permission to make the appointment, it's not set in stone.

"I've now done three major multi-sport events – the Commonwealths in 2002 and London Olympics as deputy, plus the 2014 Commonwealths as referee – so I've got a good background."

Stuart will have Silvia Garro of Costa Rica as one of his deputy referees at the Olympics, with two more deputies to be appointed, along with the umpires, in the coming months.

There is also a strange co-incidence that both Stuart and the Paralympic referee CK Chan of Hong Kong are graduates of the University of Salford – Stuart was an undergraduate studying chemical engineering while Chan was furthering his mathematics studies.

Stuart said: "We think we overlapped but we can't remember meeting each other, though we must have because we both love table tennis."

Stuart, who will be joined at the test event by umpire David Edwards, added: "I've been out to Brazil already, three times since 2009 in order to help them train their umpires and officials, including the referee who's going to be deputy at the Paralympics.

"The visit in November is part of that, helping them put together the best event they can ready for when the big

day arrives.”

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