



Umpire David prepares for a Rio thriller

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David Edwards will add another great experience to his CV when he umpires at the Rio test event later this month.

The 52-year-old International Umpire has previously officiated at the Athens Olympics in 2000 and the Paralympics in 1996 and 2012, in addition to World, European and Commonwealth events.

But he says the Rio event, which runs from November 18 to 21, will still be a big highlight of a career which began in 1994 – for several years he was the youngest International Umpire.

“It’s going to be great, I can’t wait,” said the Hertfordshire official. “I’m going to be one of only six or eight umpires from outside South America who will be there and that makes it even more special, really. I’m really pleased to be doing it.

“I’ve done Commonwealth Games, Olympics and Paralympics, plus Worlds and a couple of test events, but this is still pretty high up.

“I’ve never been to South America before, so that’s another bonus. I’ve added a few days on to make it a bit of a holiday. Without a doubt, I’ve always wanted to go to Rio. You see it in films and it looks incredible, so when this came up, I thought it would be silly not to apply.”

David will be joined in Rio by referee Stuart Sherlock, who has been [appointed referee for the 2016 Olympics](#) as well. The English contingent will be completed on the playing front by Paul Drinkhall.

The umpires for next summer have not yet been appointed, but David does not believe he will be in line for a return to the city of Copacabana and Corcovado.

“I’ve already done one Olympics and it’s also unusual if you get both the Test event and the Olympics,” he said. “I would doubt I would get both, but you never know.”

Whatever the outcome of that, David will enjoy his Rio experience, which has in part been financed by Table Tennis England’s Tom Blunn Fund, to which officials and others can apply for financial assistance. Hertfordshire TTA and one of his local leagues have also made contributions.

“It’s always brilliant going abroad and the opportunity to represent the Association is quite an honour,” he said. “It’s great to have the support that I’ve had.

"It's quite an experience seeing the players at that level – it's a totally different ball game, as you can imagine.

"I also did the London test event, which turned out to be the Pro Tour Grand Finals, which made it even better because all the top players were there.

"Hopefully some of the top players will be in Rio as well – they've opened it up to the top nations. If I were I player, I'd want to go and see what conditions are like and get some match practice in the venue."

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