



## Celebrating sport's strongest link – our volunteers

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Table Tennis England is celebrating Volunteers' Week and we want to say a massive thank you to all of our amazing volunteers across the country who contribute in many different ways to making table tennis happen.

Volunteers' Week is running until 12th June and celebrates the contribution made by millions of volunteers across the UK.

Everyone is invited to join this national celebration of volunteers and volunteering and it is a perfect opportunity to thank the volunteers who support your club, league, county or competitions as we draw towards the end of the season.

If you do not currently volunteer but would like to find out more about how you can get involved, some opportunities are included below.

**Volunteer at your club** – Clubs are always crying out for new volunteers, from helping with the club finances to organising social events there are always opportunities to support your club and local community

**Become a coach** – Like all volunteering, coaching is a very rewarding voluntary role giving you an opportunity to stay active and hands-on with the sport, whether you want to inspire young and old to get active and keep fit or start the journey of the next Paul Drinkall or Liam Pitchford. [See a current list of coaching courses here](#)

**Umpire** – Umpiring in a local league match or competition is what some players try to avoid but umpiring is a fantastic chance to experience top table tennis matches from a front-row seat and even work your way through to the Olympic stage like our very own Stuart Sherlock, who is the Referee for the Rio Olympics this year. [Find your local course or register your interest here](#)

**Event volunteering** – If you are interested in volunteering in sport but can't make a regular commitment, then volunteering at our events can be a fantastic way of giving something back or gaining some experience, whilst

also experiencing the buzz of an event. [See our current opportunities or sign up to here about future events by clicking here](#)

This is what two of our volunteers had to say about their experiences:

## Neil Brierley



Neil Brierley running a junior umpires' training session

"I do most of my volunteering at BATTs and have been involved with BATTs for around 25 years.

"The most rewarding thing about volunteering at BATTs has been to see the club flourish and the development of a busy junior coaching scheme.

"The best experiences I have had have been the huge thrill of seeing some of our youngsters play for England and seeing our elite senior side holding their own in the Senior British League premier division. Plus the Waldner /Persson exhibition we staged last year! Also, improving the facilities at the club over the past 10 years to make it a welcoming and top-class venue.

"My advice to anyone considering volunteering is to go for it! Be enthusiastic and this will rub off on others and help you to develop a great team to support you. People like being involved in things that are running well."

## Nico Caltabiano





Nico Caltabiano umpiring at the Cadet & Junior National Championships

"I have not been umpiring long. I qualified as a County Umpire in 2012 after attending one of the first Umpires Seminars that were organised. I was lucky to have three very good International Umpires tutoring during that seminar: Margot Fraser, Mick Strode and the late Andy Seward.

"In 2014 I qualified as a National Umpire which was the next step of progression. I was always helping at Waterside Table Tennis Club in tournaments and events, and also being taxi driver to my son to tournaments around the country. As I had to go to these tournaments anyway, I thought 'why not as an umpire?' I enjoyed and continued doing it, now even going to tournaments that my son does not play.

"Besides having the best seat on the house, especially when I am lucky to umpire good matches, I do enjoy the camaraderie among umpires. Also, it is good to know players and see their evolution with the years. Of course, I don't like when I have to warn players if they misbehave but the large majority are very good!

"I took the written test to become an International Umpire last month and I am waiting for the result. Fingers crossed! Of course, the ultimate goal would be to umpire during the Olympic Games. But I would trade umpiring an Olympic final if that meant that an English player would be playing.

"My best advice probably would be: don't be afraid to ask and listen to advice. And enjoy the ride!"

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