



Harry Jutle's Blue Badge journey

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Table Tennis England umpire Harry Jutle was named as a Blue Badge Umpire by the ITTF earlier this year – here, he describes his journey to achieving that distinction.

To put Harry's achievement into perspective he joins only five other current Blue Badge Umpires from England.

Three England International Umpires were selected for the ITTF European Table Tennis Championships on 18-23 October 2016 in Budapest, Hungary.

As well as umpiring the event we were also there for the Advanced Umpire Training (AUT) course and the Advanced Rules Examination (ARE) Test paper.

For this we were advised to come a day early and hence an extra night accommodation required. My two colleagues were able to come early, but my situation did not allow me to do this as I had to attend my nephew's engagement. It was not an ideal situation for me to get three-and-a-half hours' sleep and attend the AUT course at 8am.

The course was conducted by two ITTF Evaluators and we sat the ARE examination at 11am. Then back to the AUT course.

Are you interested in becoming an umpire? [Click here](#) for more information.

During the first two days I was paired with a Spanish blue badge umpire and on the third day I was paired with umpire from Hungary, who was reluctant to umpire, so was assistant for two matches before umpiring the third. I found out later that this confused the evaluator as he was expecting alternate role switch duties.

During one of the matches on the fourth day, I was umpiring a Men's Doubles on table 4 with my back to table 2 on which Tin-Tin Ho was 3-0 up in games against Georgina Pota, but Tin-Tin failed to close out the match as

Georgina slowly turned the tables, with the home crowd cheering. It was difficult to ignore the temptation to turn around and take a look, but I had to act the professional!

Soon after that I was delighted to find out that I passed the ARE and had two “Meets” confirmed – meaning the evaluators had rated me as up to the job. This made it a very enjoyable event and I managed to see lot of the local sites and do some shopping.

For my second event Russell Sutcliffe (BB) I were selected to umpire at the 2016 ITTF World Tour HYBIOME Austrian Open in November 2016 in Linz, Austria.



Harry Jutle and Russell Sutcliffe

Here I was paired with a Korean BB umpire for two days and later discovered that we were evaluated by the Austrian evaluator who has a reputation for being very to get a “Meet” from. I soon discovered why as he went through so many little things he looks for.

I feared the worst as I sat there in shock while he’s going through an A4 sheet of comments, believing he’d given me “Does Not Meet”. He did offer a lot of advice on how to improve. Although at the time I was very disappointed, looking back on it, I believe I am a far better umpire for it.

On the third day I was paired with an Algerian umpire and was evaluated by one of the course evaluators who gave me a Meet. I left this event feeling a bit low, convinced that the Does Not Meet had cancelled the Meet, so I still only had a total of two Meets.

Nominations now open for the Pride of Table Tennis Awards – including a category for officials. [Click here](#) for more information or to make a nomination.

For my third event I was selected for the World Junior Championships on 30th November – 7th December in Cape Town, South Africa.



Harry Jutle in the chair at the World Junior Championships

During the first two days I was paired with a home umpire and we both had a Meet evaluation on the second day, from a German evaluator. This evaluator was very impressed the way we swapped duties and said it was the best changeover he'd seen at the tournament. He was also impressed the way I helped my partner along whenever he made a mistake and said we worked well as a team. He was very thorough with our debrief, pointing out the positives as well as the negatives and how to improve.

He also said to me that as this was my fourth Meet, his colleague would not evaluate me. I was surprised by this and asked him to check because of what happened in Austria. He said he was pretty sure that no one received a "Does Not Meet" in Linz as he was the lead evaluator there.

He checked and the next day he confirmed that I had four Meets. He really made my day. He said the final part was an interview to test my spoken English.

I had my interview on Tuesday 27th December on Skype with an evaluator from Netherlands and the [confirmation of my Blue Badge status appeared on the ITTF website](#) in the new year – I was one of a total of 15 umpires from around the world to gain Blue Badge status.

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