

ENGLISH TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION Ltd

I WANT TO BE AN UMPIRE - HOW DO I GO ABOUT IT?

The qualification of umpires is under the supervision of the ETTA **National Umpires and Referees Committee (NURC)**, which sets the qualifying standards and procedures. The basic qualification is **Local Umpire (LU)**, which is intended primarily for those whose main interest is in umpiring at local competitions. The requirements are a sound knowledge and understanding of the Laws and simple scoring procedure, and the ability to apply this knowledge in the control of matches. The LU examination consists of a written test and a practical test. The written test paper, which candidates answer at home and in their own time, consists of about 60 questions. These are in the form of statements about the Laws and the elements of match conduct, which candidates have to mark as true or false. Those who pass the written test then have to demonstrate their practical ability by umpiring a singles and a doubles match in front of two experienced observers. These matches do not have to be specially staged and ordinary league matches are suitable. Successful candidates are registered by the NURC and issued with an official certificate.

The main umpiring grade is **County Umpire (CU)** and it is the qualification for those who wish to umpire at events outside their own area, such as open tournaments; there is no requirement to take first the LU test. The written test paper is similar to the LU test paper and is again taken at home and in the candidate's own time, but the questions cover both the Laws and the ITTF Regulations for International Competitions. Having passed the written test, candidates must show that they can apply this knowledge properly and that they are temperamentally equipped to control a match in front of spectators. For this reason, practical tests are carried out at staged matches, such as local league finals, because people who can umpire quite satisfactorily without spectators may be unable to do so in public. Candidates are tested on two separate occasions by two examiners and on each occasion they have to umpire one singles and one doubles match, making a total of four tests. To pass, they must perform satisfactorily in at least 3 of these tests. If none of the matches includes play under the expedite system a separate test will be arranged, at which the system is deliberately introduced. The examiners assess the candidate for **accuracy** - prompt, accurate decisions; for **control** - calm authority without officiousness; and for **presentation** - clear, well-timed score announcements, easy and impartial manner, tidy appearance. Good umpiring requires qualities that are difficult to measure, such as the right manner, voice and timing, and the test procedure is designed to search out these qualities.

The test procedure for both LUs and CUs is normally conducted by the appropriate County Association's CU Secretary, but the NURC occasionally conducts seminars at which candidates can, after a training course, take both the written and practical tests. Successful candidates are registered by the NURC and issued with a lapel badge. They are then eligible to umpire at competitions such as open tournaments* and have the opportunity to progress to the **National Umpire (NU)** grade. Candidates for the NU examination must normally have at least 2 years' experience as CUs, including officiating at 6 or more open tournaments. Exceptionally, the period may be reduced slightly for an umpire who has extensive experience in officiating at competitions conducted under the ITTF Regulations for International Competitions. After being nominated by their County Associations candidates are first invited to attend one of the National Championships for practical assessment. If this is successful, they take a supervised written test on the Laws and International Regulations, without the use of reference books, and finally they are interviewed by a panel consisting of 2 or 3 members of the NURC. Those who meet the required standards are appointed NUs and can officiate at any match under ETTA jurisdiction*. With further experience, they can be nominated by the ETTA for the ITTF International Umpire examination, which is a requirement for major international competitions.

* Note: It is ETTA policy that anyone officiating at an event in which players under the age of 16 may take part must have CRB clearance; there is no cost to the individuals concerned.

Further information on qualification and any other umpiring matters is available from the NURC Secretary:

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