

## Olympic Excitement Reaches Whitburn

### Torch bearer aims to do flamin' good job



*HONOURED ... Nick Ridgeon is looking forward to being a torch-bearer.*

A SOUTH Tyneside sports coach is limbering up for his moment in the Olympic limelight. Nicholas Ridgeon, from Westoe Village in South Shields, has the honour of carrying the Olympic Torch through Whitburn on Saturday.

The 23-year-old, who works for England Athletics as the club and coach support officer, was nominated for his voluntary work in sport.

He said: "It's a great honour to be chosen to carry the torch. If someone said I'd be doing this a few years ago, I would have never believed them.

“I think the Olympic games are a great way to get kids involved with sport, obviously none of them will be able to compete this time round, but in the future they will be able too, and if they can have fun and get involved at a young age, then that’s a good thing.

“I admire the inclusivity of the Games, and I think it breaks down borders.

“We can all enjoy the Paralympic and Olympic Games as one world and one community celebrating sport together.

“I feel this is almost like a pay back for all of the voluntary work I have done over the years, and it’s a privilege.”

Mr Ridgeon should be handed the torch at 8.39am on Saturday, at Mill Lane, in Whitburn.

Despite his excitement, he is also slightly nervous over the prospect of dropping the beacon.

He said: “I am really excited, and I am also looking forward to meeting up with the other torch bearers, because in their biographies there seems to be quite a few interesting people to meet.

“But, I am also very nervous, I am the kind of person who drops things, so I really hope that doesn’t happen.”

Verity Ward & Angela McGhin (Gazette)