



**British Duathlon Championships
Windsor Great Park, 3 April 2016**

Aztec Jersey Tristars Academy athletes gain experience as Gorrod wins national age-group title.

Four members of Aztec Jersey Tristars recently made the trip to Windsor for the British Duathlon Championships which were held for the first time in Windsor Great Park, in the shadow of Windsor Castle. Peter Holmes, represented Jersey in the Youth Male category alongside Florence Gothard, Adele Maher and Lily McGarry in the Youth Female category. All four athletes are part of Jersey's regional triathlon academy coached by Nick Saunders, with Holmes and McGarry also selected to train with the British Triathlon South Central Academy.

In the Youth age category the event was made up of the super-sprint distance which is exactly half of the distance completed in the senior elite championship and comprised a 2.5km run followed by a 10km cycle and a final 1.25km run.

The Youth boys (aged 14-16) were first to race and Holmes, as the sole Jersey entrant, was keen to get amongst some of the best athletes in the country in his first year in this age category. Setting off at a fast pace he stuck with the main pack until the turn point but realising this pace was not sustainable he backed off after the turn, entering first transition 49th out of the 60 entrants. Taking just 38 seconds to pass through transition including a change of shoes, putting on a helmet and collecting his bike from its allocated rack, Holmes quickly established himself with a group of riders on the way up the first long drag and onto the two lap cycle course. Holmes completed the 10km ride in 19:26 hanging onto the back of a large group of 13 riders including two fellow members of the South Central Triathlon Academy. Second transition was slower than the first due to another bike racked in Holmes' space but after finding an alternative position and collecting his run shoes he set off in pursuit of the rest of his group. A strong second run of 4:39 (26th fastest of the day) was enough to move him up through the field with two final positions picked off with a strong sprint finish to take him up to 37th position. Holmes' description of the cycle course was "fast and scary, you were just trying to hang on to the group for dear life" but he was particularly pleased with "a fun final run, it's always fun when you are passing other athletes but the sprint finish is always hard".

Next up Jersey's three Youth girls lined up against a field of 45 other girls into a crowded and narrow start area where there was much jostling and pushing for position before the starting pistol was even fired. Leading runner Florence Gothard, completing her first full season in triathlon after a switch from athletics, found herself jostled down the pack early on and it was experienced triathlete Adele Maher who was the first Jersey athlete at the turn point on the first run. Gothard was running strongly though and managed to overhaul Maher before first transition, arriving at 11:46 with Maher just 13 seconds behind. Meanwhile McGarry, much stronger in the pool than the run and suffering the after-effects of illness was struggling towards the back of the field. Onto the bikes and Maher was confident, knowing that she was closer to Gothard than expected and more experienced in group drafting than Gothard. Maher's bike racing experience showed as she worked together with a competitor to good effect, Gothard stuck with Maher's group for a short time but found herself without the gears to keep up the fast pace and completed much of the cycle alone, a significant disadvantage. McGarry

managed to catch and work with some of her competitors on the bike, moving up five positions. On the final run Gothard suffered from the effort on her bike ride while Maher's experience showed as she made up a further place to finish in 34th position at the end. Gothard was just over a minute behind and pleased with the lessons learned in her first race at this level. McGarry's efforts on the bike left her with little to give on the final run and again she struggled, losing some but not all of the positions she had gained on the bike.

All four athletes commented on the high quality of the field and look forward to returning again next year where they will remain in the same age group. The race also counted as the first event in British Triathlon's Youth Super Series, with the athletes all planning further Super Series races through the summer in the form of Triathlon and Aquathlon races.

Showing that there is more to their skills than just coaching, Aztec Jersey Tristars coaches Jo Gorrod and Dave Holmes also raced in the days' events. Island Games 2015 medallist Gorrod, competing in the standard distance age group national championships, was seventh lady across the line and took the British title in the 45-49 age group. Her time was 2:19:51 for a 10km run, 40km cycle and 5km run. Holmes, who has rarely competed since representing Jersey at the Bermuda Island Games, was tenth over the line in the sprint distance race (6.5km, 20km, 2.5km) and third in his age group.