

**STATEMENT TO BE MADE BY THE ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM, SPORT AND CULTURE
ON WEDNESDAY 17th JULY 2019**

Last weekend saw a momentous weekend for British Sport with the England Men's Cricket team joining their Women counterparts as World Champions in an epic encounter against New Zealand at Lords and Lewis Hamilton winning a record breaking 6th British Grand Prix at Silverstone.

Professional sport often takes the headlines in the media and provides many of the role models that aspiring young athletes look to follow such as Jersey's Serena Guthrie, the England Women's Netball captain, who is performing so admirably at the current World Cup.

Many of these high performing athletes would have found it difficult to reach the heights they have in their favoured sport without the help of grass roots sport with all the volunteer coaches, managers, administrators and helpers who are prepared to give up their free time to provide opportunities for young people to try various sports and hopefully find a sport that they either excel in or simply play for enjoyment or to keep fit.

Not only was last weekend so memorable for sport nationally, it also saw the return of our NatWest International Island Games team from Gibraltar after what was without doubt an incredibly successful and momentous week for Jersey on the international sporting stage.

Last week saw our team top the medal table winning 93 medals overall, 33 Gold, 31 Silver and 29 Bronze beating our nearest rivals the Isle of Man, Faroe Islands and Guernsey who won 29, 22 and 19 Gold medals respectively.

A number of the Gold Medals won by Jersey athletes were won by achieving Island Games records with some truly incredible performances but equally important were the athletes who achieved personal bests in the respective events whilst representing their Island. Having seen close up so many medal performances, it was abundantly clear that no medal at this international event was easily won and we should thank all our athletes for the dedication and commitment they have shown in both qualifying for the games and for performing so well in Gibraltar.

Time and time again I saw Jersey athletes pushing themselves to the absolute limit in pursuit of success and I had tears in my eyes on a number of occasions as I was filled with pride by our athlete's performances.

I hope all members and Islanders more generally are proud of our team's achievements in Gibraltar.

I am sure that everyone including all our athletes acknowledge the part that managers, coaches, administrators and helpers have played in the development of each and every member of our Island Games team and I thank all those who played their part in making the games in Gibraltar so successful. We are blessed in Jersey that we have so many dedicated volunteers that support sport at all levels and we should thank them all for their efforts.

The Island Games Association of Jersey must be applauded for yet again doing such a sterling job with the travel and accommodation needs of the team and liaising with each of the sports to ensure they not only had the best possible preparation prior to arrival in Gibraltar but also the necessary support during the games. We should be extremely grateful to Chairman Steve Jacobs, his Organising Committee, Team Manager, medical team and physios for all their hard work and

dedication. Those competing in the open air, such as cycling, athletics and triathlon, had to deal with both heat and humidity so having good medical support was vital. There are always injuries at such a large sporting event but I am sure we would all wish men's cyclist Sam Firby a quick recovery after his very nasty crash during the road race.

We must be thankful that Gibraltar stepped in at relatively short notice to host the 18th NatWest International Island Games after another island pulled out. Their commitment to providing high quality, modern facilities was truly impressive with the Government of Gibraltar committing approximately £70 million into new and refurbished facilities. The development of these facilities not only provided the opportunity for athletes in the Island Games to compete in world class venues, but also has given the people of Gibraltar an ongoing legacy that will not only support the development of the next generation of athletes in Gibraltar but importantly give all Gibraltarians greater opportunity to stay fit and healthy, both physically and mentally, an aim that we as an island have committed to within our Common Strategic Plan. This commitment to encourage and support islanders to stay fit and active means we will also need to invest in facilities in a similar way to Gibraltar based on evidence and our needs.

I have asked our Chief Minister to write to his counterpart in Gibraltar to thank him, the Government of Gibraltar and all Gibraltarians for their generous hospitality to our team and for the well organised and successful games that they held last week.

Although there were some remarkable individual performances I have chosen not to single out any individual. Our athletes left as a team and returned as a stronger team of which we should be extremely proud.