



NatWest Island Games 2011
25 June – 1 July

PRESS RELEASE

23 June 2011

PROFILE: AARAN WILLIAMS INTERNATIONAL WINDSURFING CHAMPION & ORGANISER OF THE WINDSURFING COMPETITION

On 25 June – 1 July, the Isle of Wight will play host to one of the largest sporting events in the world.

The NatWest Island Games – a plethora of sporting events that runs throughout the week, organised and represented by the very locals that we know and grew up with. But this island is full of colourful characters; some with their larger-than-life personality and past experience have been selected to run certain events. In a way, this specific individual is the right person for the job.

Aaran Williams, a local-born and raised wind chaser and all round water sports athlete, has been made the organiser of the Windsurfing event at the Games. He comes from a family whose affinity with the sea borderlines on the religious, he and his brothers were in fact 'baptised' at a young age by their father on the sandy beaches of Ventnor.

At first it was simply sampling the playful waves generated by the powerful Atlantic, rolling around in the white waters as it end its long journey on the sand. But fairly quickly as that particular hurdle and source of entertainment began to wane the young boys interests were captured by what laid beyond the foamy aftermath of a wave, setting their eyes on the horizon where it was made – compelling, raw and untapped.

Aaran began taking to the seas at the age of six years old. It was then his parents had organised lessons for him and a few short years later he competed in his first slalom race (aged 10). During the race it was discovered that he had a talent and was recognised by the Youth Masters that perhaps he had what it took to take part in the National Circuit.

Since training on the circuit, he amassed a huge amount of experience and skill that placed him in the top four under 15's windsurfers by the time he was 12. He excelled at all competitions that he took place, usually resulting him walking away with a few medals and sponsorship deals at the end. When asked about the highlights of professional career, Aaran lists them with fond nostalgia; in 1992 he took silver in the World Junior Championships, 1993 he won the European Junior Championship, 1997 he took silver in the Men's Australian Under 21's Competition and last but not least in 2001 he took 1st place in the British Men's Senior Competition.

Now married, Aaran is still heavily involved in the sport – running a all purpose beachwear and surf shop, alongside his windsurf business he still finds time to continues to inspire the younger generation of people on the island to take to the seas. This enterprise alongside his older half-brother (Scott Gardner's) surf centre (Wight Waters) coupled with Aaran's youngest brother, Ross Williams' prestigious accomplishments as the current third ranking Windsurfer in the world, instils the confidence of this year's windsurfing event to go off with out a hitch.

The windsurfing competition will take place at Yaverland, Sandown Bay. For full details of events, please visit : www.natwestislandgames2011.co.uk

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Article written by Joseph Back, Sports Journalism student from University of Arts London, who will be writing regular hightlights on the windsuring and sailing competition during the Games week.

NOTE TO EDITOR

1. Could you please refer to the event as the 'NatWest Island Games' (not "Island Games" or "The Games") at the start of articles and in headlines, and 'the Games' mid copy, as appropriate. Thank you.
2. Background :
 - The International Island Games were established in the Isle of Man in 1985 and today include 25 member islands in, or associated with, the nine sovereign

nations of Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Norway, Spain, Sweden, UK plus the Caribbean :

Aland	Alderney	Bermuda
Cayman Islands	Falkland Islands	Faroe Islands
Froya Islands	Gibraltar	Gotland
Greenland	Guernsey	Hitra Islands
Isle of Man	Isle of Wight	Jersey
Menorca	Orkney	Prince Edward Island
Rhodes	Saaremaa	Sark
Shetlands Islands	St Helena	Western Isles
Ynys Mon		

- In 1999, NatWest became the title sponsor of the Island Games which has become one of the largest participation events in the world behind the Olympics and Commonwealth Games.
- The NatWest Island Games 2011 are being run by the Island Games Association (Isle of Wight) supported by the IW Council, which is also a sponsor.
- The 25 member islands compete every two years around the world in a range of up to 14 sports chosen by the host island from a list of 18.
- Sports chosen for 2011 are :
Archery, athletics, badminton, basketball, cycling, football, golf, sailing inc. windsurfing, squash, swimming, shooting, table tennis, tennis, volleyball
- The NatWest Island Games were last held on the Isle of Wight in 1993.
- Further information is available at www.natwestislandgames2011.co.uk and www.islandgames.net

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www.natwestislandgames2011.co.uk