

2015 was another fantastic year for local sport. The Island Games were the highlight for many and some of the youngsters included in Team Guernsey have made it onto **Matt Lihou's** list of 10 of the year's rising stars

# Sam Culverwell (cycling)

A YEAR that has been described as 'stunning' has seen Sam Culverwell firmly establish himself on the junior national mountain bike scene.

Throughout the 2015 cycling season, 15-year-old Culverwell travelled away to the UK regularly after being accepted onto British Cycling's Olympic Apprentice Programme.

Following various strong results and performances, he has been invited to stay on the programme for another year.

He is just one of six riders to be chosen in a south-

ern region that encompasses everywhere south of Manchester and he can look forward to another 20 trips during 2016.

Culverwell raced across various top-level series during 2015, including the National Series, the National Championship, the Southern Series and, briefly, the Midlands Series.

The National Series comprises six events and his best finishes were a sixth and a seventh place, despite being a year younger than many of his rivals.

Indeed, at nearly every event he was the best-per-

forming first year junior rider.

Unfortunately, luck conspired against him at the National Championship race on the Olympic course at Hadley, as Guernsey Velo Club president Gary Wallbridge explained.

'I actually think that was Sam's best performance of the whole year because he was riding incredibly strongly and felt like he was on course for a fantastic result.

'Finishing fourth overall was something that seemed realistic given how he was riding and the race

was unfolding because he had a really good chance of reeling in the leaders.

'But then he punctured and had to retire from the race, which meant that he finished 12th overall in the national standings for the year, which are heavily weighted in terms of certain races.'

Also in that brilliant season was Culverwell playing a part – alongside Alex Van Katwyk and Brad Vaudin – in Guernsey's trio winning the British junior 10-mile time-trial championships in Hertfordshire.

