

Gearing up for the International Island Games 2023 with cyclist Chloe-Watson Hill

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Senior associate Chloe Watson-Hill is joining more than 2,000 athletes, from across 24 islands, to compete in the NatWest International Island Games 2023 being held in Guernsey. Representing Jersey, the road cyclist, who began her racing journey in 2020, will be competing in three events.

Ahead of the games, Chloe explains how she balances her intense training schedule around her busy practice in the Jersey Corporate team, and how Ogier's people first culture has enabled her to pursue her passion.

What's your training routine?

I am typically training six days a week for anywhere between an hour and four hours each session, with a mixture of off-the-bike workouts, including strength training and yoga, to support my overall fitness. In the winter months I mainly use a turbo trainer and cycle in a virtual world using Zwift, which allows you to have an avatar in a virtual world and cycle alongside other people in real time. My guilty pleasure during the more intense sessions is putting on some pop throwback tunes.

Ogier's flexi-working culture has been instrumental in my training. I'm able to stagger my work day to fit training into the afternoon and then resume my work in the evening. It's a great example of how to ensure a healthy work-life balance that supports your passions and gives me the added bonus of helping to re-focus my mind during the day. In addition, my coach Andrew is great at creating a flexible plan that works in conjunction with my work schedule - if I'm having a particularly busy week then we can adapt my training to support this.

What are you most looking forward to about the Island Games?

Being able to compete on an international stage. I started racing in July 2020 and after just three months I was selected for the Island Games that was scheduled to take place in Guernsey in 2021. However, the island was still in lockdown due to Covid and it was postponed until 2023. I kept racing and competing with this in mind and I was reselected to represent Jersey in October 2022. This is the longest run up to an event I have worked towards and I'm really excited to finally be able to take part and see all the other events taking place, especially the mountain biking and triathlon.

I'm competing three times during the week as part of the road cycling team. The first event is a 29.2km time trial where we race independently to hit the best time. The second event is a 71km road race spanning the west of the island with laps of a circuit and first over the line wins. The final event is the criterium, which takes place in the town - it's a short circuit of just 1.4km that typically attracts lots of spectators - first one over the line after 45 minutes of racing is the winner. Each race requires a different set of technical skills, from pacing yourself correctly to managing tight corners and descents, which keeps things interesting.

| How do you keep yourself motivated?

For me, it's all about constantly improving, getting fitter and stronger to beat my own personal best. When I train I wear a heart rate monitor and receive power data from my bike so at the end of each session the data is uploaded to my training platform and I'm able to see how I did, what can be improved and my overall progress. It's great to see how far I've come and to feel myself getting physically stronger and faster on the bike.

I'm also incredibly fortunate to have an amazing support team, from my coach Andrew, nutritionist Kit, masseuse Sarah, physio Claire and chiropractor Charles, all of whom have helped to get me to where I am now. A special mention also has to go to Ogier and especially the Jersey Corporate team, who have been incredibly supportive of both me and the cycling community as a whole, even sponsoring the Jersey Gran Fondo back in April. We have a people first culture at Ogier which urges us to prioritise our physical and mental wellbeing, so my training has always been respected and encouraged.

Cycling has also allowed me to travel to places I wouldn't have otherwise visited and meet like-minded people who all share a common passion with similar lifestyles and goals.

| When did you fall in love with cycling?

I got my first road bike back in 2015 as my husband was an avid cyclist and I wanted a way to stay fit and spend time together. In 2019 I really started pushing myself to see where the sport could take me, and the rest is history.

For me, I love the feeling of being fit and getting somewhere under your own steam, from being

behind my desk to zooming down a hill ten minutes later is an incredible feeling. Cycling gives you a sense of freedom and there is a brilliant cycling community in Jersey. The camaraderie among cyclists is unmatched, whether in a race or simply giving a wave or sharing a nod with someone heading in the opposite direction.

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