

## Surrey President speech by Zara Hyde Peters – March 2024

This is a speech in 3 parts - I can usually just about remember 3 things!

Firstly let's talk events! My second year as President has flown by. Partly this is because Surrey has a year round County offer. We should all be immensely proud of the comprehensive competition offer. I have handed out medals at County Disability Track and Field Championships, age group and senior track and field, Derek Crookes IC track and field event, Combined Events and track relay, championships, road relay championships, masters XC championships, age group and senior cross country championships and indoor track and field championships.

I have always believed a county association exists to provide stepping stones and local competition I don't think you will find a better county! But, of course, I am biased....

Now let's talk athletes performances. Of course, the ones that stick in your mind are those you watch on TV or in person!

Jesse Knight anchoring the GB womens 4x400 to bronze at the World indoors...Niamh Brown and Georgie leading Surrey senior women to a gold at the nat IC cross country (the third time in succession) - one

of four team gold medals alongside a silver and both individual male and female medals. I hope that the Naomi Walmsley, U13 girls silver medalist was watching our U20s and seniors and felt inspired!

Last summer saw more Surrey athletes representing their country with distinction. At Budapest World Championships 2023 Lawrence Okoye, Morgan lake, Imani Lansiquot, Jesse knight, Katie Snowden and Adele Tracey run, jump and throw with distinction with a relay medal for Imani, and Morgan starting to fulfill her promise with 4<sup>th</sup> in the High Jump.

Surrey athletes success continues - too many to mention but once again I am grateful to Keith for a statistical website beside which Power of 10 pales into insignificance....if you have never explored...try the athlete look up! And how many sites will give you county results from 1936?

Next weekend when most of us will be tucking into Hot Cross Buns and Easter eggs, we can put our feet up and watch the World XC with Niamh brown selected along with James Darghan...and Will Barnicott follows his fine U23 Euro Bronze last summer with selection for GB XC this month.

As always Surrey teams are a force to be reckoned with in Sportshall winning gold in 5 of 6 categories for girls and boys U11, U13, U15.

And lastly I do want to talk about the people that make all of this possible. In my time as President I have discovered that every year we hold an Officials dinner - and what a fun event it is! Other counties envy our cohort of experienced and willing volunteers. And I am pleased to say that Rachel and I are no longer the youngest - the welcoming team and excellent support and mentoring from our seniors continues to grow others. This is a good natured and willing volunteer team who work tirelessly for the sport. I said it last year and I will say it again - without our volunteers athletics would not thrive as it does. You are the sport!

As I hand over my medal of office I would like to say a huge thank you. In 2019 I was in danger of leaving the sport I love - but Frances, the Surrey committee and the Surrey family have reminded me what our sport is about and for this I will always be grateful!

Good luck to Lesley and Graham.... I will see you in May when I will be handing you the medals...