

Winter 2017

back pages

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF CHRISTIANS IN SPORT



THE ISLAND THAT LOVES RUGBY

INSIDE

The life of an Olympic chaplain

What happens when a church gets sporty?

Adriano Medeiros: Faith in the fast lane

CHRISTIANS IN
SPORT



christiansinsport.org.uk

WHAT'S INSIDE

NEW SIZE FOR A NEW YEAR

Welcome to your new Back Pages magazine. Following your feedback in the last issue's survey, we have decided to produce smaller, but more regular magazines. This will enable you to hear from us more frequently and, we hope, be encouraged by how God is at work in the world of sport. This issue see us look at the island of Jersey and its passion for rugby, what an Olympic chaplain gets up to in the village and a riveting interview with a motor sport star.



Ed Mezzetti

Back Pages Editor

City of York Athletic Club,
St Thomas' Church, York



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Our Mission

To reach the world of sport for Christ.

Our Vision

Christians everywhere living out their faith in sports clubs and teams.

Churches everywhere engaging with their local sports communities.

Sportspeople everywhere having the opportunity to hear the good news of Jesus.



For all the latest news, features and resources, keep visiting christiansinsport.org.uk

Key: Youth Student Adult Elite International Church

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. (1 Peter 3 v 15, NIV)

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“The reason I go to church on Sunday is that I follow Jesus! Do you ever go to church?” Those words changed my life. Gwyon Jenkins was a really good cricketer in the school first eleven, and he sat by me on the team bus when I'd been chosen at the last minute because they were one player short. Gwyon said those words in response to my time-

something about the good news of Jesus, then he asked a question requiring some kind of response from a younger fellow sportsman.

This was no threat to me because he was a fellow sportsman! This was my world, the world of sport. He was normal and he was a Christian! He just acted and spoke



filling question on the journey home. I had simply asked “What did you do at the weekend?”

“I played cricket on Saturday then I went to church on Sunday,” he said. That prompted my surprised response: “Why did you do that?” That 18-year-old kept in touch with this 15-year-old for a further six years as I worked out that knowing God through turning and believing in Jesus Christ needed to be the anchor of my life.

My perspective was forever formed by Gwyon Jenkins, who did two things in that schoolboy chat. First, he said

naturally about his faith in Jesus.

In 1 Peter 3 v 15, we are called to put Christ first, say something of Him and ask questions that we are willing to try and answer, but we must do so with respect.

We could put it this way: live for Christ, tell of Jesus, ask a question and, just like Gwyon, be good at being normal in our world of sport.

Graham Daniels

General Director

Cambridge United FC and

St Andrew the Great, Cambridge





GOD'S WORK IN THE WORLD OF SPORT

SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2016

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Here are some great stories of sportspeople reaching out with the gospel across the UK. We hope you will be encouraged by what you read.

I joined the tennis team when I started at Surrey University last term. We had a University Group meeting on praying for our teammates and it deeply encouraged and convicted me to be praying more for those around me, particularly my sporting friends. I prayed for my friend George, who I go to the gym with, at the meeting and throughout the day after. This led to some amazing conversations over the next few days and an opportunity to invite him to the Alpha course.

Barney Alexander – Surrey University

Since the launch of the sports mission tool kit 'ReadySetGO' globally in November 2015 and across Europe in May 2016, over 2,000 people have been taught to deliver the training. To put it in context, the previous sports mission material taught 857 people over five years. There have been over 86 ReadySetGO training sessions in 141 cities across 26 countries in Europe. These teams have put on over 697 'Go strategies' which are sports mission events proclaiming the gospel in a variety of methods such as camps, KidsGames, in partnerships with churches and local communities and working one on one with athletes. At the time of writing, these 697 events have reached over 49,545 people with the gospel.

Caroline Reid – International Co-ordinator



Leaders from across Europe at the ReadySetGO Plus training event

ACTS Community Church in Wales' Rhondda Valley used the Sports Mission Pack to run a 'Fit Always' event for their local fitness community. Around 90 people, including 40-50 guests, played rounds of the Sports Quiz, took on fitness challenges and heard testimonies from an Ironman triathlete in her 60s and two ultramarathon runners. Church member James Piper runs fitness classes in their building seven days a week and this event built on that base. Please pray that many members of this fitness community will be drawn into church through the event and the invites of others in the class. They are planning an Alpha course in January.



A selection of selfies from some of our University Groups

Our Sports Quiz worked really well at Peterhead Football Club. We had over 40 people with quite a few non-Christians and quite a spread in ages. We were firing through the first three rounds, so did some impromptu challenges in between rounds such as balloon lifting and burpees. It just added to the laugh and people responded well. We started a Christianity Explored course a couple of weeks later from that night and from some other things we had been doing.

Ruth McCaig - Peterhead Baptist Church

Back in March last year a couple of Christians in Sport staff, Interns and Academy students spent three days with us here at Strathallan School in Perthshire. The team were involved in teaching PE and RE classes, leading chapel services and hosting a number of different events, a sixth form dodgeball tournament being a particular highlight. Following the week, it was great to be able to have a couple of boys join me at Sports Plus up the road at Glenalmond. It was particularly great to see one young lad come to faith during the week and I have since started a mini Pray Play Say group at the school on a weekly basis to support him and a couple of other boys. It has been great to see the boys really grow in their faith in the last couple of months. I have been really proud to see the lad who came to Sports Plus taking a stand around school and even turning up to the PPS group with a non-Christian friend. It's all been very exciting!

Yamika Banda - Strathallan School



The winning team at Peterhead Baptist Church's quiz

When I signed for Grosvenor Rugby Club, I met a guy called Pete, who has been a great influence in sharing the gospel with his teammates. It was a great encouragement for me to join a team and meet someone who is just getting stuck into worship and witness. Pete also started a prayer group in the club before training on Thursdays and around eight players have been regularly coming plus both coaches.

Allen McCluggage - Grosvenor Rugby Club



Strathallan School visit

Get in touch

If you have any stories and photos to share for this section, please email them to ed.mezzetti@christiansinsport.org.uk

THE ISLAND THAT LOVES RUGBY

Jack Newton is already in his element sharing life and the gospel with the people of sports-mad Jersey.

Despite a population of just 100,000, Jersey has 167 sports clubs ranging from angling to water polo. And playing in front of crowds approaching 2,000 in the Championship, English rugby union's second tier, Jersey RFC are the biggest local sporting success story.

Since September, rugby player Jack Newton has been based on the Channel Island as our regional Intern. And for a self-confessed city boy, he is relishing being an islander on sports-mad Jersey. This was a big change for Jack, but he wanted to see where God might lead him.

“When you talk about engaging with the sporting community in Jersey, rugby is right at the forefront.”

Having graduated in sports science from St Mary's University, Twickenham last summer, Jack is now considering whether his future may lie in looking to reach the world of sport for Christ as a full-time worker.

He said: “It's a big commitment to move here, but at the same time it's an amazing opportunity. I wanted to develop myself and see if this was right for me. Christians in Sport played a huge part for me when I was at university. It defines me; I love my faith and I love my sport. I don't know what God's plan is for me, but if it's something along these lines, this is a great place to start.”



Name: Jack Newton
Hometown: Dunstable, Bedfordshire
Sport and club: Rugby, Jersey RFC
Church: Town Church, St Helier

Photo: Richard Chapman Photography

“It was a big commitment, living away from friends and family, but I love it. I love the opportunity to go somewhere new. I used to live in Australia and I have lived in London – it's always been big cities. The chance to live in a small community really appealed to me. There was so much about Jersey that was attractive and seeing how sporty the place is was great.”

Jack is working alongside Nick Ferraby, our Jersey Co-ordinator, with a particular focus on reaching out to the rugby club

He is currently playing at centre for Jersey Athletic, the club's second team, and is a member of Town Church in St Helier, where he is serving as part of the church community while also receiving theological training.



Sunset at Jersey Rugby Club Photo: Sue Trower

Jack said: “Nick has been out here for coming up on two years playing cricket and hockey and has clearly had a big impact on that scene.

“But the island loves rugby. On a Sunday morning, there are over 600 kids who come for coaching.

“My faith played a huge role in my three years that I was at university - playing and sharing life with the rugby boys there. It’s great that my faith can have the same impact as I continue with the rugby community here.

“It is a challenge that I am definitely up for. You’ve got to be honest and open about your life.”

Moving from city life in London to an

island existence in Jersey has meant plenty of changes, but Jack is enjoying adapting to them.

He said: “It’s a slower pace of life. If things change, they happen over a long period of time. All in all I really enjoy it.

“You really do build relationships here. You walk down the high street and you stop five times because you’ve got to have a chat with a mate.”

Jack’s work varies from week to week, with coaching in schools alongside Jersey’s rugby development team a regular fixture as well as youth work and Bible studies.

He said: “Jersey is sport mad. When you talk about engaging with the sporting

Meet the other interns



Name: Dave Lawther
Hometown: Templepatrick, Northern Ireland
Sport and club: Rugby, Bicester RFC
Church: Magdalen Road Church, Oxford



Name: Jen Harris
Hometown: Bridge of Weir, Scotland
Sport and club: Basketball, Oxford Brookes BC
Church: Magdalen Road Church, Oxford



Name: Jos Herbert
Hometown: Bedford
Sport and club: Rugby coach, Brackley RUFC
Church: The Source, Brackley



Name: Philip Small
Hometown: Ballymena, Northern Ireland
Sport and club: Rugby, Ballymena Rugby Club
Church: First Ahoghill Presbyterian Church

The Internship is an 11-month training programme for those of graduate-age who are passionate about understanding the Bible better, passionate about sharing Jesus in the world of sport and are willing to be challenged and shaped as they both learn and serve together. The 2017-18 Internship will provide opportunities in mission, events and operations, media and marketing. For more information, visit christiansinsport.org.uk/internship

how God has provided for me out here. The generosity of the local church in providing me with accommodation and transport has been a huge blessing and one I'm so thankful for. Everyone has been so welcoming."

Jack has some big prayers for Jersey.

He said: "Please pray that we would engage sportspeople in the local church to really grasp the idea of what Christians in Sport is all about - to go out there and do it themselves.

"Pray too that the churches would be equipped to reach out to their world of sport. It's massive here. I don't think I have met anyone who is not engaged in some sort of sport."

Ed Mezzetti
Back Pages Editor

City of York Athletic Club,
St Thomas' Church, York



community in Jersey, rugby is right at the forefront of that.

"I'm here to serve the rugby community. Whether that is coaching kids or encouraging my teammates."

Jack added: "Playing for the second team is fantastic for me as it is full of Jersey-born players. These are the guys who have got the club to where it is over the years."

Moving to a new place to start a new job has prompted Jack to trust in God more, with many encouragements.

He said: "It's been unbelievable to see

Get in touch

How could you reach out to a big sports club near you? Why not pray for opportunities and contact us at info@christiansinsport.org.uk



REAL LIFE AND GREAT SPORT

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Plans are already well under way for Sports Plus 2017, with the dates now confirmed. As we look ahead to another awesome summer, Ian Lancaster shares some highlights from Sports Plus 2016.

Over the course of the summer we delivered five residential Sports Plus camps and one non-residential camp in Jersey. In total, they involved 605 young people, 350 leaders and 85 trainees.

John's gospel was the destination for all talks and Bible studies where the tagline was "Believing in the Real Jesus brings Real Life". This was a timely series for young sportspeople who are constantly persuaded that the world holds all that life has to offer.

It was fabulous to see young people engaging with the theme, asking big questions and grappling to work out what having real life in Jesus looks like for them.

Across the six camps there was a noticeably high standard and application to the sporting programme. High octane coaching sessions, delivered by a team of qualified coaches, provided the right

Sports Plus 2017 dates

England

Repton School, Derby
August 13-18

Wales

Christ College, Brecon
July 30 – August 4 & August 6-11

Northern Ireland

Campbell College, Belfast
July 30 – August 4 & August 6-11

Scotland

Glenalmond College, Perth
July 9-14

environment for all the young people to progress in their sporting ability. Team Challenge once again proved to be a real highlight with young people pushing themselves in a range of competitive games.

We were ever mindful of God's goodness and grace in providing a brilliant team of leaders and coaches committed to bringing the good news of Jesus to bear on the lives of young people in an irresistible environment of competition and care.

Visit

Check out the information for this year's Sports Plus on the enclosed flyer or by visiting christiansinsport.org.uk/sportsplus2017

VILLAGE LIFE... BUT NOT AS I KNEW IT



Performance Team member Jules Wilkinson was one of three international Protestant chaplains at the Rio 2016 Olympics. Here Jules reflects on her role.

I didn't really know what to expect before going to the Games, but it was a real privilege to serve God out there and to meet lots of the athletes and staff who made Rio 2016 happen.

“The whole Games was a great reminder of God's sovereignty.”

A lot of what I did was similar to my ongoing work with Christians in Sport - supporting elite athletes in their walk with Jesus. Instead of me travelling around the UK and overseas, it was all happening in one place - the Olympic Village. It was great to see God's word at work.

A highlight was seeing athletes, who had learned lessons from the Bible in the good times, remembering them in tough times.

At the start of the Olympics, athletes arrived early to prepare for their events. We had dates and times in the diary to meet up. Later on, I just had to be

available as and when needed to fit in with the athletes' schedules.

The whole Games was a great reminder of God's sovereignty. For example, while I waited to meet people, He gave me opportunities to chat with others I could never have planned. It was a great chance to rely on God. Particularly on my busier days, I often had no alternative!

I never thought I would need media training to prepare for Rio, but having been interviewed on the radio a fair few times, I gradually got more used to it.

However, sharing God's word with athletes remained my focus. One Bible passage we looked at was Philippians 4 v 4-7. We considered how the fact that the Lord is near helps us to always rejoice, always be gentle and not to worry - all vital qualities in the Olympic Village.

Pray

Pray that Jules and the rest of the Performance Team would have increasing opportunities to encourage elite sportspeople who are Christians and share the gospel with those who don't yet know Jesus.



Every sportsperson knows the cost

We all know that sport involves sacrifice. No one achieves their potential through talent alone. From early morning runs in the dark to training sessions in the bitter cold, making tough choices are all part of being a sportsperson.

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And this is true in every area of life. If you want to get something done, there is always a cost. We're passionate about helping Christians integrate sport and faith as well as enabling sportspeople to explore the gospel message.

Forty years ago the work started with a handful of Christians and we are thankful to God for the journey so far. We're excited about the future given that 10 million people play sport every week in 150,000 clubs and teams across the UK.

Will you prayerfully consider partnering with us financially to support this growing work?

In 2016, we based staff in six parts of the UK with, God willing, six more cities to follow in 2017 and another six in 2018.

Our longing is to see more sportspeople respond to the gospel. Being more locally based means we can work with more churches to help Christians live out their faith in their sports clubs and teams.

Clearly though, to do that, there is a cost – just as there is with any gospel work.

Christians in Sport General Director Graham Daniels said: “We are very thankful to God that thousands of Christians are involved in sport and last year tens of thousands of sportspeople attended guest events explaining the Christian message.

“Sport continues to be massive in our culture and we long to see the work grow further so that the impact becomes more and more locally felt.”

Regular financial giving is one of the best ways to support Christians in Sport. It allows us to plan effectively, provide continuous support, commit to long-term projects and most importantly, build strong, lasting relationships with individuals and communities across the world of sport.

Giving

Would you prayerfully consider giving to or increasing your giving to Christians in Sport??. Please fill in the enclosed form or visit christiansinsport.org.uk/cost



MY SPORTING LIFE

Photos ©: Berislav Rozman

It's always great to hear stories of how people are representing Jesus in their world of sport. Whether you are a player, coach or official – or involved in sport in a different way, this new 'My Sporting Life' feature is designed to encourage you in your faith as you read of others looking to share the gospel where God has placed them.

200m, but we didn't have a hurdler for this particular meet so I was put in for 110m hurdles. In front of quite a big crowd from both schools, I proceeded to hit every single one of the 11 hurdles, knocking over nine, falling twice and managing to snap two of the hurdles. I had nowhere to hide!

What encouragements have you seen as a Christian in your sport? It has been great to see guys from the team taking an interest in Christ, coming along to church and asking questions.

What do you find tough about living as a Christian in your sport? The balance between getting involved with your team, buying in and building friendships whilst not compromising on God's pattern for life – wanting a shared experience and trying to honour God.

How do you look to share the gospel in your team? I ask teammates what they think about Jesus – if they have any background of faith. I then ask if they're interested in finding out more or have any questions and would be up for coming to church or reading the Bible with me.

What one piece of advice would you give to Christian sportspeople to help them share their faith? Most people are very happy to talk about their personal faith or an absence of one, and I've found that's the easiest way to then be able to share your own.



Profile

Name: Tom Stileman

Age: 20

Where from: Maidenhead originally, studying at Oxford.

Church: St Ebbe's, Oxford.

Sporting involvement: Playing on the wing for Oxford University Rugby Football Club.

Sporting highlight: Winning the Varsity Match in 2015 and getting the opportunity to play with Wasps A/Sevens.

Most embarrassing moment in sport: Probably an athletics meet against our school rivals Epsom. I ran 100m and

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHURCH GETS SPORTY?



I wonder what's the first thing on your list when you move to a new place and join a new church? For Jo Murnane (pictured above, far right), it was to quickly combine her passions of sport and faith.

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She said: "I was challenged to think that if there is nothing going on in Stockton in terms of reaching sportspeople with the gospel, this doesn't have to be the case!"

As a keen rower and netballer, Jo clearly loves her sport and she is determined to share her faith in the world God has placed her in. Now studying medicine at Newcastle University, that world is Stockton-on-Tees, where she is spending the first two years of her degree. Having previously been involved with reaching sportspeople at Jesmond Parish Church in Newcastle, Jo is now looking to get the ball rolling at Stockton Baptist Tabernacle.

She said: "Sport is such a big part of my life and these are the people I meet and interact with. I'm just aware that this is a whole world of people who don't know Jesus."

Jo, who previously studied French and German, is now looking to mobilise fellow sportspeople in her church and across Stockton. Having sparked interest about Christians in Sport in her home group, she learned there was also a football coach and a PE teacher in the church family. Jo then met with her pastor Andrew Waugh.

She said: "I had organised a Dialogue Dinner for my teammates where Debbie Flood spoke and so I was able to explain the vision of Christians in Sport to Andrew through what was happening in my team. They were really interested in the gospel, which I am very thankful for."

Andrew backed Jo's plan and is giving her a slot at church in mid-January where she will show the 'Let's go' video and encourage members to meet up, pray and think about reaching sportspeople in their part of the country.

Church focus

Could you start a Christians in Sport group at your church? Contact sarah.gales@christiansinsport.org.uk

Ed Mezzetti
Back Pages Editor

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FAITH IN THE FAST LANE

Adriano Medeiros got far more than he bargained for when he sought career advice from an ex-Formula 1 driver.

Hoping to boost his dreams of making it in the world of motor racing, the Brazilian instead began a journey of faith that is still shaping his exploits on the track today. Adriano thought Alex Dias Ribeiro might point him in the right direction to drive professionally overseas, but was told “I can help you meet Jesus Christ”.

“The fact that I heard two former F1 drivers talking about God opened my ears. I listened and gave consideration to what they were saying.”

Ribeiro was renowned for having ‘Jesus saves’ displayed on his car during his F1 races in the late 1970s. His meeting with Adriano prompted the younger man to look into this Jesus in the Bible and put his trust in Him.

Now, some 20 years later, 44-year-old Adriano is himself racing with his own ‘Jesus Saves’ team in the UK in the Classic Formula Ford Championship, which he won in 2013 and 2016. Having grown up as a motor racing mad youngster near the Interlagos track in Sao Paolo, he is now looking to use the sporting gifts he has been given to make Jesus known.

Growing up

Adriano’s attraction to the Interlagos track in Sao Paolo began at a young age and he was soon finding crafty ways to see the action.

He said: “When I went to school, the bus passed by the track. If you arrived late at



school, they would close the gates and not let me go in. What I used to do was get the bus a little bit late, say ‘I’m not going to make it’ then get off the bus at Interlagos and go and watch the cars!”

Although raising finances was very difficult, by his 20s, Adriano was managing to compete in a few races. But a lack of money meant he had to be his own mechanic.

The life changing meeting

Adriano was optimistic when he was invited to meet ex-Formula 1 driver Alex Dias Ribeiro at Interlagos, but he didn’t know much about Ribeiro’s faith. To his surprise, he also met Emerson Fittipaldi, another fellow Brazilian and a double Formula 1 world champion.

Adriano then got another shock. He explained: “Suddenly, everybody sat around in a circle and got their Bibles out! These guys started talking about Jesus and God. I started asking myself ‘why am I here, doing this?’ I stayed because I

Coming to the UK

In 2002, Adriano decided to leave Brazil to pursue his racing driver hopes. His journey took him to the UK and after working as a mechanic and in McDonald’s, he began racing in 2006.



wanted to talk to them about my desire to be a racing driver.

“The fact that I heard two former F1 drivers talking about God opened my ears. I listened and gave consideration to what they were saying.”

Adriano asked Ribeiro if he could help him go abroad and progress his driving career, but was told about Jesus instead. Adriano returned to the Bible study the next week and a couple of months later, he gave his life to Christ at one of the meetings.

From here, he worked his way up the ranks. Now the Jesus Saves team also gives Adriano many opportunities to share his faith, which he is keen to do.

He said: “I can always explain to people what I do and why I do it. I had a conversation with a team that I was racing last year. I was able to explain my faith and one of the guys on the team said I’m really glad you said that because that is the first time I can see Christianity in a way that actually makes sense to me.”

Pray

As Adriano flies the flag for Christ in the Classic Formula Ford Championship, why not pray that God may raise up others like him across the world of motorsport?

About Christians in Sport

Formed in 1980, Christians in Sport has more than 35 years of experience supporting Christians in the world of sport and helping sportspeople explore the Christian message. For more information on who we are and how we can help you, please get in touch using the details below.



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