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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Well, what a year! It is such a relief that in Matthew 6:33-34 the Lord Jesus Christ told us that we should, 'Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own'. Whatever is coming tomorrow, next week or next year, the most important perspective that a disciple should take is to put God at the centre and press on with today, seeking to prioritise the King's agenda.

'SEEK FIRST HIS KINGDOM AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND ALL THESE THINGS WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU AS WELL. THEREFORE, DO NOT WORRY ABOUT TOMORROW, FOR TOMORROW WILL WORRY ABOUT ITSELF. EACH DAY HAS ENOUGH TROUBLE OF ITS OWN'

Matthew 6:33-34



It is in that manner that we should approach this magazine. We are officially 40 years old and we have been running Sports Plus camps for 25 years. You will read of the pioneering spirit of so many who initiated these ventures and, I've no doubt rejoice in the past. Once you have savoured the prose, would you be kind enough to let your mind hurry to how that affects the world of sport today? The leaders you read about from those early years would want you to ask, 'how do we keep advancing His Kingdom in the world of sport today?'



St Bede's School Mission, early 1990s

You might also enjoy some of the stories of the recent lockdown. The Big Online Sports Quiz was an unexpected success, with a reach far outstripping our wildest dreams. Also, our opportunities with elite sportspeople grew exponentially, with much of that momentum being sustained. Do rejoice in what the Lord has done. Then ask, 'what shall we now do in order to advance the Kingdom in the world of sport today?'

Looking ahead to Christmas, we can't wait to see what the Lord will do, who will listen to His message over the season and turn and trust in Christ. Whilst you enjoy the prospect, ask yourself, 'who in the world of sport might I pray for and invite to come and hear the Good News of Jesus Christ?'

We live in difficult times, but we are children of the Sovereign Lord who is never troubled or hurried, never anxious or fearful. That's why we will press on in confidence that advancing His kingdom in the world of sport is one of our daily privileges. At Christians in Sport, we yearn to retain a daily consistency in reaching the world of sport for Christ. Therefore, whatever is going on around us, remember this: 'Now is the time of God's favour, now is the day of salvation'. 2 Corinthians 6v2.

GRAHAM DANIELS

General Director





***BUILDING A
CHRISTIAN PRESENCE
IN SPORT FOR
OVER 40 YEARS***



Gerald Williams was once told to keep his voice down by John McEnroe. The colourful American just one of the household names whose shots were so skilfully called by BBC tennis commentator Williams during his radio and television role at Wimbledon.

Yet perhaps Williams, who passed away in 2016, would say his most enduring legacy from those wonderful championships came from something that might have seemed insignificant and ordinary off the court at SW19 in the early 1970s. Something that actually proved to be extremely significant and extraordinary; a meeting he arranged between his friend Alan Godson and Eddie Waxer in the busy walkway between Centre Court and No.1 Court.

Godson loved sport and his displays in rugby or cricket arenas were matched in boldness by his desire to tell people about Jesus Christ. Waxer was an American who travelled the world ministering to professional sportsmen and was introduced to the well-connected Williams by former tennis world number one Stan Smith.

As the tennis crowds mingled beside them, dialogue between Godson and Waxer was underway and gathered pace quickly. Waxer wanted the United Kingdom to have a fellowship of Christian sportspeople and sought for that group, in turn, to reach other sportspeople with the good news about Jesus.

“Eddie had faith that Great Britain would in time be the most significant country in the world for the sending of athletes who know Christ to other nations,” said Williams.

In February 1976, Waxer invited a group of British, Christian sportspeople to an annual get-together of American, Christian sportspeople in Orlando, Florida. Godson was among them, so too Williams, as was Andrew Wingfield Digby, a formidable seam bowler ordained in the Church of England, who openly acknowledges he needed

very little persuasion to board a plane bound for Orlando during a harsh, dark, British winter.

"For most of us the flight to Florida was an adventure, but for Godson it was five and a half hours with a captive audience," says Wingfield Digby, referring to his friend leading an air stewardess to Christ in the sky.

The trio were amazed as they watched and listened to successful American football players talk freely and sincerely about how their relationship with Jesus Christ was the number one priority in their lives, despite all the glitz, glamour and trappings on their doorsteps. So much so, that before heading back across the Atlantic, a previously God-fearing but not yet converted Williams asked Jesus to enter his life, as Godson knelt beside him.

Talk about lighting the touch paper. Wingfield Digby recalls the mood splendidly.

"We returned to London determined to do all we could to build a Christian presence in sport in Great Britain. We could



Andrew Wingfield Digby

" WE RETURNED TO LONDON DETERMINED TO DO ALL WE COULD TO BUILD A CHRISTIAN PRESENCE IN SPORT IN GREAT BRITAIN. "

see the enormous need for sportspeople to be presented with the challenge of Jesus and we could see more clearly than before that the impact of the testimony in word and deed of Christian athletes is great indeed."

On 19 June 1976, Godson, Williams, Wingfield Digby and others organised the first gathering of Christian sportsmen and women, of whom there were 80, fittingly on the eve of the Wimbledon Championships. Another followed in 1977 and again in 1978 with now 400 attendees. The snowball effect kicked in and in 1980 the charity organisation called 'Christians in Sport' officially began, with Wingfield Digby going on to become full-time director in 1984.

We look back on the last 40 years in wonder and gratitude at what God has graciously done through the work of Christians in Sport, as we have tried to reach the world of sport for Christ.

Over the page are three stories of people who represent thousands of Christian sportspeople who have been journeying with us over the past 40 years.



Pioneers: Harry Hughes, Alan Godson and Andrew Wingfield Digby (L-R)



Darren Moore had a 20-year career as a professional football player; being a central defensive pillar at clubs like West Bromwich Albion and Derby County in the Premier League, as well as internationally for Jamaica. Now Doncaster Rovers manager and playing a pivotal role in bringing fellow professionals together for online Bible studies, Moore reflects on when he put his faith in Jesus Christ in 1999 through a connection with a Christian in sport in the shape of teammate Wayne Jacobs at Bradford City.

" I STOPPED GOING TO SUNDAY SCHOOL AND I AUTOMATICALLY THOUGHT YOU CAN'T PLAY FOOTBALL AND SERVE GOD. "

"When I was young, I went to Sunday school," said Darren. "But as my football career started, it was Sundays at 10 o'clock when the team bus would pick me up, so I stopped going to Sunday school and I automatically thought you can't play football and serve God.

"It's only when I met Wayne Jacobs (Jakes) that I realised how wrong I was, because you can serve the Lord at all times. Jakes really exemplified that. We used to travel to Bradford together and he once asked me what my family background was and if it was Christian. I said I was from a Christian family but found it very difficult to attend a church and serve the Lord because I was playing football.

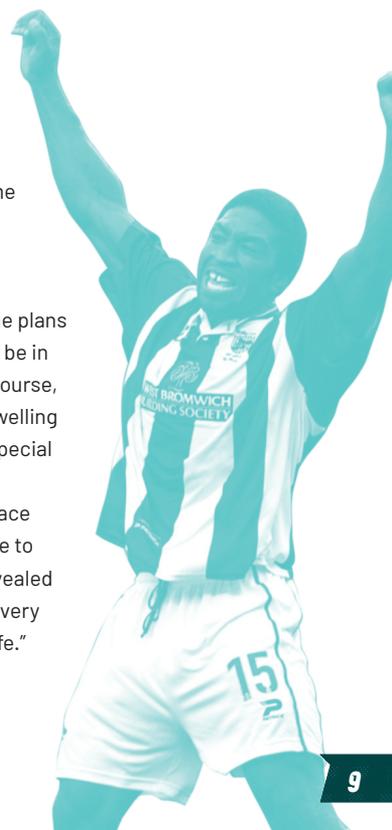
"Wayne was such a wonderful guy and didn't force it. He asked me to do him a favour and get his 'Word for Today' booklet out the glovebox. He said he was driving so could I read it for him because he liked to do it each day. I started to read it and we'd discuss what was said. So, I was getting teaching and doctrine from Wayne right there and then!

"One day I was feeling low and lacking confidence. We opened the 'Word for Today' and God was talking in 2 Timothy about not giving us a spirit of fear but of love and a sound mind. I thought 'my goodness' because I was feeling a bit of fear that I didn't belong at this level of football, and that scripture spoke right into my heart.

"Wayne told me they had a Christians in Sport group where seven or eight players gathered, including Graham Daniels. I went along. Danno would deliver a scripture, we would discuss it and have a bit of food, too.

"What I felt with that group was that we were all at different parts of our careers...in the first team or playing reserves or about to be transferred or injured. But when we came together and Danno shared scripture, we were all at the same point. God loved us all unconditionally and knew the plans He had for us and wanted to be in our everyday lives. And, of course, the Holy Spirit's there too dwelling among us. That was really special to me.

"I felt confident and at peace and that's when I gave my life to the Lord. God very much revealed Himself to me and said He's very much part of my everyday life."



Being a busy mum and part-time church worker might seem a million miles away from Darren Moore's world, but crucially, **Helen Nicholson** shares the same passion for sport that Darren does; and Christians in Sport has been equally as pivotal over her journey at various hockey clubs since her days in academic study.

"I went to university in 2004, not yet a Christian," explains Helen. "But the vast majority of friends that I made were Christians - notably a house mate and a course mate who both became involved with the small Christians in Sport university Pray Play Say group at York St John. So, I knew of Christians in Sport through them. I even went to a Christians in Sport university group meeting before I became a Christian.



"It was significant sitting in that meeting with friends who talked openly about Jesus; their love for Him and how they wanted teammates to know Him. I found it very strange sitting as they prayed out loud together for each other. However, seven days later, I returned to the weekly Christians in Sport meeting, having become a Christian the night before, and it seemed very normal to talk about Jesus and to pray for the world of sport.

"It was clear to me from day one of knowing Jesus that I have been created with the gifts to play hockey and to glorify God with those gifts."

Helen went on to do an Internship with Christians in Sport which she "treasured", before being involved in Sports Plus camps, Quiz Nights and other activities.

"IT WAS CLEAR TO ME FROM DAY ONE OF KNOWING JESUS THAT I HAVE BEEN CREATED WITH THE GIFTS TO PLAY HOCKEY AND TO GLORIFY GOD WITH THOSE GIFTS."

Today, life's responsibilities mean she isn't at these types of events as much, but she very much remains part of the team.

"I am a Christian in sport in my hockey club, Oxford Hawks, and I long to live for Jesus there," You could say I am completely bought in on the vision of Christians in Sport - I am less in touch with all that is going on than I once was, but the vision does not change!"



**" WE CONGRATULATE
CHRISTIANS IN
SPORT FOR TURNING
40 AND KNOW THAT
THE BEST IS YET
TO COME. "**

That vision is once again travelling across the world.

Asa Bjork is a health and fitness pastor at a church in Huskvarna, Sweden, where she lives with her professional football coach husband Thomas and two teenage children. Ever since a visit to a Sports Plus camp in 2001, she and her family have held dear their links to Christians in Sport.

"It showed me how a good camp can be done," said Asa. "I was so impressed how the coaches were also trained in the Bible, not just the young kids. The fellowship, love and passion made leaders and coaches use their own holiday time to come and teach at the camp. That really impressed me.

"We get inspiration from Christians in Sport. We ran our first ever Clubhouse Xtra for sporting families here in Sweden in April, and we got most of the content from the Christians in Sport website. I love the generosity that they show to the whole sports movement, and how they so generously share resources. It's kingdom culture! We congratulate Christians in Sport for turning 40 and know that the best is yet to come. So, we keep on playing the game with our eyes fixed on Jesus!"



The race marked out for us is not finished yet and the journey most definitely continues as we press on in reaching the world of sport for Christ, but at this 40th anniversary milestone we rightly praise God for what He has done.



**SERIOUS SPORTS ACTION
FOR THE SERIOUS SPORTS
PLAYER** THANKING GOD FOR 25 YEARS
OF SPORTS PLUS CAMPS



On Monday 19th October 2020, Christians in Sport offered three opportunities at different times of the day for people to join together in an online gathering to give God thanks in prayer, not only for 40 years of Christians in Sport, but also for 25 years of Sports Plus camps.

Scanning the gallery of attendees and upon seeing a certain face, you could immediately be transported back in time to a memory from Repton School or Christ College Brecon, Loretto or Royal School Armagh to name a few. So many people who, for several years of their lives, had been committed to attending, leading, coaching or supporting at Sports Plus.

What was also so abundantly obvious was how each person, as they recounted a tale or a snapshot from the Sports Plus past, didn't see it only as a place where they had served God, but a place where they had been wonderfully encouraged, fed, and developed by Him.

Some memories came from fresh-faced interns with Christians in Sport, others were offered by what you might call slightly more seasoned campaigners. But smiles; lots of smiles.

And it's not hard to understand why it evokes such happy, meaningful memories.

Sports Plus has a holiday feel about it - it's a week long residential sports camp. That sport is serious sport, though. Specialist coaching and brilliant team competitions are on offer. But while it's the perfect way to improve in your sport, it's also an ideal environment to explore more about the Christian faith and what it means

"SPORTS PLUS WAS KEY IN MY JOURNEY, AS A YOUNG PERSON I FOUND THAT EVERYONE SPOKE A LANGUAGE YOU UNDERSTOOD."



Ed Fenning (second from left, back row) with his team

to be a Christian sports player.

"I'm a bit of a jack of all trades, master of none," says Ed Fenning, whose Sports Plus journey began in 2000 and continued into leadership roles in later years.

"As a young person I did hockey, where I developed significantly in the simple ball skills that give you time to have your head up, or rugby where I got ready for pre-season training which would follow just a couple of weeks later. These days I'm a runner, and the bleep test is probably my highlight as it's a good quality intense training session.

"I went from young person to trainee leader, then team leader and most recently a leader of trainees. It has been great to taste a variety of roles, but in all of them, the central aspect is of serving one another as we strive to know Christ better and to make Him known clearly.

"As a leader, you are there to pour yourself out in service

of the young people for that week. This makes Sports Plus doubly exhausting, but also doubly blessed. It's a huge privilege to open up the Bible with the young people. While leaders serve wholeheartedly, they are also wonderfully served by other leaders who are investing in training you.

"I've massively benefited from Christians in Sport's vision of Pray Play Say: being committed to pray for your teammates and committed not only to play on the pitch with them but to share life with them (1 Thes 2 v 8) and say something of Jesus. Each year my heart is thrilled afresh that God would save a wretch like me, and so I'm motivated to go and tell others this amazing news. Sports Plus, more than anything else, has helped me fight to keep making Jesus known on the top of the agenda in my life."

Another familiar face at Sports Plus, another story behind one of the windows, is Suzie Toyn who shares Ed's experience of being refuelled and motivated by other Christian leaders. "Over the years it was great to see many friends who keep returning. It is a real encouragement to be with other Christian sports leaders and help spur each other on throughout the week."

When not at camp, Suzie works for the International Tennis Federation in elite Wheelchair Tennis. Like Ed, Suzie



Suzie Toyn at team challenge

started coming to camp in 2000. From young person, to trainee to tennis coach and now head coach, she's seen camp from every angle. "Sports Plus was key in my journey. As a young person I found that everyone spoke a language you understood. I really discovered how sport and my Christian faith could be so interlinked. Now as a coach, it is a real privilege to be able to share who Jesus is with the young people and help them reflect on the importance of Him in their lives, and help encourage them to keep playing for Him."

Remarkably by God's grace, the concept and model of Sports Plus has been taken to plenty of other countries too. Manu Traica from Romania had heard good things about the camps when talking to people at European sport ministry gatherings; and in 2012 took the chance to experience it for herself at Brecon.

"I still remember my first visit," recalls Manu. "Going into the chapel for the evening session and the atmosphere and energy that was created. It was fun but also serious – serious about sports coaching and serious about the Gospel. It was energetic but also intentional. It was like that verse 'my ears have heard about it but now my eyes can see it.' It was more than my expectations could imagine.

"I took notes each day on all aspects of the day, in order to see and pray how we could apply it in our context in Romania. In 2013 we started a Sport Plus camp in Romania, a dream which came true. A small team from Christians in Sport came to run it and a small team of Romanian leaders learned by working alongside them.

" WAS FUN BUT ALSO SERIOUS - SERIOUS ABOUT SPORTS COACHING AND SERIOUS ABOUT THE GOSPEL. "



Manu Traica (second from right, back row) with 23 other international leaders at Repton Sports Plus

"In the second year we were again assisted by another small team of Christians in Sport leaders helping us, but each year we also tried to invest more in local leaders. We kept the model of Sports Plus camp while adapting it to our own context in Romania. Year after year we grew the team of local leaders to run it, and in 2018 I handed over to another team of leaders to lead a Sport Plus Camp."

It is thrilling that Romania is one of as many as 19 countries outside of the United Kingdom where the Sports Plus model has been cultivated and grown; and we're not thrilled because we want Sports Plus to look good, this is for making God look good. This is for pointing people to Jesus. For it is the true hope that Christ offers which makes Sports Plus camps tick.

The pioneers of the camps in the 1990s knew that, as do Christians in Sport who have been passed the baton since until today, to this 25 year anniversary. The people behind all those Zoom windows know it too, and it's no surprise that understanding the good news of Jesus in a sporting context at Sports Plus has put smiles on lots of faces.

1994

FIRST JOINTLY-RUN CAMP
WITH ADVENTURE PLUS



1995

FIRST SPORTS PLUS CAMP
AT COKETHORPE SCHOOL,
OXFORDSHIRE

" I HAVE TO TELL YOU HOW MUCH OUR SON ENJOYED
CAMP, HE WENT THERE UNDERSTANDABLY A
BIT APPREHENSIVE NOT KNOWING A SOUL - BUT
HAD AN ABSOLUTELY FANTASTIC TIME. HE NOW
WANTS TO COME BACK NEXT YEAR. "

- Parent

1997

SPORTS PLUS MOVES TO
REPTON SCHOOL



" IN SOME WAYS I WISHED I COULD STAY AT
SPORTS PLUS FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.
ON THE OTHER HAND, I NEED TO GET BACK
TO THE HOCKEY GIRLS AT MY CLUB TO GIVE
THEM THE CHANCE TO SEE JESUS. "

- Young Person

2005

FIRST SPORTS PLUS IN SCOTLAND AT
LORETTO SCHOOL, MUSSELBURGH

2004

FIRST SPORTS PLUS IN
NORTHERN IRELAND AT ROYAL
ARMAGH SCHOOL

2001

FIRST SPORTS PLUS IN WALES AT
CHRIST COLLEGE, BRECON AND START
OF TRAINEE LEADERS' PROGRAMME

" THE TALKS IN THE MEETING AND DISCUSSIONS
IN TEAM MEETINGS WERE RELATABLE
AND HELPED ME TO UNDERSTAND THE
IMPORTANCE OF A PERSONAL FAITH AND
HOW JESUS DYING ON THE CROSS IMPACTS
ALL AREAS OF YOUR LIFE. "

- Suzie Toyn

"IT'S AN UNBELIEVABLE PRIVILEGE TO SEE LIKE MINDED YOUNG PEOPLE GET PASSIONATE ABOUT THEIR SPORT, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY ABOUT WHAT CHRIST HAS DONE FOR THEM."

- Coach

2011

TWO CAMPS HELD IN NORTHERN IRELAND AT CAMPBELL COLLEGE, BELFAST

BURSARY FUND INTRODUCED - ACCESSED BY NEARLY 1,600 YOUNG PEOPLE IN LAST 9 YEARS

"AS A TRAINEE 2, A REAL HIGHLIGHT WAS BEING ABLE TO SIT IN WITH TEAM MEETINGS. IT WAS REALLY EYE OPENING AND BENEFICIAL TO SEE WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE AND ENCOURAGING TO HEAR SOME OF THE GIRLS GET A GRASP OF THE SCRIPTURES THEY WERE READING."

- Trainee

2014

24 LEADERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD CAME TO OBSERVE SPORTS PLUS AND TAKE THE MODEL BACK TO THEIR OWN COUNTRIES

"THE SPORTS PLUS CAMP IN ROMANIA FOR SERIOUS PLAYERS FROM SPORTS CLUBS FROM MY CITY WAS A DREAM COME TRUE. I'VE HEARD SO MANY TIMES THE PHRASE "DREAM BIG AND START SMALL!" I THINK, IN A WAY, THAT HAPPENED WITH OUR FIRST SPORTS PLUS CAMP IN ROMANIA."

- Manu Traica



2015

FIRST SPORTS PLUS IN JERSEY AT VICTORIA COLLEGE

"AFTER SPORTS PLUS I RECALL MY SON TELLING ME THAT THE TWO PARTS OF HIS LIFE HAD COME TOGETHER AND MADE SENSE. HE WAS CHALLENGED BY EACH SPORTS PLUS CAMP AND GREW IN HIS FAITH EVERY YEAR."

- Parent

2018

FIRST SPORTS PLUS IN SOUTH WEST ENGLAND AT MONKTON COMBE SCHOOL



2019

DUBLIN SPORTS PLUS LAUNCHES; BRINGING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CAMPS TO 7 IN 5 COUNTRIES

"IT WAS A REAL JOY TO LEAD MY TEAM THIS YEAR, WE HAD A REALLY SPECIAL TIME GETTING TO GRIPS WITH SOME BIG QUESTIONS- THE GIRLS WERE REALLY ENGAGED AND REALLY WANTED TO DELVE DEEPER INTO WHAT IT MEANS TO LIVE LIFE AS A CHRISTIAN. IT WAS A GENUINE PRIVILEGE."

- Leader

2020

SPORTS PLUS GOES ONLINE FOR THE FIRST TIME; MORE THAN 1,000 SPORTSPEOPLE ENGAGED OVER THE THREE DAYS





BEHIND

**CLOSED
DOORS**

**SPORT MAY HAVE GONE BEHIND
CLOSED DOORS, BUT THE GOSPEL
HAS CONTINUED TO GO OUT SINCE
THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC BEGAN.**



70,000

VIEWED FIVE ONLINE
SPORTS QUIZZES DURING
THE FIRST LOCKDOWN



MORE THAN 1,000

SPORTSPEOPLE ENGAGED
OVER THE THREE DAYS OF
SPORTS PLUS ONLINE



SINCE SEPTEMBER

45 UNIVERSITY GROUPS
HAVE BEEN MEETING
WEEKLY ONLINE AND IN
PERSON THROUGHOUT THE
UK AND IRELAND



250 MORE

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES WITH
ELITE SPORTSPEOPLE DURING THE
FIRST LOCKDOWN COMPARED TO
THE PREVIOUS 6 MONTHS



700 LEADERS FROM OVER

50 COUNTRIES WERE EQUIPPED
THROUGH ONLINE TRAINING
CONFERENCES AND IN-COUNTRY
SMALL GROUPS



SINCE MARCH

70,000 HOURS OF GOSPEL VIDEO
CONTENT HAS BEEN WATCHED;
THE EQUIVALENT OF 190 HOURS
EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR

Adults now spend an average of four hours online each day, up from three hours before Covid. The younger you get, the longer this will now be. As the UK faced lockdown last spring, Christians in Sport, alongside most organisations, had to quickly adapt to becoming a predominantly online work.

Whether moving Bible studies onto Zoom, developing a new digital learning platform for international leaders or launching new resources and digital events to reach hundreds of thousands of sportspeople in the UK; the digital side of our work was forced to suddenly exponentially grow and develop in a short space of time.

In God's kindness, this has provided opportunities to reach significantly more people, from many more countries than ever before. Now, as we reflect six months on, we begin to work out what this new normal will look like as we make the most of the technology given to us, whilst continuing to personally equip people to reach the world of sport for Jesus.



THE BIG SPORTS QUIZ

In the last three years we've had the privilege of sharing the gospel at various guest events to over 35,000 sportspeople at an equivalent of two events a day. One of our most popular guest events has historically been our Sports Quiz. As lockdown hit the UK in March, these face-to-face opportunities disappeared so we pivoted to see how we could continue to reach sportspeople, and provide Christians in the world of sport an opportunity to continue to share life and the gospel with their friends. Thus, the Big Online Sports Quiz was launched in April.

Over the five events, by God's kindness, we did the equivalent of two year's worth of evangelistic events reaching 70,000 people. We regularly had over 500 teams gathering together to play an online version of our regular quiz and have a chance to hear a short talk from one of our speakers.

Becky was one of those who invited teammates from her touch rugby team to the quiz. "It was scary to invite teammates, but they seemed a lot more keen than you'd expect. The talk was levelled really well at the audience and quite a lot of my teammates engaged with the talk. We had some really good chats and better talks on a one-to-one basis after the quiz."

Stories like this were replicated not only all over the UK, but also all around with world with teams tuning in from over 80 countries.



DIGITAL RESOURCES AND PRESS

Christians in Sport has always had a strong digital presence, this became even more so during the months of lockdown and subsequent restrictions on face to face gatherings. It peaked with over 250,000 views of our videos in May, more than five times our usual views, and continued over the summer as we produced videos, podcasts, blogs and online events for thousands of sportspeople.

As well as seeing people engage with our own resources online, we also saw the secular world begin to ask more about what the Christian faith had to say to sportspeople. This led to an unprecedented opportunity to speak and be featured on platforms such as BBC Sport, TalkSport, The Times, Sky Sports and in August being featured on Songs of Praise.

One particular clip on Sky Sports saw Graham Daniels

speak about the unconditional love of the Father and how it can transform how people view their sport and the clubs and teams around them. Broadcast to thousands throughout the day on Sky Sports News, and then watched over 100,000 times after being shared on social media, this provided an amazing opportunity to reach into the culture of sport and speak biblical truth as people looked for answers.

Now, with everyone spending more time online, there is wisdom needed as to how to continue to engage people without over-saturating them with online content! That said, there is a wonderful opportunity to equip Christian sportspeople and reach those who don't yet trust in Christ through digital resources more than ever before.



ELITE SPORT

No elite competitions for at least two months brought the prospect of no face-to-face meetings with over 500 professional athletes in the world of football, tennis, rugby, golf, athletics and more who have grown to rely on regular spiritual support.

Faced with this challenge, Christians in Sport supplemented some creative thinking with the knowledge that God knew what He was doing even if we were nervous about it.

Remember what Paul said in his second letter to the Corinthians?

"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed." 2 Corinthians 4 v 7-8.

As is so often the case, we see His hand working at the times we feel most limited.

The use of online Bible studies flourished in our football work to the extent that they are still in place even though full lockdown isn't.

God's kindness allowed for the Christians in Sport's European Tour presence to be in the same hotel 'bubble' as players and caddies when it resumed in the UK in July, which was an ideal opportunity for socially distanced one-to-one meetings.

We could talk of similar encouragements in other sports and overall we say "God is magnificent!" as we reflect on how He has allowed us to continue and grow our opportunities to disciple elite sportspeople and care for people pastorally in challenging times.



INTERNATIONAL

In partnership with other sports ministry organisations globally, Christians in Sport had the privilege this year of helping pilot a new training journey specifically for our heartland; the competitive and elite sports player. For a young Christian leader who is active within this world, it has often proved a challenge to help them grow and develop in ministry due to the inability to take time out during seasons to attend training. Our hope is to train participants in how to think biblically, lead strategically and engage effectively within the world of elite and competitive sport in a programme which keeps them in their clubs and teams.

The idea for the Leadership Development Programme was conceived barely one year ago. **However, due to the huge restrictions placed on us all between March and July it conveniently allowed us to not only plan, build and recruit for the programme ready for the September 2020 start, but it also forced us to become au fait with the required digital resources required.**

The long-term goal is to engage approximately one hundred competitive and elite athletes in the programme each 'season'. For the pilot year running from September 2020 to June 2021 we have 35 students from 27 countries - ranging from Panama to Fiji- representing current Olympic and Paralympic disciplines, current and retired professional players and competitive and all-ability sports. There are many challenges with starting this programme; not least among them trying to generously and sensitively navigate the plethora of cultures represented by the participants, mentors and teachers. Nevertheless, we are immensely excited by the new venture and are entrusting it to the Lord's leading!

**2020 SEES THE START
OF A BRAND NEW GAME
PLAN FOR CHRISTIANS
IN SPORT**

LOOKING AHEAD



**'UNLESS THE LORD BUILDS
THE HOUSE, THE BUILDERS
LABOUR IN VAIN.'
PSALM 127 V1**

KEITH PROCTOR
Managing Director



As we look back over the last three years and start a new Game Plan for the next three, we remember that God is in charge of the vision to reach elite and competitive sportspeople for Christ. This puts God in His place and us in ours making us servant hearted, humble and dependent on Him.

Looking back, we have much to thank God for. Since the start of Game Plan 4 in September 2017, 127,000 sportspeople heard the gospel through over 2,000 guest events. These events regularly took place across 300 towns and cities enabled by over 1,000 committed leaders.

The elite work has grown beyond our expectation, our resources have hit an all-time viewing record, and globally we helped train leaders from over 100 countries to reach elite and competitive sportspeople in their context.

We thank God for His work.

With our anniversary, we have been doing a lot of reflection and thanksgiving of how God has built the 'house' of Christians in Sport. We don't want to take that for granted or get complacent so do please pray as we start this Game Plan 5 that we will not labour in vain without our Heavenly Father and submit all our plans to Him.

As we move forward, our purpose remains the same; we know that the gospel of Jesus Christ is little heard in the elite and competitive sports world for two reasons:

- There are too few sportspeople who are Christians amongst the millions involved in elite and competitive sport throughout the world.
- Christian sportspeople can feel ill equipped to integrate and apply their faith in the day to day context of elite and competitive sport which may inhibit Christian living and witness.

Christians in Sport exists to reach the world of sport for Christ and we work with competitive and elite sportspeople, leaders and partners to further this mission.

Our new Game Plan started in September 2020 and on the next page are five areas we want to focus on:



01

DELIVERING OUR CORE WORK

Under God, we will continue to deliver our core work whilst adapting to the changing circumstances; seeking innovative ways to expand and further our impact. Sports Plus 2021 may look different, university work is currently disrupted and trialing new methods, physical training and guest events are harder to deliver but as sportspeople, we don't believe in 'hard lines' and so the work goes on!



02

DEVELOPMENTAL PATHWAYS FOR LEADERS

We remain convinced that leaders and teams are key to expanding the work in an effective and sustainable way and therefore need more robust pathways to develop leaders, both in number and caliber. We have many in our 17-23 age range and see the benefit of focusing on this window for an enduring impact. The ambition of the Leadership Development Program to train leaders across the world also raises the bar of 'reaching the world of sport for Christ'.





03

DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT

Our preference is always to be as relational as possible, but technology can greatly enhance the work; whether that is to assist operational effectiveness, or adapt and scale up our offer and accessibility to sportspeople, leaders and partners. We want to be in a much stronger place in three years' time.

RESOURCES AND THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Investment in resources has borne fruit and we are attracting more sportspeople who regularly use our materials. We are exploring new avenues to enable us to continue speaking clearly, relevantly and with authority into issues of sport and the Christian faith. So far this has included 'More than Sport' a new series of 30-minute episodes which delve into the big issues of life, sport and faith with the aim of engaging and providing insight from those close to the issues.

GREATER BREADTH IN ENGAGING COMPETITIVE SPORTSPEOPLE

We want to be better at ensuring that competitive sportspeople are able to access our offer and engage with the mission, whatever their age and wherever they live. We will do some work in piloting new models of Sports Plus and a specific geographical focus piece.



04

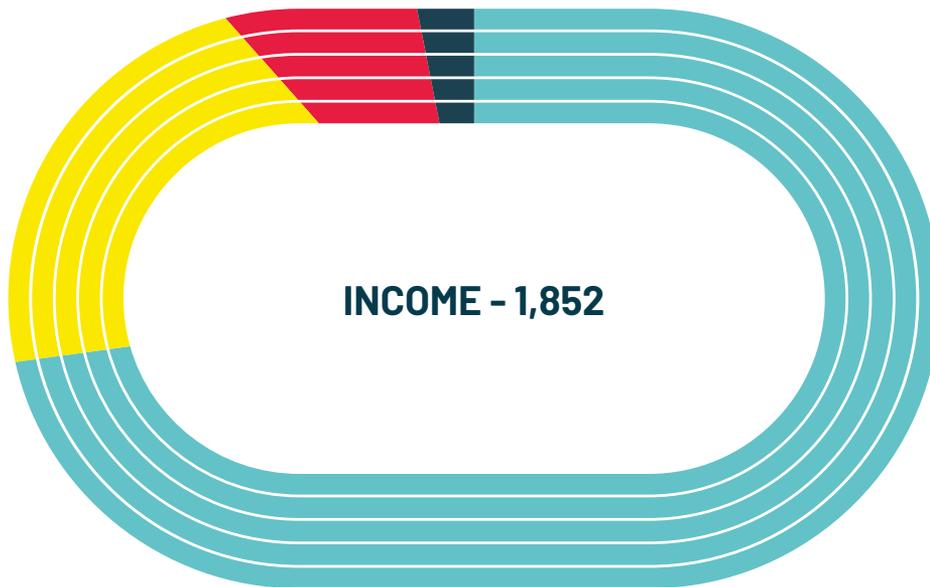
05



FINANCIAL REPORT

We thank God for His continued provision and protection. This year we saw God's hand clearly at work in significant ways. In January 2020 we launched a historic matched funding campaign called 'The Big Match'. Since then, we have received donations which we forecast will enable us to drawdown 60% of the full amount by 2022. We are very thankful to God for the commitment of the partners who have supported the Big Match through new or increased regular giving.

(All figures in £'000's)



- Unrestricted donations = 1,302
- Restricted donations** = 371
- CJRS* = 146
- Camps and Conferences = 33

Unsurprisingly, total income was affected by the impact of Covid-19. Whilst the number of partners who donated increased, total unrestricted donations fell from £1.6m to £1.3m (18%).

*Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

**Primarily for international activities

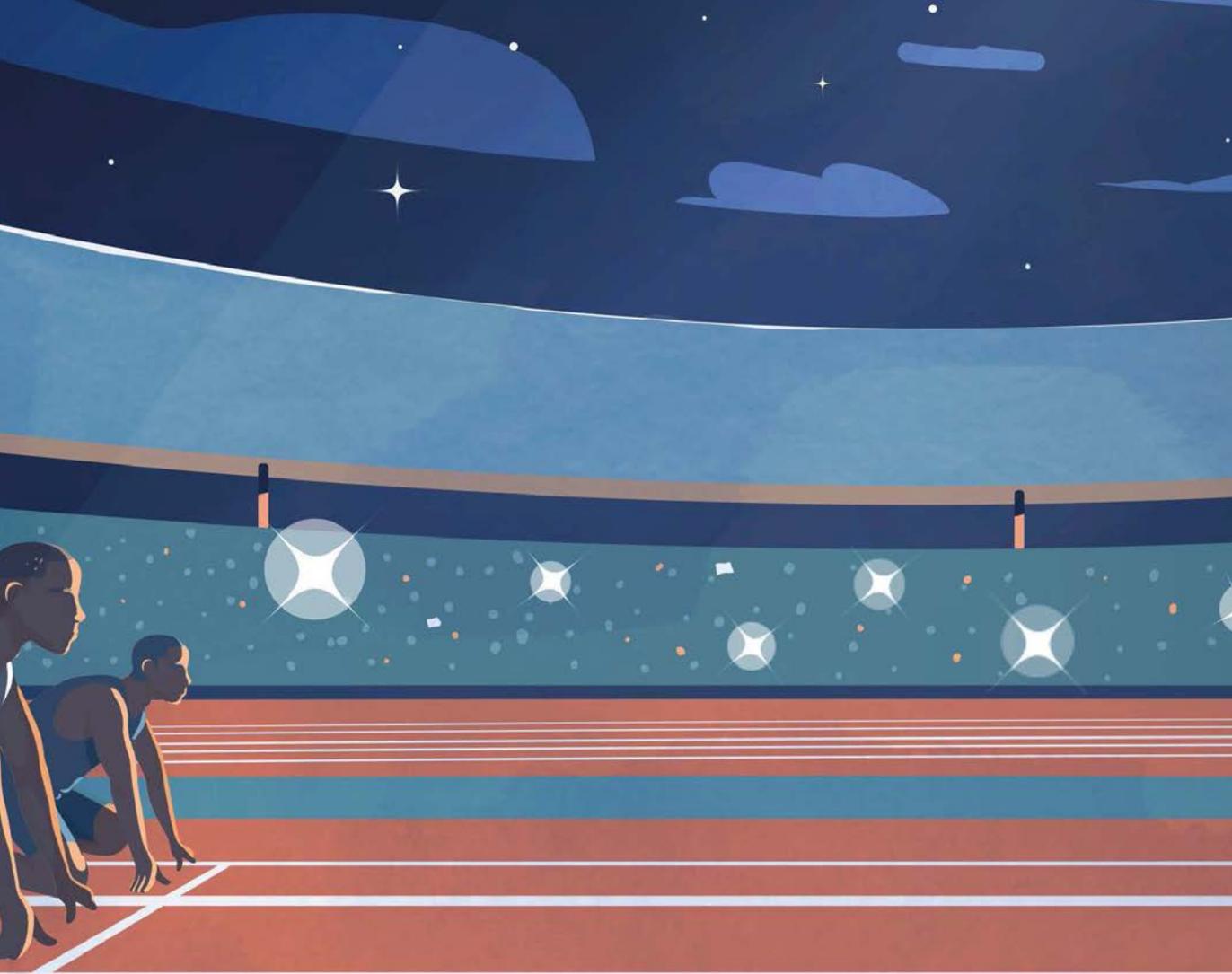


- International activities = 166
- Restricted** = 99
- Camps and conferences = 32
- Elite activities = 411
- UK activities = 805

Total expenditure fell by £561k (27%) compared to last year due to the budget being reduced in March, as well as a significant fall in activities related expenditure with the cancellation of summer camps and other events. Income exceeded expenditure for the year, mostly as a result of a surplus on restricted funds which is due to be spent in the coming year.

Thank you, our partners; churches, families, and individuals for being part of mission to reach the world of sport for Christ. It really is a team effort and we pray that there will continue to be more fruit, for God's glory, from the work this year.





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