

# **ANNUAL REVIEW 2018-19**



# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Next year we mark 40 years of Christians in Sport and 25 years of Sports Plus and can't wait to celebrate what God has been doing in the world of sport over that period.

The vision for Christians in Sport was developed initially through the meeting of a few extraordinary people who dreamed big and put themselves at God's disposal.

One of these, Gerald Williams (right), put it like this after a vision-casting trip to the States: "We climbed into our jumbo jet, feeling that God could do something through Christians in Sport in Britain if we made ourselves available." And here we are, almost 40 years later, putting ourselves in God's hands to be used in the work of reaching sportspeople!

In the last year thousands of sportspeople have been encouraged to connect, live and speak out their faith in Jesus Christ in competitive and elite sport. From opening the Bible with hundreds

**"WE CLIMBED INTO OUR JUMBO JET, FEELING THAT GOD COULD DO SOMETHING THROUGH CHRISTIANS IN SPORT IN BRITAIN IF WE MADE OURSELVES AVAILABLE."**



**"WHATEVER YOUR ROLE WITHIN THE WORLD OF SPORT, BE IT GIVING, PRAYING, PLAYING, COACHING, PARENTING AND BEYOND, PLEASE DO KEEP MAKING YOURSELF AVAILABLE FOR GOD TO USE YOU IN REACHING SPORTSPEOPLE FOR CHRIST."**

of young sportspeople on Sports Plus camps and supporting students to speak of Jesus in their sports teams, to training club players in evangelism and supporting elite athletes as they meet Christ and learn to integrate Him into their professional lives. It continues to be a great privilege to build relationships and see the Spirit bear fruit among sportspeople.

This year, a Northern Irish golfer, seeing a chance to share the gospel with club mates, spoke of his desire to be useful for Christ:

*"The Open returning to Portrush after 68 years created a unique opportunity. A few outreach-minded members prayed for God's word and Christ's name to be part of the conversation, for His glory."*

The subsequent Sports Quiz event was a roaring success, with a packed room of club staff and members hearing God's Word proclaimed. How wonderful to see athletes proactive and eager to be used to make Christ known!

Further afield, we're so thankful for God's blessing in growing international initiatives, including indigenous leaders from 38 countries attending the ECSU Gathering in May. Equipped with our resources translated into 30 different languages, these leaders will go out in God's strength to build sustainable sports mission initiatives in their home countries. What a great encouragement in the way these individuals, being passionate about sport and Jesus, have made themselves available for the gospel.



You'll find this Annual Review absolutely packed with stories of individuals, from church leaders to Sports Plus volunteers to ex-pros working with elite athletes, all putting themselves out there to be used by God in reaching sportspeople. Please use them as both an encouragement and a challenge.

Whatever your role within the world of sport, be it giving, praying, playing, coaching, parenting and beyond, please do keep making yourself available for God to use you in reaching sportspeople for Christ.

Thank you for being part of the team,

**Graham Daniels and Keith Proctor**



# ENGAGE

**OUR GOAL BY 2020 IS TO GIVE 150,000 PEOPLE THE OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR AND RESPOND TO THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST. TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL WE ARE:**

- ENGAGING SPORTSPEOPLE IN THE BRITISH ISLES
- ENGAGING ELITE SPORTSPEOPLE
- ENGAGING SPORTSPEOPLE INTERNATIONALLY
- ENGAGING SPORTSPEOPLE THROUGH DIGITAL RESOURCES



**748 YOUNG PEOPLE ATTENDED SPORTS PLUS V 673 IN 2017/18**



**63% OF PEOPLE AT OUR GUEST EVENTS WOULDN'T CALL THEMSELVES A CHRISTIAN YET**



**A TOTAL OF 80,000 SPORTSPEOPLE HAVE HEARD THE GOSPEL THROUGH GUEST EVENTS IN THE FIRST 2 YEARS OF GAME PLAN 4.**



# STUDENT GROWTH

One way we engage sportspeople is by investing in students playing university sport, helping them to consider the implications of the gospel for their enjoyment of sport and also for sharing Jesus with teammates. This year has been a period of continued growth in this student work, as thousands of student sports people have had the chance to hear and respond to the Good News.

University groups are at the heart of encouraging Christian students in their sports contexts, with one Cardiff student saying "My uni group really supports me in my faith. It's so helpful meeting on Wednesday mornings before big games or socials to be supported by other Christians and learn how I can be evangelising in my team." Hopeful to encourage and equip more students in reaching their teammates, we were keen this year to grow the number of attendees at groups throughout the UK. Praise God that

we notably exceeded our target for growth with 502 now signed up for groups, with the introduction of freshers vision events and more staff on the ground no doubt contributing towards this.

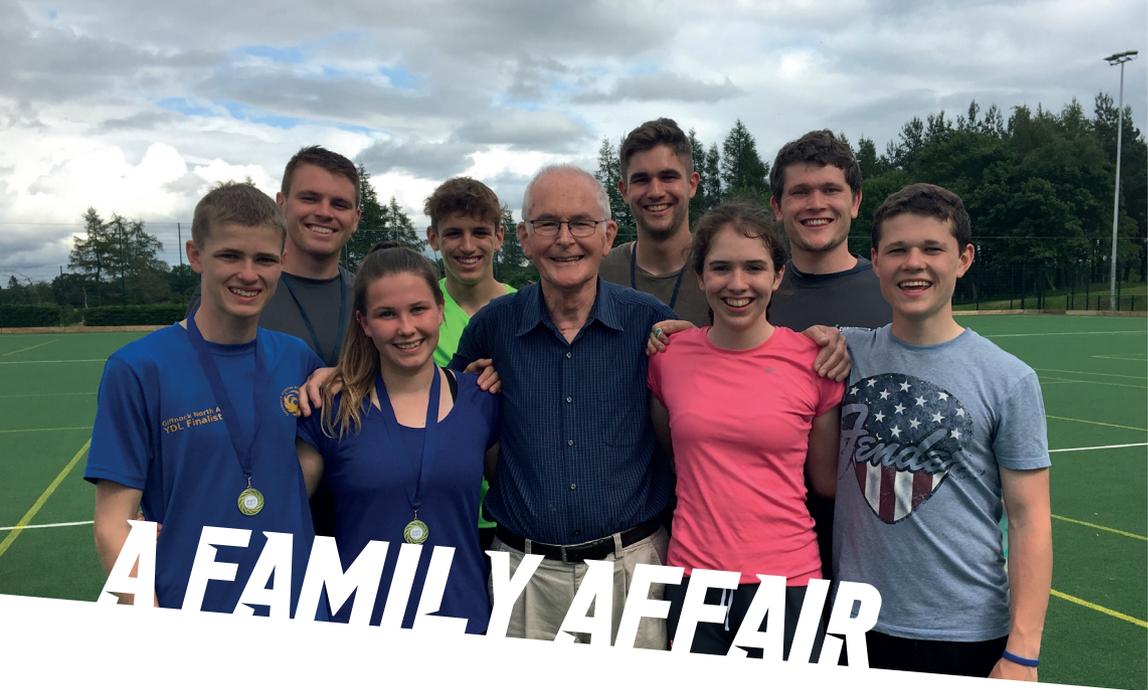
Praise God for His goodness in bringing student sportspeople into groups who are passionate about living and speaking for Jesus in their university sports teams.



**26% INCREASE IN STUDENT GUEST EVENTS COMPARED TO 2017/18**



**164 STUDENTS ATTENDED OUR STUDENT CONFERENCE AT NEW YEAR.**



# GROWTH IN THE SILVER CITY

sport. This evening was a real answer to prayer and galvanised the movement of Christian sportspeople in Aberdeen. One leader noted, "It was incredibly helpful in getting across the vision of Christians in Sport as well as the need. It was challenging and encouraging and I left feeling more equipped in sharing Christ with my teammates."

Having also planned a Sports Quiz in February, there were some discouragements around the number of teammates who were confirmed to attend. However the event went ahead and the gospel was proclaimed; a statement of intent and another answer to prayer. Pray with us ahead to this year's quiz in March for more sportspeople who don't know Jesus to come and hear the gospel.

We are so thankful to God for a number of other initiatives to reach the world of sport in Aberdeen for Christ, including the establishment of a university group, Sports Plus engagement and prayer meetings within churches.

Please pray with us in our aims to partner with more churches across Aberdeen and engage leaders who can help drive the mission of reaching sportspeople within the city. And pray with us for the other 121 towns and cities like Aberdeen to continue to develop sustainable sports mission.

As part of Game Plan 4, we aim to help establish sustainable sports mission in 121 target towns and cities throughout the UK, one of which is Aberdeen. Of course, our aim is then this leads to thousands more sportspeople having a chance to respond to the gospel.

We are so thankful for the work of many faithful Christian sportspeople here who have helped drive the mission over several years. Recently, the team in Scotland have sought to grow this by finding more Christians in sport from more churches across the city in order to reach the world of sport in Aberdeen.

After an initial strategy meeting last summer with existing leaders, each returned to their churches and gathered sportspeople to share the vision of training and outreach to teammates. It was brilliant to see new relationships develop and to meet new Christians in sport to support and equip as well as make plans to hold guest and training events over the coming year.

Praise God that 20 people attended Clubhouse Aberdeen three months later who represented five churches, all from a range of ages and involvement levels in sport from players and coaches, to elite youth and local women's club



It was another excellent summer of Sports Plus, one of huge encouragement and grateful praise to God in this ministry to engage young sportspeople. We are thankful for His goodness in many areas, including the first Dublin Sports Plus and growth year on year of the number of leaders returning to serve and of young people attending.

It was particularly wonderful to welcome eight of Ian Macdonald's fourteen grandchildren to Perth Sports Plus this summer. Ian, a Christian in sport himself in Glasgow, is a keen runner and is not stopping anytime soon! He commented "My wife and I seek to pray for our grandchildren every day

and we are thankful for their involvement in sport and for their exploration of faith. We encourage them to see their sport as their mission field where they are called to be 'ambassadors for Christ.'

Sports Plus is run to help young people improve in their sport whilst exploring what it looks like to live and play for Jesus as a Christian sportsperson, and so we trust and pray that Sports Plus has helped the Macdonald family towards this. Please pray with us that God will continue to bless families like the MacDonalds through these sports camps.



**SPORTS PLUS TOOK 205 TEAM LEADERS, 81 COACHES AND 104 SUPPORT STAFF TO RUN 7 CAMPS**



**62% OF TEAM LEADERS HAD BEEN TO CAMP BEFORE**



**849 SPORTSPEOPLE WERE TRAINED FOR THE FIRST TIME THIS YEAR**

# EXPAND

**BY 2020 WE AIM TO GROW THE WORK BY EXPANDING OUR NUMBER OF LEADERS WITHIN THE WORLD OF SPORT TO 1,000. THIS IS BEING ACHIEVED THROUGH:**

- **EXPANDING THE WORK THROUGH LEADERS AND PARTNERS**
- **EXPANDING THE WORK THROUGH MORE TOWNS, CITIES AND ELITE SPORTS**



**118 ELITE ATHLETES SUPPORTED FOR THE FIRST TIME BY CHRISTIANS IN SPORT THIS YEAR ACROSS 9 TARGET SPORTS**



**352 ATTENDEES AT ECSU GATHERING AND 340 ATTENDEES AT READYSETGO ORLANDO - GROWING PARTNERSHIPS IN INTERNATIONAL SPORTS MINISTRY**

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

From the beginning of the organisation's history, we have felt a responsibility to help support sustainable sports ministry in regions beyond the UK. As part of this vision to expand the work through international partnerships, we have seen encouraging growth across Europe and on a global scale this past year.

After more than two years, a set of sports Bible teaching resources was launched in Orlando to over 300 leaders as part of the ReadySetGo movement to spread the gospel globally among sportspeople. God has also been kind in the development of plans to host ReadySetGo conferences in multiple international regions over the coming year. Pray with us for many sports leaders to attend these gatherings, for key contacts to be made and hearts to be moved to reach the mission field of sport around the world.

Closer to home, we have been privileged with ongoing involvement with the

European Christian Sports Union (ECSU), helping them to deliver their biennial Gathering for leaders in sports ministry across Europe. Off the back of this conference, a significant number of mainland Europeans applied for the Multiply Summer School and the successful applicants represented 14 different European countries.

Subsequently, these European attendees have gone on to support indigenous projects in their home countries. Anna from Italy is starting a new ministry with competitive climbers in the Italian Alps. 'S' from Turkey has been asked to take over the reins of the sports ministry in the country. Joao, Samu and Larisa have all returned to universities in Europe and are helping start new European university groups and Marta returned to Poland and as of September is now representing Christ in one of the top Polish basketball teams! Praise God for how He is raising up leaders to continue to reach the world of sport for Christ around the globe.

# REACHING THE ELITE RUGBY WORLD

With the unique stresses of top-level sport and significant time away from home and church, elite athletes can be isolated and under immense pressure in their identity and faith. At Christians in Sport we are therefore thankful to God for opportunities over the last 40 years to step into this world of elite sport and support athletes in this environment.

The world of elite sport is vast, but this work of coming alongside professionals is currently focussed within nine target sports; football, track & field, rugby union, tennis, cricket, rowing, golf, hockey and netball.. These sports have been chosen to help focus our resources, creating sustainable networks of support, and by God's kindness Pete Browne (pictured below) was



appointed in late spring as the rugby worker to expand our elite work and target this sport more effectively.

Having come through Sports Plus as a young person and been supported by our Elite team as a player, Pete has been a friend of Christians in Sport for a long time and his retirement from professional rugby at Ulster has allowed him to fill this role, a great answer to prayer. His experience as a former pro means Pete has several existing relationships within rugby which may open doors for meeting more players, coaches and officials. It also helps Pete to speak directly into the pressures of joys of this sphere as he supports believers and seekers in the world of elite rugby.

Speaking about his role, Pete noted, "the aim is to build up the players identity in Christ so they understand the gospel of grace in high performance environments where worth can often be re-evaluated every session or game. God's unconditional love leads to a freedom to play with

all our being, no matter the result. This is easier said than known and that head to heart journey is where hopefully myself and the performance team can relationally understand and help in any way possible. Please pray for patience and most importantly for God to do His work in rugby - not mine or anyone else's!"

Praise God for the provision of a dedicated rugby worker in this sphere of elite sport, and pray with Pete for fruitful opportunities to point players to Christ.

**"THE AIM IS TO BUILD UP THE PLAYERS' IDENTITY IN CHRIST SO THEY UNDERSTAND THE GOSPEL OF GRACE IN HIGH PERFORMANCE ENVIRONMENTS WHERE WORTH CAN OFTEN BE RE-EVALUATED EVERY SESSION OR GAME."**



**103 BIBLE STUDIES TOOK PLACE FOR ELITE CHRISTIAN ATHLETES ON TOUR, INCLUDING THE DIAMOND LEAGUE ATHLETICS, PGA AND EUROPEAN GOLF TOURS WITH 1,046 PEOPLE ATTENDING OVER THE YEAR**



**516 ELITE ATHLETES ARE NOW SUPPORTED BY CHRISTIANS IN SPORT V 467 ATHLETES IN 2017/18**

OUR TARGET FOR 2020 IS TO ENABLE THE WORK TO GROW, INCLUDING RAISING OUR ANNUAL DONATIONS TO £2 MILLION. THIS INCLUDES:

- ENABLING THE WORK THROUGH PRAYER, PARTNER COMMUNICATIONS AND A STRONG OPERATIONAL CORE
- ENABLING THE WORK TO GROW THROUGH SPECIAL PROJECTS
- ENABLING THE WORK FINANCIALLY



OUR WEBSITE WAS SHORTLISTED FOR 'BEST NEW OR REDESIGNED WEBSITE' IN THE PREMIER DIGITAL AWARDS



3094 PEOPLE RECEIVE THE PRAYER DIARY BY EMAIL - A GROWTH OF OVER 600 FROM 2017/18



OVER 9,000 PEOPLE READ 'FOLAU, VUNIPOLA AND THE INTOLERANCE OF TOLERANCE' WITHIN A WEEK OF LAUNCH - OUR MOST ENGAGED WITH BLOG EVER

# ENABLE

## BRAND RELAUNCH AND DIGITAL RESOURCES



You'll notice that this Annual Review is the first to make use of our new logo and brand design. This work, alongside our website redesign was all about making it easier for people to understand exactly who we are and what we do.

Our new website was launched in April and we're thrilled that it has been nominated by Premier Digital for 'Best re-designed website' and 'Best Christian organisation website' in their 2019 awards. A major aim of the website was to improve access to our resources and

since April we've seen more people accessing our resources and those people staying on our website for longer than before, as they've seen other items of interest.

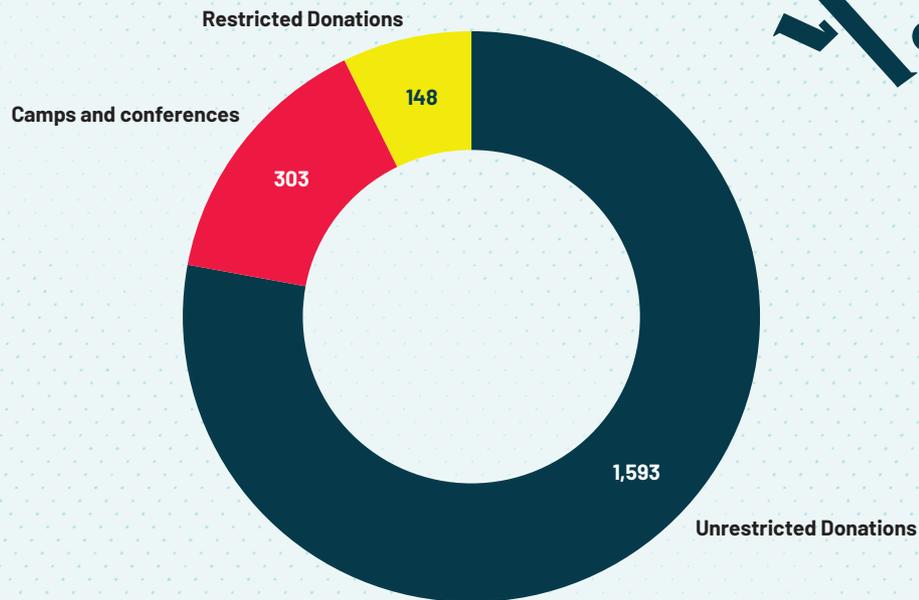
We also wanted to make it clearer for people to know how to get in touch with us, especially if they were elite athletes. Since re-designing the site, we have seen more elite sportspeople get in touch through the website than we usually would, allowing our Elite Sport team to respond directly to them.

**"THIS WORK, ALONGSIDE OUR WEBSITE REDESIGN WAS ALL ABOUT MAKING IT EASIER FOR PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND EXACTLY WHO WE ARE, AND WHAT WE DO."**

# THANK YOU!

Behind every guest event ran, resource created, and training event delivered, there are hundreds of partners who have prayed for and given to this work. With gratitude for this support, here is an overview of our finances\* (all figures in £'000's.)

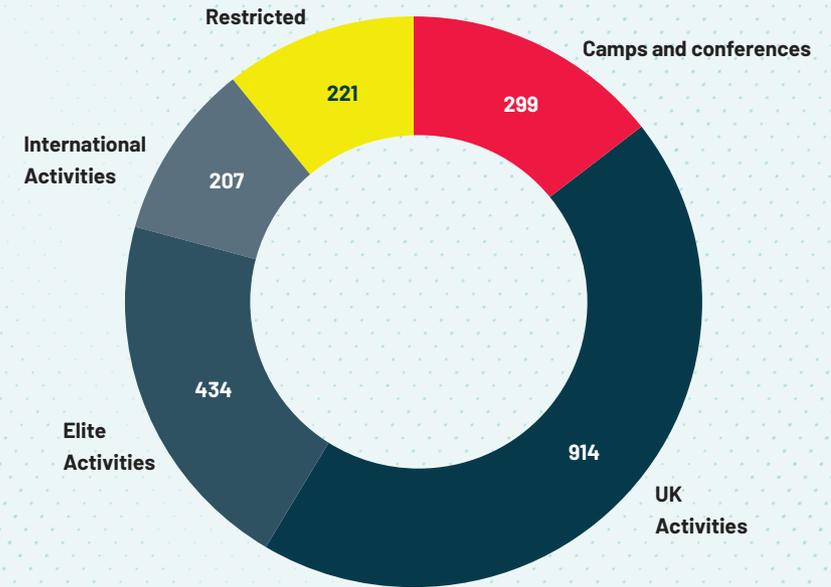
## INCOME



Total income increased by 6% from £1,918m to £2.044m. Unrestricted donations increased by 10% on last year.



## EXPENDITURE



Total expenditure was £2.069m, an increase of 7% from £1.920m last year.

Thank you for standing with us prayerfully and financially in the mission to reach the world of sport for Christ. We praise God for your support and pray that the work of the last year will bear much fruit for the glory of God.

*\*Pre audit figures subject to minor changes.*





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