

Autumn 2017

# back pages

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF CHRISTIANS IN SPORT



## University Challenge: Three decades of student work

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Sports Plus: A summer in pictures

The Internship: Breaking new ground

Umpire's call: New minister's hockey hopes

# WHAT'S INSIDE

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Welcome to your new Back Pages. From Sports Plus to student work, and hockey umpiring to football coaching, this issue is packed with articles I hope you find engaging and inspiring as we seek to reach the world of sport for Christ together. Happy reading!

**Ed Mezzetti**  
Back Pages Editor

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



Tom Cox: minister and umpire. Read his story on pages 14-15



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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 more information on who we are and how we can help you, please get in touch, we'd love to hear from you.

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# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

## The season that never ends

Late September is the time when summer sports reach the end of their season offering a chance to rest, reflect and start planning next year's targets. For winter sports, the season is still young enough for all to dream of success. The season may end formally but in reality we are always in season, using our imagination to plan the next game or the next strategy as we look for that competitive edge.

better. And our competitive nature as Christians in sport means that we can always strive to find ways to pass on the good news of Jesus to our teammates and colleagues, as well as developing plans for our sporting performance. The early Christian leader Paul ended a letter to Timothy, a young man he was mentoring for leadership, with these words: "I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season..." There is never an off-season for the good news. Let's be prepared every day to find ways to pass it on in our world of sport.

"I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season."

Whatever the season, it's great to see Christian sportspeople engaging with their clubs and teams and this edition is full of many examples of that.

Committed sportspeople make the most of all times, whether in or out of season, to improve their skills and compete

### Graham Daniels

General Director at Cambridge United FC,  
St Andrew the Great, Cambridge





Night of Champions, Kingham Hill School



Club La Santa, Lanzarote trip



Debbie Flood (left) with fellow chaplain Heather at the World Para Athletics Championships

## BACK PAGES BITE-SIZED

Christians in sport are reaching out with the gospel where God has placed them. Here's a collection of recent stories we hope encourage and inspire you.

When a Dialogue Dinner was suggested at the University Group meeting I was so up for it! A few of the cricket girls had shown a bit of interest in previous conversations so I was keen for them to discuss and ask questions to get them thinking. It went down brilliantly, top night with nice food, good chat and Q&As with staff member Rosie Woodbridge. Following on from that, one of the girls came to church with her flatmate and wants to return after summer. Then a few weeks later another teammate and my course mate came to church, they loved it and became Christians that night!

**Libby Piggott, Bath University Cricket Club**

I've taken a number of teammates to Club La Santa, Lanzarote over the last 10 years, but this was the first time I'd brought players that I coach. Seven of them, and 20 others invited by their Christian teammates, studied and discussed passages from Luke's gospel, heard it explained, and asked their questions to Graham Daniels. Throw into the mix the amount of time getting to know one another better, and the advantage of being away from the distractions of 'normal life', these trips provide a truly unique evangelistic opportunity. As yet none have turned to trust in Jesus, but three want to keep investigating, one has



James Boyle (left) with two friends at the European Champions Cup final rugby day

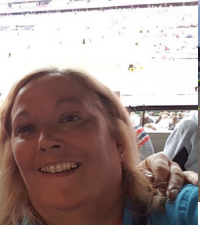
agreed to read the Bible one-to-one next season, and they all want to come again next year.

**Craig Larter, Anglia Ruskin University Hockey Club**

One day at the European Sports Mission last summer, staff member Dave Hampton said let's text a friend from our country, asking them 'do you have time to speak with me about God and look at the Bible?' I thought when my friend received that message, all that he would say was 'what are you talking about!', but he said 'OK, I'm very interested, I would like to speak with you'. When I came home, we met each other and had some conversations. A couple of months later he gave his life to Christ! So one of the most powerful lessons for me is don't be ashamed of God and the gospel, just say what you have to say.

**Nenad, Serbia**





Jersey beach volleyball tournament



Wimbledon Bible study breakfast

The European Champions Cup final day ran right in the middle of my university exams. I ruled the event out for my teammates as it can often be a stressful time. Dave Hampton challenged me not to make someone else's decision for them so I asked and was overwhelmed by the response! Six of my teammates were keen to come which was a brilliant opportunity for them to play some rugby, have some food and fellowship, watch a real spectacle but most importantly hear the way to real life through our saviour Jesus Christ. The boys were very provoked by what was said and one took a John's gospel. I'm so excited to see what God will do as the season starts up again.

### **James Boyle, Edinburgh University Rugby Club**

To round off the academic year, Warwick University's Christians in Sport group held a dodgeball tournament as a way of sharing the gospel with our teammates. God was so faithful and we had 48 players in all, with teams representing American football, frisbee, golf and cricket. We had a great talk from Intern Jos Herbert between the group stages and the knockout rounds relating the hope that a sporting upset brings, to that of Jesus Christ and the hope He can bring to our lives. So many people heard the gospel for the first time at this event so please be praying for follow up conversations with Christian teammates,



The winners at Warwick Uni's dodgeball tournament

and that God would work in the hearts of those who came.

### **Jack Shepherd, Warwick University Golf Club**

If you are one of our prayer partners, you will know we have been persistently praying for God to raise up Christians on the ATP and WTA pro tennis tours for more than two years. This summer, we stepped out in faith and offered a Bible study on the middle Sunday of Wimbledon for Christians involved in the competition. Over breakfast, a group looked at the rich young ruler from Matthew's gospel, the man who (nearly) had it all, prayed for the world of tennis and discussed future gatherings. Small beginnings to what we hope will flourish into regular Bible studies at the Grand Slams and the pro tennis world reached for Christ.

### **Elizabeth Chambers, Performance Team Manager**

#### **Get in touch**

We'd love to hear your stories of how God is working in your world of sport. Share yours by emailing [ed.mezzetti@christiansinsport.org.uk](mailto:ed.mezzetti@christiansinsport.org.uk)



# SPORTS PLUS: A SUMMER IN PICTURES

It was awesome to see God at work in the hearts of hundreds of young people across our seven Sports Plus camps this summer. Our theme was 'Make way for the King' and our memory verse Matthew 2 v 2. These pictures show just some of the highlights, while here are a few stats for you to enjoy...

4,007

MILES RUN ON THE MORNING JOG

470

TEAM MEETING  
BIBLE STUDIES

95

MAIN MEETING  
TALKS

692

YOUNG PEOPLE

COACHING IN



AND MANY MORE...

373

LEADERS, COACHES,  
SUPPORT STAFF  
AND TRAINEES

798

CUPS OF TEA DRUNK  
ON LEADERS'  
TRAINING WEEKENDS

105

DECIBELS RECORDED  
DURING DINING ROOM  
SINGING AT BELFAST 2



# WE'LL TRUST GOD WHATEVER COMES OUR WAY

Former international judo player Paul is supporting his son Sam as he pursues his rugby career. Here he shares what it's like being a Christian parent in this position.

Sam first played rugby at under 11 level and made a big impact, dominating his opponents!

As he continued to improve, he joined the junior section at Bath and then moved to Bristol, our local club, when he was under 17. He is now playing rugby at University of South Wales, but keeping up his links with Bristol.

For four of five years, Sam was playing on Sundays. In those days, we encouraged Sam to get involved in youth groups with midweek meetings. When there was no rugby, then we would be at church. The clash between sport and church can be a struggle, but it's one we worked through.

I would also go to church on my own sometimes or with rest of the family. I do what I can to keep Jesus at the centre of my life and am around Christians as much as possible. I always try to go to midweek meetings.

God's got His hands on Sam's career. It's hard to be a Christian in a rugby environment. It would have been easier for him not to say anything, but everyone

knows he's a Christian in each of the clubs he has gone to. We work at this together to try and get a good balance between faith and rugby.

Pressure to succeed can be a big thing. Sam and I have talked about the various stages on the rugby career ladder. He's of the mind that his skills are a gift from God and we'll take one match at a time. We'll trust God whatever comes our way.

As a Christian, being a parent of a sportsman at Sam's level has many joys and challenges. It's not an easy environment, but we pray together and work at it together. The key is encouraging him to trust God.

Christians in Sport support many Young Performance Athletes (YPAs) and their parents like Sam and Paul. This year, we are publishing a booklet, which has responses to many of the big issues parents of YPAs may face. For more information, email [lisa.elliott@christiansinsport.org.uk](mailto:lisa.elliott@christiansinsport.org.uk)



# UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE: THREE DECADES OF STUDENT WORK

The nature of our student work has evolved over the years, but it remains a key part of our mission to reach the world of sport for Christ. British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) runs competitions for more than 5,800 teams every year, while two thirds of students play sport at university.



Daf Meirion-Jones



Owen Brown



Rosalie Brokenshire

Here, three former university group leaders share their memories with Back Pages editor Ed Mezzetti. They are rugby players **Daf Meirion-Jones** (Cambridge 1990-91, now senior pastor of Chessington Evangelical Church) and **Owen Brown** (Edinburgh 2003-05, now UCCF Wales Team Leader) and netballer **Rosalie Brokenshire** (Exeter 2008-09, now a full-time mum with two young boys).

## EM: What did being in a University Group look like in your day?

**RB:** We got support from Christians in Sport and started using the Pray Play Say material each week and the group just grew. It was really exciting. There was definitely an emphasis on prayer. I remember that being a big thing. We moved the meeting to a Wednesday morning, so we could really focus on the BUCS matches that afternoon. We also organised dodgeball and beach volleyball tournaments and quizzes to share the gospel.

**OB:** We had boys' and girls' prayer meetings on Monday nights and a Wednesday get together at 6pm before a lot of the team socials took place. Anyone who didn't have one would pray for those who did and text them during the evening. We ran Christianity Explored as well.

**DMJ:** 15 to 25 of us, across a whole variety of sports, got together on a Monday







A punting breakfast in Cambridge



evening to look at the Bible and pray for one another doing personal evangelism in our sports teams. Once a term we put on an evangelistic event, often a dinner with a speaker like Graham Daniels.

### EM: Can you share some of the encouragements?

**DMJ:** I came to faith through the Christians in Sport group! You saw people seeking to share Christ across a whole variety of different sports, people having the courage to invite their friends along. Our termly events would pretty much have 100 people. Seeing a handful of people profess faith in Christ, that's the best encouragement there is.

**RB:** In the second year, we had a really big drive to get people to come to the new year conference. We got a big group together. When we came back, it felt like we were a tighter unit. Everyone had a bit more training and got the vision. It really felt like we were reaching the world of sport for Christ together.

**OB:** It was one of the first examples for me of all-of-life mission and it really had an impact. It often led to great conversations and we had 150 people at one dinner where Alex Harris [past Student Team Leader] came to speak. 14 or 15 years on, it's good to see many of those people still going well in the Lord.

### EM: What challenges did you face?

**OB:** One of the main things was trying to develop a Christian community where there was accountability. Because we were such a large group, it was harder to know each other so well.

**DMJ:** We always needed to keep an evangelistic focus, with prayer central, so it wouldn't just become a self-serving time of hanging out with your mates. In university sport. There's a whole world of post-match social life where, as Christians, sometimes we think we need to compromise ourselves in order for our friends to hear the gospel.

**RB:** For us, there was the challenge to get things going at the start and then trying to disciple and lead people - that's normal Christian life.

### EM: Why is student work so important?

**RB:** Uni is make or break time for a lot of people. People often either forget their faith or really get stuck in. It's a precious time. As students, you tend to get to know people a lot quicker. It's such a time to grow in faith and the opportunities for evangelism are huge.

**OB:** I saw how open people were. That's really stayed with me. You need to do things well and get fully involved in the life of the university. I have looked to develop that ever since. We're in the world for the world.

**DMJ:** It's an absolutely key time for discipling and evangelism. It's often when the foundations of biblical understanding and teaching are put in place.

**As our student work keeps growing, we would love to see Christian sportspeople in the top 50 BUCS universities and colleges being supported and reaching out to their teammates.**

# THE INTERNSHIP: BREAKING NEW GROUND

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These are exciting times for Christians in Sport. As we look to reach the world of sport more effectively, we are seeking to place staff in different regions. From this autumn, our Internship programme is playing a key part in this strategic change as nine men and women take up placements across the British Isles.

The aim of the Internship remains to train and support men and women of graduate age to reach the world of sport for Christ, while also equipping them with transferrable skills for wherever God leads them in the world of work afterwards. But instead of being based at our head office in Bicester, this year's crop of nine will be linked to partner churches and focus their work in a geographical area.

Ian Lancaster, our UK Team Leader, said:

"We're really excited about this prospect of placing Interns in churches across the British Isles - getting the same central training and missional experience but scattered throughout the land. It will give great opportunity for hands on learning from local church leaders and places a responsibility on the Intern to help drive and shape strategy for reaching the local world of sport for Christ."

The regional Internship programme will enable us to partner more directly with local churches. Interns will gain more

exposure to local church life and the opportunity to serve there as well as being supported by our regional staff. The new programme also offers greater flexibility than before. Interns competing at a high level of sport can be based where they need to be for training, while others can commit to an area they are particularly passionate about.

This year, eight new Interns are joining Jen Harris, who is starting a second year on the scheme in Edinburgh. Here's your chance to meet the eight newcomers.



**Name:** Phil Small

**Sport:** Rugby Union

**Location and church:** Belfast, First Ahoghill Presbyterian Church

**Prayer for the year:** My prayer is that I will grow closer to Jesus and, as a result, become more passionate about reaching people, specifically sports people with the monumental news of the gospel.



**Name:** Vanessa Kelada

**Sport:** Cricket

**Location and church:** Dublin, Christ City Church

**Prayer for the year:** I pray that Christians in Sport can be well received and have an impact in Dublin, like it has all over the world.

**Name:** Hannah Smith

**Sport:** Ultimate Frisbee

**Location and church:** Bristol, Emmanuel City Centre Church

**Prayer for the year:** That God would continue to challenge and shape us for His glory and that I personally would not be ashamed of the gospel as I seek to pray, play, say within my club in Bristol.

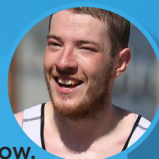


**Name:** Craig Bathgate

**Sport:** Triathlon

**Location and church:** Glasgow, St Silas Church

**Prayer for the year:** That we would see an uprising of Christian sports players in Scotland, who are passionate about living out their faith in their sports teams and clubs.



**Name:** Jack Shepherd

**Sport:** Golf

**Location and church:** Bicester, The Source, Brackley

**Prayer for the year:** That God would use me to share the gospel with those in my world of sport, and that through the Internship I can equip and encourage Christian sportspeople to do the same.



**Name:** Rob Stileman

**Sport:** Cricket

**Location and church:** Bicester, The Source, Brackley

**Prayer for the year:** That God will use me and the other Interns massively in growing His kingdom in the world of sport.



**Name:** Vusa Mtunzi

**Sport:** Rugby

**Location and church:** Jersey, Town Church

**Prayer for the year:** That my influence as a Christian in sport in Jersey will provide opportunities for people to know about Jesus Christ, our Saviour.



**Name:** Jos Edwards

**Sport:** Rugby Union

**Location and church:** London, Dundonald Church

**Prayer for the year:** That the Lord increases my hunger to know more of Him and see Him use me in my new rugby club to make Him known and glorify His name.





## Profile

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**Name:** Gail Redmond

**Age:** 38

**Where from:** Belfast, Northern Ireland

**Church:** Carrickfergus Elim

**Sporting involvement:** Women's Domestic Manager at the Irish Football Association, a player for Glentoran Ladies and coach Northern Ireland under 15 girls.

**Sporting highlights:** Captaining Northern Ireland, being a freshman All American player at the University of Southern Mississippi and playing in three Women's Champions League qualifying rounds.

**What is your most embarrassing moment in sport?** I scored an epic own goal in the Algarve Cup against Portugal (probably the best goal I have ever scored)!

**What encouragements have you seen as a Christian in your sport?** I am always blown away how sport, especially football, can open doors into places you never

thought you would go and opportunities to share with people you never thought you would meet. Over time the biggest encouragement I have seen is God's faithfulness in all these situations.

**What do you find tough about living as a Christian in your sport?** The biggest challenge for me is balance. It's a real joy to read God's word and meet with other Christians, but it's so easy to push your quiet time to the side or skip church for a coaches meeting or training.

**How do you look to share the gospel in your sporting role?** I try to be intentional about making time to get to know teammates and fellow coaches; praying for opportunities to share about what God has done in my life.

**What one piece of advice would you give to Christian sportspeople to help them share their faith?** I really do believe the saying "people don't care what you say until they know you care". Invest in people and share the greatest message ever! Christ died to forgive us of all our sins and give us an abundant life!

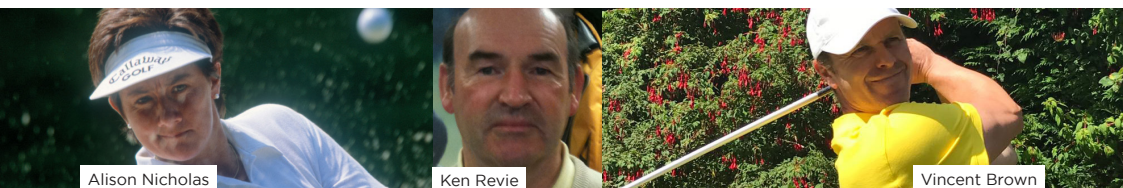


# FAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

Reaching the world of sport for Christ is why we exist. That's harder to do in some places than others, such as professional golf tours where players spend so much time away from home.

For the few players who are Christians, it is hard to get to church and enjoy fellowship with other believers. For those looking to investigate Jesus, there is not an obvious place to turn. This is where Christians in Sport can step in.

days of build-up and practice when all is more informal and everyone is readily available, so giving me the freedom to 'bump' into folk for a chat about the things of God."



Alison Nicholas

Ken Revie

Vincent Brown

On June 1st, Christians in Sport took over the leadership of LOGOS Golf Ministries - a charity whose mission statement is 'taking the word of God to the world of golf.' LOGOS remains a separate charity, but our staff are now supporting the work of its representatives Ken Revie (European Tour), Alison Nicholas (Ladies European Tour) and Vincent Brown (Tartan Tour).

Northern Irishman Ken said: "With the Christians on Tour, I'm always looking to have a Bible study, get together or when the circumstance arises, I'm always happy to meet up one-to-one with them.

"My time at an event is primarily the two

Alison, a former US Open champion and winning Solheim Cup captain, began work on the LET in July.

She said: "I am supporting and encouraging the Christians on the golf tour to live and grow in their faith, while giving the opportunity for others to explore the Christian message.

"I have been encouraged to get involved through many different avenues and as I have first-hand experience from both a golf and Christian perspective it seems the perfect fit."

Vincent seeks to represent Jesus as a player on Tartan Tour in his home country of Scotland.

He said: "While attending events over the past couple of years I have spoken to many amateurs and professionals about my role of being a point of contact should anyone want to know more about the Christian faith."

## More information

To read more about LOGOS and reports from Tour events, visit [logosgolfministries.co.uk](http://logosgolfministries.co.uk)

# UMPIRE'S CALL: NEW MINISTER TOM TELLS OF HOCKEY HOPES

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"I would love, at the start of my ministry, to help people to understand that umpiring isn't something I do separately. This is part of ministry. I don't stop being a minister when I have a whistle in my hand."

Tom Cox has just begun a new post as minister of Oadby Baptist Church in Leicestershire. But before he started he made sure he would be able to keep up another great passion - hockey umpiring. Having first taken up officiating at the age of 16, he is looking to reach national level. Having got married to Ellie in 2016 and with all the demands of starting his new church role, Tom knows this will require plenty of balancing, but the 26-year-old wouldn't have it any other way.

"On a personal level, I love hockey and it's great to keep involved with it. I could go back and play at a social level, but with umpiring I can get to a much higher level and I enjoy that. I like giving back to the sport.

"On a ministry level, umpiring provides some of the best opportunities I have to witness outside of the church, to sit with someone and talk about my faith and church life. I think it's good for anybody in Christian ministry to be involved in something outside of their church. It keeps me in touch with a world that I just wouldn't see sat in my church office.

"Jesus calls us to get out there. If you're



going to witness to the world outside of the church, you need to know about that world."

Originally from the Wirral, Tom started playing hockey aged 12 and it soon became his main sport. A right forward with Oxtun HC, he was a regular junior county squad player.

His first taste of umpiring came at 16 when Calday Grange Grammar School, where he was a pupil, hosted a young leaders course. "I just loved umpiring straight away, even though we probably only had an hour of it."

Seeing the sport he loved playing from a different perspective, and having the chance to serve others, gripped Tom straight away.

His hockey master at school, Chris Todd, a former international hockey umpire who umpired in five World Cups and two Olympic Games, was only too keen to encourage him on that route. Having achieved his level one club qualification, Tom was soon umpiring and playing matches, often one after the other.

"It was around the age of 18 that I realised



I could go further with my umpiring than I could as a player. I decided to sacrifice playing to pursue my umpiring career, and soon gained my level two regional qualification."

While doing an undergraduate degree at London School of Theology, Tom was put on the National Young Umpires Promising List and had the opportunity to umpire junior tournaments at national level.

While a minister-in-training in Bewdley, Worcestershire, Tom joined the Midlands Region Hockey Umpires Association and umpired a couple of men's Premier division games.

"I'm just about reaching the limit of what I can do with my qualification and I would love to go higher," he explained.

Off the pitch, Tom has had some great opportunities to share his faith with other umpires and players.

"At regional level, you generally meet your umpiring colleague an hour before the game, usually someone you've never met before, and inevitably the question of what you do for a living comes up.

"It's brilliant having an opportunity to say I'm a Baptist minister as that often leads to conversations about my faith, and my beliefs about all sorts of topical faith-related issues."

Balancing ministry and umpiring doesn't just happen off the pitch though, as one of Tom's assessment feedback reports suggested he may like "to stop being so much of a Christian" when umpiring, especially when dealing with conflict.

He said: "I am called by God to ministry and that rightly impacts my approach on the pitch. I like to build a relationship and rapport with the players so that they come to know my heart is in serving them. Without umpires, there's no game. So when you get things wrong, it's better to hold up your hands and apologise. There's always time to chat it through in the bar over food afterwards."

**Ed Mezzetti**  
Back Pages Editor

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



# PARTNER EVENINGS

You are warmly invited to join the team as together we thank God, pray and look ahead to see how we can further reach the world of sport for Christ.



January 12th	<b>Birmingham</b>
January 15th	<b>London</b>
January 19th	<b>Oxford</b>
January 26th	<b>Cambridge</b>
March 5th	<b>Cardiff</b>
March 9th	<b>Belfast</b>
March 12th	<b>Edinburgh</b>
March 16th	<b>Bristol</b>

More evenings to be confirmed in 2018

**To find out more and book please visit**  
**[christiansinsport.org.uk/partners](http://christiansinsport.org.uk/partners)**  
or call the office on 01869 255 630