

Summer 2018

# back pages

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF CHRISTIANS IN SPORT



## Moldova mission: On court for Christ

### Inside this issue

World Cup dreams and a hope to rely on  
Gospel gains in the capital  
Discipleship Down Under

# WHAT'S INSIDE

Welcome to your new Back Pages. It's always encouraging to hear how God is at work in the world of sport and this issue shares some great examples from around the globe. From Moldova to Australia and across the UK, sportspeople are hearing the gospel and that's worth celebrating!

**Ed Mezzetti**  
Back Pages Editor  
City of York Athletic Club,  
St Thomas' Church, York



Commonwealth Games chaplaincy - Page 14-15

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## Know someone sporty starting university this year?

We can link them up with other Christian sportspeople who are already at their university, let them know about their university Christians in Sport group and link them with churches that we know of in the area.

**[christiansinsport.org.uk/startinguni](http://christiansinsport.org.uk/startinguni)**

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

## Gospel fruit in the world of sport

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"The gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world – just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace." Colossians 1 v 6 (NIV)

Paul wrote these words to the Colossians almost 2,000 years ago. They were as true back then as they are today – the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world. Paul saw amazing gospel growth as he preached the message of Jesus across much of the Roman Empire. But living now, we can see how much further the good news has spread and rejoice in that fact. If you are a follower of Jesus in the UK today, you are living proof of this.

In this magazine, we have some great examples of how the gospel is bearing fruit in the world of sport beyond these shores. Jules Wilkinson and I had the privilege of being part of the chaplaincy team at 2018 Commonwealth Games where we saw how God's word is taking root among top-level athletes from across the globe. Being part of a global sporting event like that gives a great focus to our work of supporting elite sportspeople all year round.

I hope you will also be encouraged by how God is at work in Moldova. You can read how members of the Admirals Basketball Academy are hearing the gospel as they train and compete together. Two of the men behind this vision, Eugene Postolache and Eugene Pogorelov, themselves came to faith in Jesus through a sports mission initiative and were further equipped to reach local sportspeople after attending a Sports Plus camp.

Also happening this summer, there are few, if any, bigger global sporting events than the World Cup. Let's be praying for more doors to be opened to the gospel in international football. But let's also remember what an opportunity the World Cup presents to share the good news with our sports friends locally. The gospel is still bearing fruit and we can be part of that great mission today!

**Graham Daniels**  
General Director

Director of Football at Cambridge United FC, St Andrew the Great, Cambridge







Bristol University dodgeball



Sports Plus Xtra Jersey



Christ Church Aughton Sports Quiz

## BACK PAGES BITE-SIZED

Christian sportspeople are sharing their faith with their friends all over the country. Here's a collection of stories to encourage and inspire you.

A few months ago, I was invited to a Christian in Sport Sports Quiz and encouraged to bring a group from my cricket team. This also happened to include a couple of my best mates. None of the team were church goers or have ever expressed an interest in faith. I found it so easy inviting the team to the quiz considering I've never invited them to church before, they all were keen and some even brought their girlfriends. They were able to hear the gospel throughout the evening and I got to share why Jesus is so important in my life. We won the quiz and they all can't wait for the next one.

**Sam Parker, Shirehampton Cricket Club**

and openness of the testimony meant that the students were really engaged. A great event.

**Michael Moir, Bloxham School**



Birmingham University Athletics Club Bible study

On 15th March, we held a Lent Address Day at Bloxham School called 'Uncover', encouraging our students to consider what the Bible has to say about Jesus. As part of the day, we used the Christians in Sport Quiz with our fourth form (Year 10) of 70 students, gathering them all into groups in a dining room. Two of the visiting team from Lymington Rushmore Holidays led the quiz with great enthusiasm. At half-time we had a testimony where one of the team interviewed another member, asking her about her time at school and her journey to faith in the Lord Jesus. Although the atmosphere throughout the quiz was very enthusiastic and competitive, the honesty

Initially we hosted a Dialogue Dinner style 'pasta party' to discuss the Christian faith with our athletics friends. Thirty came, engaging with discussion and asking thoughtful questions. We covered the relevance of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Every week since we've done a Bible study with a smaller group who are interested. Around 10 who are investigating faith regularly attend and even invite other friends themselves. We started with an Uncover study of John and when our friends were keen to carry on, we looked into Old Testament stories. Their Bible knowledge has grown dramatically, making many links and comparisons between stories themselves.



University Group leaders training, Scotland



Bristol Partner Evening



Word Alive football

Some had previous understanding of the Christian faith, some had none. We were encouraged when one friend, having come to our Bible study, church and other Christian Union events, gave her life to Jesus. Since then her faith has grown and she is sharing how Jesus has changed her life with others in the athletics club.

**Victoria Weir, Birmingham University Athletics Club**

I invited seven of my rugby teammates round for a Dialogue Dinner. The actual night was so much more relaxed and enjoyable than I thought it would be - if it wasn't for the effort of cooking I would repeat it every night, because it was just really good fun! The girls were so engaged and helped me along as I tried to share the gospel with them and God really led me to explain it in a way that felt natural and conversational. A few of the girls who couldn't make it had asked me how it went and said they would like to come if I did something like it again. It was great to really put it out there that I'm a Christian and I think they'll feel more comfortable to talk to me about it now if they want to.

**Bethany Duffy, Ulster University Coleraine Rugby Club**

Over the past couple of years, I have been part of a road cycle group, consisting of school parents from our local Crieff community, who meet twice a week



Philippa Cook (left) with some of her fellow Strathearn Wheelers

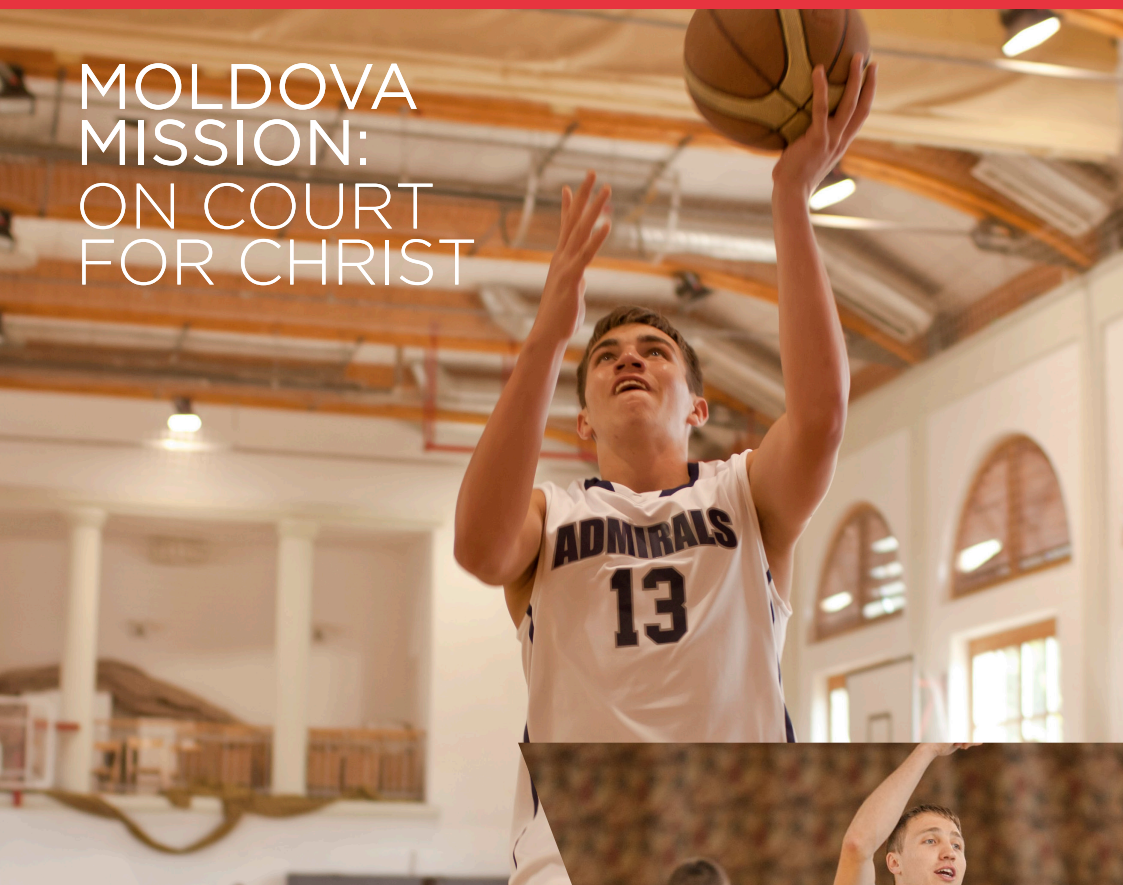
to cycle. One of the mums became a Christian through attending our local church and I felt challenged over the past year to meet with her, before our cycle rides, for Bible study and prayer. The amazing thing is that others in the group got to know about this and asked if they too could attend. So a group of us now meet each week and at the moment are working our way through the gospels. It has been a wonderful opportunity to share my faith and every week there is lots of lively discussion! We also entered a team, along with some husbands, for the Christians in Sport Quiz which was hosted by some of the local churches. Again, this was a great night and provoked good conversation. I would encourage anyone involved in sport, no matter what age you are, that there are always plenty of opportunities to share your faith.

**Philippa Cook, Strathearn Wheelers Cycling Club**

### 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)

# MOLDOVA MISSION: ON COURT FOR CHRIST



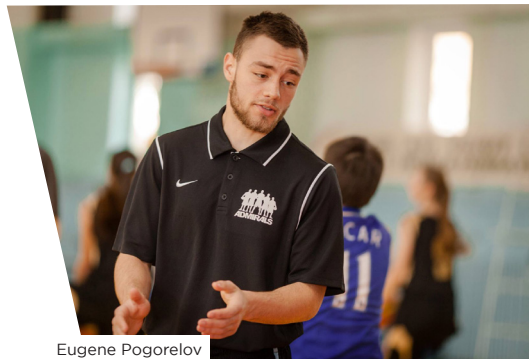
"This is what I love. This is my passion." That is how Eugene Postolache describes his work for the Admirals Basketball Academy in Chisinau, Moldova.

Eugene, and his colleague Eugene Pogorelov, are examples of the amazing work Admirals do. Both came through the basketball programme and are now on staff, coaching various teams and sharing the gospel with them.

The Admirals Academy came into being in June 2012 when Nicolai Morari, who heads up the Admirals, was asked by



Eugene Postolache



Eugene Pogorelov



the Basketball Federation of Moldova to take a team to Ukraine for a tournament. After starting out with one team, they now have four sides, with players of both sexes representing Moldova in national age group teams. Yet throughout the Admirals' evolution and development, the vision has always remained the same: to share the good news of Jesus with all those who attend the academy.

Both Eugenues know personally the role sport can play in a person's journey to faith. For Eugene Pogorelov it was after attending a sports camp at 17 that he made a commitment to follow Christ. Whilst for Postolache, he was challenged to investigate Christianity for himself after hearing the gospel from an American basketball coach whilst at university.

Consequently, they are both passionate about their work as they share their basketball expertise, their lives, and the gospel with the young players they coach.

It has been our privilege to support the Admirals over the years, through training leaders, speaking at events and helping provide teams for camps. In 2015, when the Admirals were looking to start a basketball camp, both Eugenues came over to Repton Sports Plus to see a camp model in action.

For Postolache, the opportunity to visit Repton was a defining moment: "I came to Sports Plus two months after I joined the Admirals. It was a crucial time for me.

"We first met Nicolai Morari when he came to a global sports mission conference. His passion for reaching sportspeople was clear and it has been a joy to see Admirals birthed and grow over the past six years. Nicolai is a great mentor to his young leaders and has always kept the gospel at the centre of the basketball academy with young players and adults all having to do a Bible study before or after training in order to attend. We have been partnering with him for many years, helping provide training at his Born to Play leader weekends, supporting him on their camps and through visits."

**Caroline Reid, International Co-ordinator**

"When I came to Sports Plus, I saw the picture of what I want to see in the future in Moldova: generations of young sports people who have a faith in Jesus."

Pogorelov was particularly struck by the impact of Sports Plus on how both leaders and young people played their sport, as a result of their faith.

"It was incredible, and it was really interesting to see how God impacted the sport they play. Now they play not for themselves but to glorify God, they have different relationships in their teams, they are role models in their teams and they try to share their faith through their sport"

Yet, their visit to Repton not only envisioned them, it also provided them with practical ideas going forward. For example, Team Challenge, the multi-sport tournament which runs throughout



Eugene Pogorelov (back row, second from left) at Repton Sports Plus 2015



Sports Plus, has translated well to a Eurasian context!

Visits have been reciprocated with Christians in Sport staff and Interns travelling to Moldova to deliver some of the teaching at their 'Born to Play' training camps over the past four years.

The most recent edition was in January 2018 and it saw around 50 young people (all aged between 13 and 16) spend three days playing sport, undertaking team building exercises and looking at the central truths of the gospel.

At the end of the training camp, many of the young people made a commitment to follow Christ. But the Eugenies are keen to emphasise that the camps are no stand-alone venture, rather they are just one part of the Admirals' ministry.

"We are trying to tell them the message of Jesus Christ all year round. Born to Play is just an opportunity for them to move the knowledge they have from the head to the heart," said Pogorelov.

They highlighted two young players who became Christians back in January.

"After the camp this year, two of them made a decision to follow Christ, but for a few months before, we had slowly started to study the Bible. Since the camp, we have been holding Bible studies two mornings a week. And we can see that they are progressing in their faith."

It is a picture of what the Admirals are seeking to do - investing long-term in the lives of these young people and helping to develop committed disciples of Christ who, in turn, will go on to make more disciples themselves.

And what of plans for the future?

Last month saw the introduction of a leadership training programme that aims to develop broader life skills that should serve the 36 attendees into adulthood.

"We want to help them use their abilities and their potential, and teach them different life skills, but also, during that time, share the great story of Jesus. We understand that this is a process, it is not just one or two meetings, it is a process lasting maybe five years."

This story is one example of the many great ministries across Europe and the world which we are supporting over our next three-year strategic Game Plan. We continue to pray on for all the Lord will do through the Admirals Basketball Academy and pray expectantly for more examples of sports mission across Europe.

**Rob Stileman**  
Intern

Banbury Cricket Club,  
Life Church, Brackley



### Watch

To see a short video about the Admirals' work, visit [christiansinsport.org.uk/admirals](https://christiansinsport.org.uk/admirals)



# CLOSE CATCHES COACHING VISION

Having first attended Sports Plus as a 13-year-old, Beth Close is now pairing her passion for faith and athletics as a coach

An England international 400m hurdler, Beth has just graduated from the University of Bath. But in August she will be back on the university's track to coach athletics at our new Monkton Sports Plus camp.

"As I grew up, I got involved in a little bit of coaching at my club. I had a passion for athletics and teaching young people and I was really inspired by my coach at Sports Plus, Heidi Smith. She was always so accommodating and helpful to me in my sport, even though she normally coaches longer distance athletes.

"I also have a real passion for sharing the message of Jesus, so to be able to coach and do that at the same time is awesome. It will be really cool to coach on the same track I trained at during uni."

Beth was an Assistant Coach alongside Heidi at Sports Plus Repton last summer, having been a Trainee the year before.

"I really love being able to engage with young people. I gave my testimony in one of the water breaks last summer and they found it helpful. I told them a lot about my struggles and quite a few of the older ones could really relate to that. I was able to encourage and pray with them. It was lovely to see them wanting to become closer to God and do that within their sport."

This year, supporters' donations have part-funded Beth to secure her England Athletics Coaching Assistant qualification and are providing similar help to others training to be Sports Plus Coaches. In return, recipients of the funding commit to coach at Sports Plus in the longer term.

Beth added: "Heidi was a big influence on my life for many years at Sports Plus. I just want to be able to pass that on in my coaching. I am so thankful for all that she and Christians in Sport have done for me."



## Get in touch

For more information on Sports Plus coaching, email [sportspluscamp@christiansinsport.org.uk](mailto:sportspluscamp@christiansinsport.org.uk)

# WORLD CUP DREAMS AND A HOPE TO RELY ON

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As you read this article, the World Cup is in full swing. One of the biggest sporting events on the planet has fans gripped as 32 nations compete for the coveted trophy in Russia. When you consider the global interest the World Cup generates as well as the joy and celebration it can elicit, it is easy to see why football is widely known as the beautiful game.



The World Cup has conjured up historic moments that live long in the memory like Brazil's epic team goal in 1970, Maradona's 'hand of God' in 1986 and Robin van Persie's Salmon-like diving header in 2014. Because so many people watch these events unfold around the globe, they provide a real sense of shared experience that fans can reflect on, even if their team didn't quite hit the heights on the pitch.

One of the standout experiences is that each World Cup begins with bags of hope and expectation, particularly

if you follow one of the 'bigger' teams like England. This time, they're going to do it, all those years of failure will be supplanted by one glorious, successful campaign! And even when current form suggests that hope is really thin, it can be hard not to soak up some of it as your team kick off their first match. However, by the time the group stages end, the hopes of 16 teams will have disappeared as they exit the World Cup and their fans ponder a myriad of 'what if' questions.

Our English word 'hope' so often conveys vague optimism for the future like my

team winning the World Cup. But when we go back to the Greek of the New Testament, we see hope in a different light. The noun 'elpis' or verb 'elpizo' are usually translated into English as hope, but their meaning contains a sense of trusting and waiting with confidence.

Of course, this issue of hope goes far wider than sport. One theme frequently noted by social commentators today is that in the West this type of 'sure hope' is in short supply. Increasingly, as we look to the future we feel a sense of uncertainty, even foreboding. Into this context 'sure hope' is a valuable commodity.

And while we can never be totally confident of our team winning the World Cup, there is a 'hope' we can be sure of if we're trusting in Jesus. A hope of heaven and an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade as 1 Peter 1 v 4 puts it.

When Jesus meets two of his followers on the Emmaus road in Luke 24, we are told that they were kept from recognising them. They were heading away from Jerusalem where they had been part of the group of believers and now appear to have lost the hope they had. When asked what they are discussing, they reply in verses 19 to 21 of the NIV: "About Jesus of Nazareth. He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel."

They described their hope as something they had before, in the past tense - that

'elpis' confidence is now lost. But what happens next is awesome. Jesus says how foolish these men had been not to believe what was written about Him in the scriptures and after giving them the most amazing Bible study and breaking bread with them, Luke tells us: "their eyes were opened and they recognised Him". Suddenly, their hope, which had turned to despair, is restored and they powerwalk it back to Jerusalem to let the disciples know Jesus is alive.

That is the difference Jesus makes. He provides the hope we can be confident in. The writer to the Hebrews sums it up pretty well in chapter 11 v 1 (NIV): "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see".

There is nothing wrong with having optimism as a football fan. And as an England supporter, I would love to see them lift the trophy on 15th July, but there is no certainty in this outcome. Let's enjoy the World Cup, but rejoice in the 'elpis' hope found only in Jesus.



Germany celebrate their 2014 World Cup win

### Reach out

Visit [sportsmissionpack.co.uk](http://sportsmissionpack.co.uk) to download our free collection of resources to help share the gospel during the World Cup

### Ed Mezzetti

Back Pages Editor

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







# LONDON CALLING: GOSPEL GAINS IN THE CAPITAL

By 2020, we aim to see the gospel reaching sportspeople in 121 cities and towns across the UK. With a population of 8.8 million, London is one of the places we're particularly focussing on.

The UK's capital is certainly a sporty city, with 40 per cent of Londoners taking part in two or three sessions of physical activity a week. But fewer of these are playing sport in traditional clubs and teams. For example, running groups meet regularly in most of the city's parks and others play football or rugby in work-based teams, while much of this happens away from 'traditional' weekend matches.

All this means there are many great and varied opportunities to reach sportspeople with the good news of Jesus. We are partnering with churches across the city to see how they can best do this in their different contexts. Here are just three examples of what this work looks like.

**Dundonald Church** in Raynes Park, near Wimbledon, is part of the Co-Mission network of churches in the capital. Ministry Trainee Pete Greene, a golfer and cricketer, helped set up Dundonald's Sports Network with rugby player and Christians in Sport Intern Jos Edwards after attending our London gathering.

"We meet once a month to pray for our non-believing teammates, for opportunities and for boldness to share the gospel. If you're the only Christian in your team, you can feel a bit isolated, but if you're part of a network like this, then it really encourages you. It's a fledgling group, but we're encouraging each other that our sport is a mission field.

"About 30 people are involved. We've created a WhatsApp group as a way to stay in contact if we can't always make the face-to-face meeting."

During the Six Nations rugby tournament, the church hosted a barbecue and showed the England versus Ireland match on a big screen. Around 100 people came and they kicked off with a gospel talk.

A few miles north, a group has also started at **The Boathouse Church** in Putney, another Co-mission church, which has around 50 adult members. While lots of the group are part of clubs and teams, others play sport on a more ad-hoc basis, like so many of their fellow Londoners. Touch rugby player and paddle boarder Beth Cutting said hearing about the vision of Christians in Sport had spurred members into action.

“This got lots of us really excited, seeing there was a mission field out there and asking each other ‘what are we going to do about it in Putney?’

“After that, we did a survey to find out how many people in the church were playing sport. It showed 40% of our adults were engaged in regular physical activity. All of them were interested in meeting together to pray about their different sporting contexts. Since September, we’ve been meeting once a month for breakfast before our Sunday morning service to pray and share something from the Bible.

We’ve even had three people join clubs due to the encouragement of the group when they hadn’t felt confident enough before.”

The church used one of their monthly Boathouse Session outreach events to host a Sports Quiz, while group members are looking for more training to help with one-to-one evangelism.

Over in south east London, staff member Linvoy Primus has helped **Christ Church Bromley** set up a monthly Bible study for local professional footballers.

Matt Lloyd, the church’s associate minister for evangelism, said: “We had one footballer in our church already and Linvoy linked us up with another two. Linvoy leads the Bible study and I help. They are all Christians at the moment and it’s in early stages, but we’re praying for gospel opportunities with teammates.

“One of the best things about it is that they are meeting guys who live in their world. One of them said ‘It’s the highlight of my week. We talk about football and what it’s like to be a Christian in the changing room’. I would say that he’s grown considerably in faith through this relationship with the other footballers. I couldn’t have set this up without Christians in Sport. It’s a great example of serving the local church.”

Matt, who plays wheelchair tennis, said the church are also thinking about other ways they can reach out to their local sporting community.

Having seen something of what’s happening in London, how could you get stuck into your local world of sport?



Six Nations rugby event at Dundonald Church

### Get in touch

London-based and want to make something happen in your church?

Email [london@christiansinsport.org.uk](mailto:london@christiansinsport.org.uk)

# COMMONWEALTH GAMES: DISCIPLESHIP DOWN UNDER

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Christians in Sport staff support more than 400 elite athletes as they look to live for Jesus in the world where He has placed them. This support takes our team to various locations around the UK and further afield - including Australia! Staff members Graham Daniels and Jules Wilkinson were among the 10 international Christian chaplains at the 2018 Commonwealth Games on Australia's Gold Coast where they built on work happening all year round.

Research shows that there are more than 10 million people playing in clubs and teams in the UK alone. We do not value the life of a professional sportsperson more than an amateur one, so why do we invest so much in terms of staff and hours in such a small number of people?

Nowadays, the demands of elite sport on time and travel mean that to reach the top level, Christian athletes will often have grown up outside the church. But the Bible tells us that like all followers of Jesus, they need teaching and fellowship to help them live out their faith. By supporting elite sportspeople all year round, and by serving as chaplains at major events like the Commonwealth Games, we are effectively bringing church to them.

Elite sport is also a profession where you continually have to prove yourself to get



Graham Daniels and Jules Wilkinson at Gold Coast 2018

selected, where your salary or funding is dependent on maintaining extremely high levels of performance and often where you're intensely scrutinised by the media and fans. This pressure means it is very easy for your identity to become bound up in how you perform and what others think of you. Therefore, much of the time Graham and Jules spent at the Games was in opening God's word with Christian athletes, helping them take their eyes off themselves and focus on Christ.

Jules said: "The reason major events have chaplaincy is that they want to provide whatever the athletes have at home to help them train and compete. If you're a Christian used to going to church, they want to have that provision in the village for you, so you can be helped to



achieve your best in competition. We were not there as social workers or sports psychologists, but chaplains helping Christian athletes live out their faith.”

At the majority of events, it’s up to the local organising committee what

able to hold a gathering before the competition started for any Christians who wanted to come. It was wonderful to see a number from different countries meeting as sisters in Christ the day before they were competing as hard as they could against each other.”

Graham added: “Sometimes teams wanted a Bible study and we were able to provide that too.”

The Games, however, were not without their funny moments. Graham said: “Everyone had their uniform. Ours was yellow and made us look a bit like pizza delivery people, which led to a lot of banter, but fortunately our takeaway services were never called upon!”

One of the roles of chaplains is to provide a safe space for people to be quiet and to offer expertise and support when tragedy strikes. This proved the case after 15 players and staff from the Humboldt Broncos ice hockey team were killed in a road accident.

Jules explained: “The whole of Canada was mourning this tragedy and the Canadian chaplain was able to support the athletes and officials at the Games by setting up a book of condolence.”

A big encouragement was the relationships that Graham and Jules were able to develop with officials. “It’s not just the athletes that are under pressure, but the team managers too, so it’s important that they trust what we’re doing,” said Graham.

The opportunities Graham and Jules had at Gold Coast 2018 have proved a real springboard to the work supporting track and field athletes at Diamond League meetings this summer.

Do join us in praying for more chances to serve at major sporting events in the future.



provision they make for chaplaincy. Most will look to have representation from the five majority world religions. At Gold Coast 2018, the Christian chaplains were based in the Multi-faith Centre in the middle of the Athletes Village.

Reflecting on the Games, Jules and Graham were able to praise God for many highlights.

“It was wonderful to see the Lord build on the existing relationships that we had with the athletes and to be able to support them through adversity and joy,” said Jules.

“One thing that Christian athletes love is to meet other Christians competing at their level. In one team event, we were

A new booklet from Christians in Sport

# HOW DO I SUPPORT MY CHILD AS A CHRISTIAN IN THE WORLD OF ELITE SPORT?

Top 10 questions asked by parents and guardians

01

## HOW DO I HELP MY CHILD DEAL WITH THE CULTURE OF ELITE SPORT?

GRAHAM DANIELS

Elite sport is often a real pressure-cooker environment. It's said that it was UCLA football coach Henry Sanders who first told his team: "I'll be honest. Winning isn't everything," then following a long pause: "It's the only thing!" Whoever said it first, it is a very accurate summary of the elite sport subculture.

Playing is about winning and coaching is about creating winners - although there will be differences in how this is displayed in a team sport compared to an individual one.

Indeed, many coaches hone the skill of pushing a young athlete to stay hungry for success by chiding their failures and praising their successes (but not too much to stop them becoming complacent).

So when he or she is winning, the young sportsperson feels great, but what they (and we) fail to realise is that all the time we may be ingraining in them a mindset that attaches their

identity to their performance. We are sowing in them the seeds of real problems later on. When they start to lose, it is not just a loss, it is much more than that because their identity is bound up with it. As a result, they feel like they are a loser and torn apart.

What can a parent or guardian do to counter this insidious trend?

1. Firstly, help your child to cultivate a **grace-based mindset** rather than a performance-based one. Colossians 3 v 1-4 urges us to set our minds on who Christ is and what He has done and not on our achievements. Far from lessening the motivation to play, it increases it because we now do all things for God's glory (Colossians 3 v 17), secure in knowing we are loved by God regardless of our performance. This provides much greater security to cope with the tough and exposing subculture of elite sport.



*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

(Colossians 3 v 1-4)

2. A second consideration is that whilst sport is a vital part of God's good creation, we do need to recognise the Bible is clear that "physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come" (1 Timothy 4 v 8). Please hear me

as a passionate sportsperson, this is not undermining the importance of sport, but it is **elevating the importance of spiritual growth**. It is therefore worth asking whether as players devoted to our sport, or parents and guardians devoted to our children's sport, we show as much commitment to godliness. The stark reality is that long after my sporting ability has faded, my character will endure. I sense this is almost a bigger problem for parents and guardians, who with admirable commitment pour hours into their children's sport, but as one youth worker put it to me recently: "If only I saw as much passion for their children's spiritual growth!"



### Questions to consider:

1. How much is your identity as a parent or guardian bound up with your child's success as a player?
2. Can you love your child in a way that sees them as valuable regardless of winning?
3. What are you contributing in cash and calendar to your child's spiritual growth?



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