

BACK PAGES

THE ANNUAL

2025

ISSUE 1

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CHRISTIANS
IN SPORT



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who have provided articles for
this edition.

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EDITOR'S MESSAGE



We are incredibly excited to present you with this first edition of Back Pages: The Annual. We hope you love the magazine's new look with more stories, resources and insights into the world of sport than ever before.

Step back, and it can look like not much changes in sport. As I write England begin another Ashes campaign in Australia, home nations experience the agony and ecstasy of FIFA World Cup qualification, and men and women across the UK turn up every week to train, coach, support or compete. For more than 50 years Christians in Sport's mission has been similarly unchanging – to reach the increasingly vast mission field of sport with the good news of Jesus.

Step in and you'll see a world of sport that doesn't stand still for a moment. Baseball faces its toughest test yet Down Under, and as professional structures in women's cricket, football, and netball grow, so do audiences. In every season, at every level, the world of sport continues to provide new opportunities to enjoy God's good gifts and share Him with others.

Back Pages may look and feel a little different, but stepping back again, we hope the stories within this magazine bring to life our unchanging desire to see every sportsperson reached with the good news of Jesus.

We remain deeply thankful to God for your partnership as it sustains this very mission.

Brian Glynn
Back Pages Editor

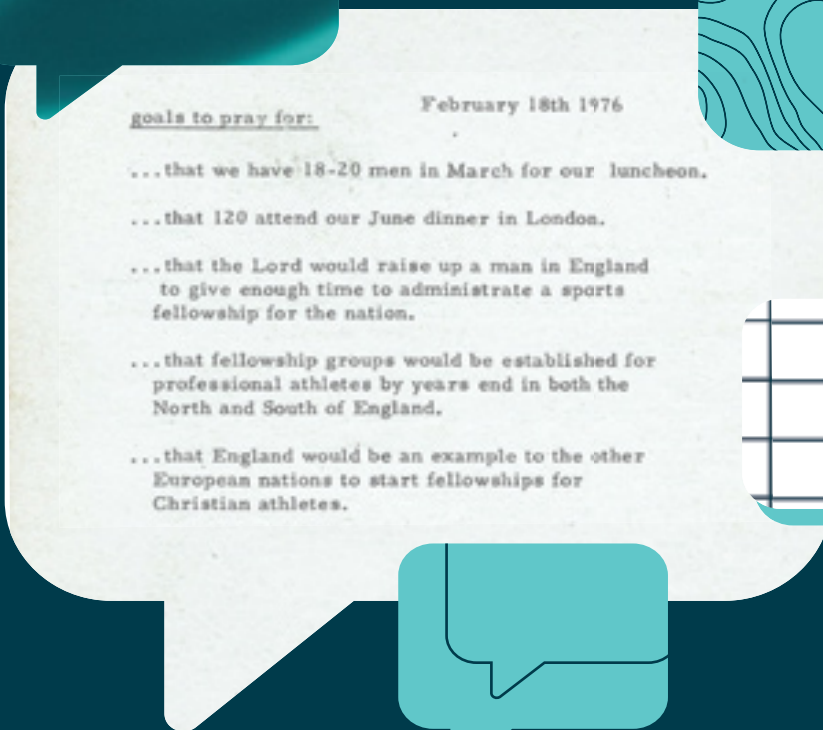
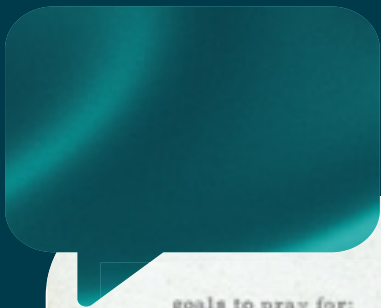




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DIRECTORS' MESSAGE



Fifty years ago, in February 1976, a group of Christians sat down and wrote out five prayers. No structure, no staff teams, no national ambition – just a conviction that God cared about the world of sport and a belief that He might move if they prayed. Half a century on, it's impossible to miss the kindness of God in answering those prayers far beyond what they imagined.

As we open this year's magazine, marking fifty years since that prayer memo, we want to begin exactly where they began: with thanksgiving. God has been faithful. And many of you have stood with us in prayer year after year. We are deeply grateful.

FIFTY YEARS OF GOD'S SURPRISING GOODNESS

Those early pioneers asked for "a sports fellowship across the nation." Today we see Christian athletes opening the Bible together in clubs, academies, universities and professional environments across the UK. We see coaches praying for their teams. We see groups meeting quietly before training sessions. We see elite players shaping the culture of dressing rooms with humility and courage. All of it traces back to that simple conviction in 1976: prayerful action matters.

Through those decades, your prayers have strengthened the work. Every conversation on a training ground, every camp, every small group in a university sports club – none of it happens in isolation. It has always been underpinned by the prayers of partners who believe that Jesus is Lord of sport too.

GIVING THANKS FOR THIS PAST YEAR

If the long view shows us God's faithfulness across fifty years, the close-up view of 2025 has shown it just as clearly.

Take Sports Plus. The momentum and depth we're seeing there is one of the clearest

answers to prayer in recent memory. Nearly a thousand teenagers spent a week this summer training hard, competing well and hearing the gospel with clarity. But more than that, we saw young athletes discovering that following Christ isn't something bolted onto life – it's the centre of it. We watched them realise that faith and sport aren't rivals but partners.

YOUNG PEOPLE ENJOYING SERIOUS SPORTS ACTION AT REPTON SPORTS PLUS



We saw young believers praying for teammates. We saw some trust Christ for the first time. We saw teenagers leaving camp longing to be witnesses in their clubs. After decades of praying for the next generation, Sports Plus has become a remarkable place of gospel fruit.

We also give thanks for significant growth among Christians in professional sport. Never in our history have we seen so many elite athletes open the Scriptures together, ask serious questions about faith, and commit themselves to following Jesus. Bible studies that began

with two or three now gather a dozen. Prayer groups that once met irregularly now meet weekly. The courage of these men and women has been striking – not loud or brash, but quietly confident in Christ.

At the same time, student sport remains a frontline full of opportunity. Young leaders are stepping up with conviction, handling the Bible well, and standing for Christ in environments where pressure is real. We've seen small groups multiply on campuses. We've seen teammates reading the gospels for the first time. And we've been encouraged again and again by the faithfulness of students who compete seriously yet live distinctively.

We're also thankful for the doors God has opened in the public space. Being invited onto platforms like Radio 2 has given us the chance to speak naturally and warmly about Jesus to millions who would never come near a church. Every time those opportunities come, we're reminded that God provides the reach and produces the fruit – we simply need to be faithful when the door opens.

LEARNING FROM THE FRONTLINE

A great deal of what we're seeing has been shaped by the world Gen Z athletes inhabit. It's a generation marked by pressure, identity questions, high expectations and deep longing for connection. Yet those very pressures have created a remarkable openness. Young athletes are curious. They're willing to talk. They want clarity, meaning and community – and the gospel offers all three.

That's why our partnerships with local churches and other organisations have become so important. It's the church that makes and forms lifelong disciples of Jesus. Sporting believers need teammates; they also need a church family around them. We thank God for pastors and student workers who faithfully invest in these young men and women.

LOOKING AHEAD: WHERE WE SENSE GOD LEADING US

As we look at the next few years, one priority keeps rising clearly above the rest: the under-23 age range. These years are decisive – spiritually, personally and athletically. They shape habits, identity, worldview and direction. When someone learns to follow Jesus wholeheartedly in this window, it often shapes the rest of their adulthood.

So, we're committing ourselves to deepen our work with this age group: strengthening Sports

IT WAS A PLEASURE TO SPEAK TO STUDENTS AT UCCF'S FORUM CONFERENCE THIS SEPTEMBER



Plus, investing further in student ministry, developing resources for young professionals, and walking more intentionally with emerging elite athletes.

Alongside this, we know we must remain specialists. Sport changes quickly, the cultural pressures on players shift year by year. To serve Christians well, we need research and insight – the kind that helps us understand what athletes actually face and equips us to support them with wisdom. We intend to stay right at the forefront of that, so believers can live out their faith with clarity and confidence.

And we're convinced that public platforms will continue to matter. Not because visibility is the goal, but because real people listen when Jesus is spoken of clearly in the national conversation. We want to walk through every open door the Lord provides – humbly, joyfully and bravely.

WHAT WE'RE PRAYING FOR NOW

Fifty years after that first memo, we find ourselves writing new prayer points for a new season.

We're praying for a wave of under-23 athletes to come to know Christ and follow Him faithfully in their sporting communities.

We're praying that Sports Plus would keep shaping young disciples who love Jesus deeply and speak of Him naturally.

We're praying for continued growth among believers in professional sport – that they would be a steady gospel presence in locker rooms and training grounds.

We're praying for deeper partnerships with churches and student ministries – real unity for

the sake of a new generation.

And above all, we're praying that the Lord would keep us humbly dependent on Him. We want prayer at the start, prayer in the middle, and prayer at the end – just as it was at the beginning.

THANK YOU

Your prayers have carried this work. They still do. We're so grateful for every moment you've lifted this ministry before the Lord. The same God who answered those first five prayers in 1976 is answering yours today.


As we step into the next chapter, we do so with confidence in Him – Jesus, Lord of sport and Lord of all.

Here's to more years of prayerful action, and to the faithfulness of God – yesterday, today and always.

Graham Daniels
General Director

Ian Lancaster
Mission Director

Keith Proctor
Managing Director



50 YEARS ON THE FRONT LINE

Over many years, Christians in Sport have sought to evangelise, equip and encourage players, athletes and coaches at every level.

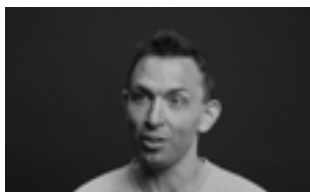
Thanks to the generous giving and persevering prayer of partners, God has opened wonderful opportunities to train future leaders, and build sustainability into our vision to reach the world of sport for Christ.

From leading university groups to volunteering at Sports Plus, from the internship scheme to local network leaders, it's always a privilege to see people grow in maturity through mission: connecting their love for sport with faith in Christ. It's been a joy to play a small part in the journeys of many who have gone on to full-time ministry, remaining active in both church and sport while growing in passion for mission and service.

Fifty years after a small group began praying big prayers for sports mission in the UK, we asked three church leaders who have journeyed with Christians in Sport for many years to reflect on why this partnership matters in their church context.



MIKE HARRIS



Mike Harris is the full-time pastor of Emmanuel City Centre, Bristol, and plays rugby for Old Redcliffians R.F.C. He was an intern in 2015 and served on the Christians in Sport staff from 2016 to 2022.

"Sport has been the lens through which I've understood how the Christian faith impacts every area of life. I grew up in a church family who taught me about Jesus, but coming to Sports Plus camps at age eleven and thinking about how I could worship God while playing rugby was mind-blowing.

"Understanding that the gifts God has given me could be worship on a rugby pitch has shaped how I live for Jesus in every area of life.

"The first question for me as a Christian sportsman was, how do I live out my faith on the rugby pitch when everyone else wants me to live differently? How can I see it as a place to offer my all to God in response to his goodness to me? That's really been the pattern I now see in every area of life – worshipping him because of his gifts and his goodness."

JON REEVES



Jon Reeves is an Associate Minister at Highfields Church, Cardiff, overseeing evangelism, strategy and the Ministry Apprentice Programme. A former football player, Jon has served at Brecon Sports Plus for twenty years and is an Associate Evangelist with Christians in Sport.

"As a local pastor, we want to reach the world. Christians in Sport share that passion for mission – to make Jesus known and to make disciples who tell others about him!

"The sports pitch can be a difficult place to live as a Christian. Pastoring in a university city, I've really valued the work Christians in Sport do with students, offering specific



encouragement and pastoral care. It's a brilliant support to our church as we help students live out their calling.

"I see Christians in Sport connecting students in discipleship and evangelism, providing great encouragement in that season of life.

"What I love is that Christians in Sport are for the church. It never feels like a competition – many staff are involved in church leadership themselves, and that conviction comes through naturally. Their love for the Bible is clear and contagious; it's shaped me as a Christian man as I've served alongside them. Their convictions are consistent – holding firmly to the original mission and vision."

MATT BEEBY



Matt Beeby is the Rector at St James, Gerrards Cross and Fulmer, and plays cricket at Gerrards Cross Cricket Club. He currently serves as a trustee of Christians in Sport.

"As a young person, I remember Andrew Wingfield Digby setting up a game of cricket in the school chapel, and Graham Daniels visiting a few years later. Looking back, Christians in Sport were instrumental in lighting a fire in me to share the gospel at university. During that time, I was able to read the Bible with teammates and saw some come to faith.

"Now, as a church leader, touchline parent and sometimes still a player, I'm grateful Christians in Sport continue to serve young people in those formative years. I see wave after wave growing in conviction through Sports Plus and university work.

"Parachurch organisations do their best work when they understand they aren't the church. I rejoice when young people from our church lead at Sports Plus – they return more excited about mission and with a deeper love for God's word. It's then our role as a Church to carry that on week by week."

The backbone of mission is always the local church – gathering weekly, being taught from God’s word, and discipling one another throughout the week.

Alongside investing in emerging leaders, it’s a privilege to partner with local churches, encouraging Christian sportspeople to live out their worship and witness within their sporting contexts each week.

We’d love to share the following two stories from the past year, showing how God has been at work through these partnerships across the UK.

JESMOND MISSION WEEK

Graham Daniels

In mid-October, I travelled to the Northeast to support Jesmond Parish Church’s ‘Questions of Life’ mission week as a guest speaker alongside Nick Megoran. It was a packed programme: a sports quiz, a Q&A evening, breakfasts, youth events, and two evangelistic Sunday services.

While there, I dropped in on the Christians in Sport university groups at Northumbria and Newcastle. It’s always inspiring to see young adults driving mission in their sporting contexts.

Tuesday night saw Jesmond Cricket Club hosting the Sports Quiz – and it was

rammed! We almost couldn’t fit everyone in. Despite the chaos of quiet microphones and tight space, the evening was buzzing. Sports quizzes are brilliant evangelistic opportunities – such an easy invite for teammates to hear about Jesus.

On Thursday, JPC hosted ‘Does it Matter what I Believe?’ where I shared a little about my football career and how Jesus transformed my identity. It was a joy to point to the security that comes from knowing Christ, which is something so many athletes, coaches and professionals long for in a performance-driven culture.

Come Sunday, I preached on Luke 5:17-26 (“Our need for forgiveness”) in the morning, and Luke 23:32-49 (“Who will go to heaven?”) in the evening. Both passages show us Jesus in such a way that we must respond, yet also reminds us that salvation is a miraculous gift of grace.

What struck me the most was seeing a whole church working together in planning, serving and sacrificing to make Jesus known in their community. It



was a marvellous week of gospel partnership, and I'm deeply grateful for those who hold our work in their prayers.

Will you keep praying with us, that together we might continue to take the good news of Jesus into the world of sport and beyond?

THE LEWIS STOPOVER: A WEEKEND OF SPORTS MISSION IN THE HEBRIDES

Josh Strike

At 4 a.m. on Friday 12th September, I arrived at Glasgow Airport for a short flight to Stornoway to begin a weekend of sports mission on the Isle of Lewis.

Lewis is stunning and home to a thriving sports community. A neighbouring island, Eriskay, is recognised by FIFA as one of the world's eight most unique football locations. Lewis also has a rich Christian history – the 1949–53 revival is still remembered by some of the island's older residents.

Landing in Stornoway, I gave short gospel talks in three schools before joining a team running a youth sports tournament. I spoke specifically on Romans 3:23–24, looking at how we fall short of God's perfection, yet Jesus achieved what we could not through his life, death and resurrection.

Later that day, Graham Daniels and I led Clubhouse, an evening to open the Bible, train and encourage amateur sportspeople to share their faith. Adults from clubs across the island gathered, passionate to reach young sportspeople with the gospel. Around six hundred people heard the good news of Jesus proclaimed that Friday.

Saturday began with a men's breakfast at the Failte Centre, followed by a packed Sports Quiz at Stornoway Golf Club. Graham spoke on Matthew 7, focusing on the implications of choosing either the broad or narrow road, inviting guests to hear more at church the following day.

At High Free Church and Stornoway Free Church, Graham addressed the big question asked of Jesus by the rich young ruler in Mathew 19:16: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" This passage emphasises that we can do nothing by ourselves, regardless of our apparent strengths, and instead we must turn to Christ and trust in Him.

That Sunday, I had further opportunities to encourage young people in sharing the gospel through a youth Bible class, and a Big Youth Fellowship event. It brought together young people from across the Western Isles, including many from Harris.

We were encouraged by the warmth and faith of believers on the island – and thrilled to meet many others exploring the good



news of Jesus. Working alongside local churches, schools and clubs reminded us again that gospel work in sport flourishes when it's rooted in the life of the local church.

A highlight was meeting Agnes, now in her nineties, who became a Christian at fifteen during the 1949 revival. Flying home, my prayer was that God would continue to work in the hearts of young sportspeople – that one day they might tell their own stories of his faithfulness, just as Agnes had to us.

In the coming months, we're excited for further opportunities across Scotland to reach amateur sportspeople and to walk alongside elite athletes. In the build-up to the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games, we aim to continue the encouraging work that took place at the World Athletics Championships in Tokyo.

We give thanks for every church, sports club and individual who has partnered with us in prayer, giving and mission since that prayer meeting fifty years ago. The story of Christians in Sport is, above all, a story of partnership – of God's people working together so that sportspeople everywhere might hear and respond to the good news of Jesus.

Here's to the next chapter, and to the churches, teams and individuals we will carry that same vision forward: to reach the world of sport for Christ.



WHAT'S NEXT?







We love supporting churches to reach sportspeople. To find out more visit:













christiansinsport.org.uk/churches

Quiz of the Year

OUR QUIZ THIS TIME IS **EMOJI ATHLETES**. THIS ISN'T EASY; YOU NEED GOOD SPORTING KNOWLEDGE AS WELL AS SOME SERIOUS LATERAL THINKING SKILLS. HERE'S AN EXAMPLE TO GET YOU STARTED:





= EAR LINK HALL HAND = **ERLING HAALAND**

SO WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, CAN YOU GUESS THE NAMES OF THE SPORTS STARS WHO BROKE RECORDS, WON AWARDS AND TOPPED TABLES IN 2025?

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ANSWERS: 1. Luke Littler 2. Carlos Alcaraz 3. Katie Ledezky 4. Shai Gilgeous-Alexander 5. Rory McIlroy 6. Scott McTominay 7. Sydney McLaughlin 8. Aitana Bonmati 9. Sadio Kabeya 10. Michelle Agyemang 11. Hamish Kerr 12. Jakob Ingebrigtsen

Run Your Own Quiz



USE OUR SIX-ROUND MULTIMEDIA QUIZ AND INVITE SPORTSPEOPLE TO COME FOR A GREAT NIGHT AND TO HEAR SOMETHING OF THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE.



CHRISTIANSINSPORT.ORG.UK/QUIZ





CHRISTIANS IN SPORT ARE EXCITED TO WELCOME FIVE NEW INTERNS TO SERVE ON THE PROGRAMME THIS YEAR. WE CAUGHT UP WITH GRACE ROBINSON TO HELP US GET TO KNOW HER AND HER FELLOW INTERNS, AND GET A RUNDOWN ON THEIR EXPERIENCE OF THE INTERNSHIP SO FAR.

MEET GRACE T!

Having studied economics and English at Exeter University, Grace is originally a netballer from Sheffield. She attended Sports Plus as a teenager and got involved with the university group which she led in her final year. Grace decided to do the internship because Christians in Sport played such a huge role in connecting sport and faith together, and she wants to encourage students to make the most of the opportunities to share the gospel.



MEET JESS!

Jess is a 100 and 200m sprinter who has recently graduated from Cambridge University, where she juggled a Masters in polar studies and her role as President of Cambridge Athletics. Jess first became involved with Christians in Sport at university, where she then led the group in her second year, and has since served on multiple Sports Plus camps. Jess wanted to do the internship to grow in her convictions of sport and faith, and to encourage students to find joy in playing sport for God.

MEET MATT!

Often spotted in his padded kit as a hockey goalie at the weekends, Matt plays for his home team BromBecks Hockey Club. He graduated with a degree in sports science from Birmingham which is where he first became involved with Christians in Sport. As well as leading the group for his last year at university, Matt has been involved with both leading and coaching at Sports Plus. Matt wanted to do the internship because he is excited about reaching the world of sport for Christ, and he wanted to see how God is changing the lives of sportspeople.



MEET HANNAH!

Originally from Northern Ireland, Hannah grew up playing hockey and continued competing as she studied as a physio at Cardiff University. Hannah then led the Christians in Sport group at Cardiff in her final year and has now joined Lloyd Thomas in supporting the supporting Welsh local networks and university groups. Hannah wanted to do the internship because she felt so encouraged as a student to share the Bible with teammates, and she wants others to feel encouraged also.



MEET GRACE R!

Grace has just moved from Scotland where she studied English literature at St Andrews. Having previously been President of Saints Ultimate Frisbee, she has now switched to triathlon since moving back home to Oxford. She first became involved with Christians in Sport in her first year at university and went on to lead the group for two years. Grace applied for the internship because Christians in Sport helped transform her faith at university and she wants to mature in her faith so that she can serve others in this year and beyond.



PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

OVER THE YEAR WE'LL PRIMARILY WORK WITH UNIVERSITY GROUPS; SUPPORTING STUDENTS ACROSS THE UK AS THEY LIVE AND SPEAK FOR JESUS IN THEIR SPORTS. DURING UNIVERSITY VISITS, WE MEET ONE-TO-ONE WITH STUDENTS TO READ THE BIBLE AND ENCOURAGE THEM AS THEY WITNESS TO TEAMMATES, DISCUSSING WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE TO LIVE BOLDLY FOR CHRIST.

ALONGSIDE UNIVERSITY VISITS AND SUPPORTING EVANGELISTIC EVENTS, A REGULAR WEEK INCLUDES BIBLE AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING. OUR INTERNAL TRAINING FOCUSES ON DEVELOPING BIBLE HANDLING SKILLS AND APPLYING BIBLICAL THEOLOGY TO THE CONTEXT OF COMPETITIVE SPORT, AS WE PRACTICALLY DISCIPLE AND PASTORALLY SUPPORT SPORTSPEOPLE THROUGH THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF THE SPORTING WORLD.

EACH WEEK ALSO INCLUDES A DAY AT THE MINISTRY TRAINING COURSE IN OXFORD WHERE WE JOIN OTHERS ON SIMILAR TRAINING PATHWAYS, TO STUDY THE BIBLE AND PRACTICE WRITING AND DELIVERING TALKS. THIS TERM WE ENJOYED OPPORTUNITIES TO GO ON LONGER MISSION TRIPS TO SCOTLAND AND MOLDOVA.

WHAT'S NEXT?



Please pray for our five interns that they would grow in their faith and witness in sport.

Find out more about applying for the 2026 internship at:

[christiansinsport.org.uk/
internship](https://christiansinsport.org.uk/internship)

TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

Jesus' famous words in Matthew 28 help us see the scope and the reach of the gospel: the call on the disciples is to "go" and "make disciples" of "all nations."

The world of sport is a 'nation' to which Jesus encourages us to "Go and make disciples". A Moldavian basketball academy is a 'nation'. "Go" says Jesus "and I will be with you to the very ends of the earth."

Over the decades Christians in Sport have been involved in finding indigenous leaders, connecting them to others and supporting them through training and resources.

Staff and interns, past and present, have had the privilege of serving alongside brilliant leaders all over the world, learning together and making disciples within the sub-culture of sport.

Our latest adventure saw Lloyd (Mission Lead - Wales) and a couple of interns travel to the basketball courts of Moldova for a week of sport, leadership development and Bible training...

Ian Lancaster
Mission Director

Admirals Basketball is a mission organisation we've partnered with for over 12 years. Admirals is run by Nick, who fell in love with basketball and came to faith in Jesus through the work of a Christian Basketball camp in Moldova in 1995, having grown up in deeply challenging circumstances against the backdrop of the fall of the Soviet Union. Today, Admirals run Basketball academies in Ukraine and Moldova. Recognising the hardship young people face in Eastern Europe, Admirals seek to enable them to build relationships, be introduced to Jesus and follow a leadership training pathway.

LANDING IN CHIȘINĂU

Landing on Friday night, Lloyd, Matt and Grace began Saturday with leadership training alongside alumni and ambassadors of the Admirals programme, many of whom continue to play and coach for Admirals. The session focused on connecting Christian faith with leadership on and off the court before welcoming young people for a three-day camp on Sunday.

The camp sought to engage young people with the big picture of the Bible, applied to the context of sport, using the 'Born to Play' training programme. Beginning with God's good creation in Genesis 1, the training then looked at the fall in Genesis 3, finishing with Christ's sacrifice to redeem people and call them to whole life worship of Him in Romans 12. These sessions focused specifically on what it means for a sports person to know that they are created in the image of God, to enjoy the gifts he's given them to play, and compete in relationship with others, all to reflect God's creative and relational character and point to His glory. On

the last night, an academy coach shared his testimony, encouraging young people to see the freedom that comes through committing their lives to Jesus.

Leo, the Admirals Ukraine head coach shared his highlights:

“The impact of these opportunities are huge for young people. Young basketballers in Ukraine have experienced war and extremely difficult times. Here they can relax and think about identity in Christ in community with Christians. It’s so important for me as a coach and mentor.”

Lloyd shared encouragements from the week:

“One boy from Ukraine had never opened the Bible before, but now he wants to go back and look more deeply into the Bible and what it means to be in relationship with Jesus. Another gave up his birthday money to come to the camp instead of buying new Basketball shoes. It was heart-warming to see his eagerness to come to and, as part of the camp, Admirals were able to give new shoes to every young person.”

LEADING THE CHARGE

Admirals began in 2013 after years of planning and a visit to Sports Plus, which enabled Christians in Sport to share experience and support Nick’s vision. Before saying goodbye to our team, Nick shared his vision for the future:

“Seeing young people discover in the Bible that their identity is in God and enjoying that for the first time, that’s why we exist and that’s what I love about this mission. It’s hard to believe it’s

been 12 years since we began this partnership, it’s been a great blessing to have staff coming from Christians in Sport each year, Greg, Lances, Lloyd and many interns who’ve visited. What an impact on the lives of many Moldovans and Ukrainians through this Born to Play training. I’m excited to see how we can build and develop on this foundation we’ve laid over 12 years.”

THE JOY OF GOSPEL PARTNERSHIP

Admirals Basketball is a wonderful example of passionate, biblically grounded sportspeople seeking to create sustainable mission projects to engage young people. Will you pray with us that Admirals’ ministry in Moldova and Ukraine continues to grow and bear fruit in the world of sport for Christ.



WHAT’S NEXT?



Please pray for the work of training leaders in sports ministry throughout the world through developing accessible training pathways including courses and mentoring.



SPORT IS A MASSIVE, AND GROWING, MISSION FIELD. IT'S A PRIVILEGE TO WALK ALONGSIDE SO MANY DIFFERENT SPORTSPEOPLE, SHARING THE HIGHS AND LOWS AS THEY ENJOY THE GIFT OF SPORT, AND LONG TO SHARE JESUS WITH THEIR FRIENDS AND TEAMMATES.

WE HOPE THESE THREE STORIES ENCOURAGE YOU AS YOU READ OF GOD AT WORK IN THE LIVES OF SPORTSPEOPLE.

YOUR SPORT STORIES.

A RUNNER'S JOURNEY



VIC RACING AT THE LIVERPOOL CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIP.

Athletics is tough - and the stopwatch is honest. The objective measure of athletic performance on the track and field were central to the first modern Olympic Games in 1896 and remain so today. These characteristics are what motivate Vic Weir to compete.

"The thing I love about running is that you can push yourself every year, whatever your level. You compete against others, but also against yourself."

Vic currently runs for Birchfield Harriers, alongside working as the operations manager at Grace Church Stirchley. Running from a young age, she's been through incredible highs and long tough lows as an athlete, all while seeking to follow Jesus.

"I started running at my local club, progressing to county level. In my final year at school, I

had a breakthrough, getting a national record on the track. As a student at Birmingham University, I was selected to run for GB at the European and World Cross Country Championships.”

It was only as a student Vic came across Christians in Sport. She began to connect her love of running with her faith as part of the university group in Birmingham. It shaped how she saw her sport and what was happening around her in a high-performance environment.

“It was wonderful to have different sportspeople who love Jesus around me. I'd never really encountered that. I'd only known either Christians or sportspeople, never both together.”

“People around me had their identity tied up in being a runner, and it became a wonderful opportunity to share faith. You can turn up to

training standing tall for Christ in a way where suddenly it's not the end of the world if you get ill and you miss a session, or you don't make a breakthrough performance or team. It opened the door to share that I am in Christ and that is my ultimate, secure identity. I grew throughout my time at university and ended up reading the Bible with a few teammates together. It was an amazing time, opening the Bible every week and seeing God's word do its work.”

Vic's career continued, taking up a scholarship at the University of Portland in Oregon after

”

IT OPENED THE DOOR TO SHARE THAT I AM IN CHRIST AND THAT IS MY ULTIMATE, SECURE IDENTITY.





graduating from Birmingham. However, this wasn't an easy step, as injuries and underperformance became tough realities to face.

"I didn't run as well as I had been - it was tough and something I had to work through. It's really cutthroat in athletics," Vic reflects. "To make it, you have to be super consistent. It's not enough to have a really good year and then a year where you don't run as well."

Vic's passion to continue reaching sportspeople continued to grow. Coming back from Portland she joined the Christians in Sport internship.

"I knew from my second year at Birmingham that I wanted to do the internship. I'd seen how impactful this work had been for me and I'd love to, in a really small way, be a part of that. It was one of the most formative years of my life. I loved spending time training with other staff, getting alongside students and seeing how fundamental the church is in God's kingdom work. I loved being in the Bible so much and being challenged and changed. If I could ever do it again, I would!"

Now that Vic is working for a church and running

at club level, she reflects that sharing faith is different:

"It's trickier than when you're a student, my friends seem more settled in their careers, work and relationships. I find it harder to speak into those situations, but the challenge to me is to see that they need to know Jesus more than anything, however well life is going. I'm still figuring that out whilst taking advantage of the opportunity to invite friends to church and events like carol services. I want to witness to them in the week-in-week-out of life. Even if my life doesn't look super glamorous or flashy, I'm still secure in Jesus and I'm able to show them that regularly."

WHAT'S NEXT?



Hear Vic share more of her story on our YouTube channel using the QR Code.

THE BREAKFAST CLUB

YOUR SPORT STORIES.

F For some it's the most important meal of the day, for most, breakfast is rarely the meal they invite others to share. But, this September two players at the University of Birmingham football club chose to think outside the box during pre-season; this is their story.

Elijah is a physio student playing in the first team and Sam is studying liberal arts & natural sciences and playing in the fifth team. Now in their second year, they lead the Birmingham University Christians in Sport group.

Elijah: "I've been in the club for a year, Sam has joined as a club 'fresher' this year. When I joined, even as part of the first team, the drinking culture was pretty intense. I texted the social secretary after seeing the shopping list for the first social, I said: 'I want to be there at the socials and get to know people, but I want to honour God in the way I drink – so set me a new shopping list.' And so I was there drinking soda, water, milk. I gained a reputation for it



ELIJAH AND SAM LEAD THE
UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM
CHRISTIANS IN SPORT GROUP

which opened up conversations about my faith. No one even gave me stick for it, and a few said they'd rather do what I was doing! It's led to me having an influence I think. There's times when the conversation is one I'm not wanting to get involved in at all, but I feel a responsibility to shift the culture of the football club and to steer conversations rather than just not get involved. That was a motivator to think about creating a place to have conversations away from nights out and the influence of alcohol."

Sam: "Playing with different squads is brilliant because we can help bring all the players together when our training and travelling commitments are different. We're living with

other Christians this year, and from the outset we wanted to be really intentional not to let this be an escape, but to use this space to welcome others to hear about Jesus. Together we've both been challenged and encouraged by our Church's teaching on hospitality and sharing the gospel, so come pre-season we felt compelled to try and open up our house to the football club."

This intentionality led Sam and Elijah to begin inviting teammates to their house after training for breakfast.

Sam: "We'd both been away at UCCF's Forum conference, and as soon as we got back, we



DURING THE MORNING, WE STOOD UP JUST TO SAY WE'RE BOTH CHRISTIANS AND WE WOULD LOVE TO SERVE THE REST OF THE BOYS. THEN ELIJAH SAID GRACE, AND THEY ALL CLAPPED AFTERWARDS!

”

planned the breakfasts. We stuck an initial message in the group chat saying we had no ulterior motive but to serve the team and make space to socialise without downing loads of alcohol. Nearly 40 players came to the first breakfast. During the morning, we stood up just to say we're both Christians and we we'd love to serve the rest of the boys, then Elijah said grace, and they all clapped afterwards!"

Elijah: "Everyone said they enjoyed it so much, they were asking us why we were doing it and how much we were expecting them to pay for the breakfast! Sam and I chatted and agreed we'd try to give a consistent answer to these questions, we'd say the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. When we ran the next breakfast the following week, people were asking us to say grace before they ate."

After two weeks running breakfasts after training, Sam and Elijah decided to send a message out saying the next breakfast would include more time to look at the Bible and have discussion, with Duncan Leese from the Christians in Sport student team joining.

Sam: "It was encouraging to see loads of people committing on the WhatsApp group. Sadly a few didn't make it because of the way training was split up, but we had 25 guys there and the response was great. Even months later people are still talking to me about it."

Sam and Elijah have been encouraged in responses this term since running the breakfasts and sharing the good news of Jesus.

Elijah: "A couple of lads stayed after breakfast to chat to Duncan. One lad didn't seem to have any questions at the time but he's started to come to church with me. He can see the difference following Jesus makes, and where that's lacking in his life and he's hungry for change. I'm praying he'll continue coming to church with me as he works that out."

Sam: "One boy in my team came to church and even invited another friend who isn't a Christian, so that's two guys who came in my first two weeks in the club. Another guy came to the breakfasts saying he was a Christian, but he hadn't yet been in a context where sport and faith were put together. It's been encouraging to see him start coming to the university group meetings and begin to see how significant sport is as a place where he can live for Jesus and share Him with others. It's been really exciting: I think opening our house has played a big part in that."



CHRISTIANS IN SPORT HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS FOR OVER 40 YEARS, SUPPORTING AND TRAINING THEM TO CONNECT SPORT AND FAITH AND SHARE JESUS WITH TEAMMATES. AGAINST A BACKDROP OF INCREASING WILLINGNESS IN YOUNG ADULTS TO ENGAGE IN CONVERSATIONS AROUND FAITH, OUR PRAYER IS THAT MANY STUDENTS WOULD COME TO HEAR AND RESPOND TO JESUS THROUGH THE FAITHFUL WITNESS OF CHRISTIAN TEAMMATES AT UNIVERSITY.

SHARING JESUS IN A SPORTING PARADISE

YOUR SPORT STORIES.



”

32
STRANGERS,
1 GRACIOUS
GOD.

Lanzarote is a dream sporting destination. Frequented by the world's top endurance athletes, F1 drivers and more, Club La Santa, is the sportsperson's 'all you can eat' dream.

This summer, Lewis and Jen Catto led a week-long trip to Club La Santa for friends to enjoy all the sport the resort has to offer, alongside a chance to explore the good news of Jesus together each evening. Lewis writes on how the week played out.

32 joined the trip which is a record number. A quarter were Christians and the rest had been invited to find out more about Jesus, whatever their understanding. Each day seemed to top the one before; new friendships were formed, new sports were tried, and songs were belted out at Karaoke night.

While a day at Club La Santa really does feel a bit like heaven on earth, the true highlight was gathering all 32 of us each night in a conference room to explore and respond to the good news of Jesus together.”

As we opened the Bible each night, working through Jesus' 'I am' statements in John,

the response was remarkable. We were so encouraged each night as conversation was not constrained to the meeting room. Discussions, questions and testimonies about Jesus continued into dinner, onto the padel court and late into every evening! People were genuinely taking the time to consider who Jesus is and what it means for them - whether for the first time or the hundredth.

Everyone had the whole day to enjoy whatever class, race, session, workout or time by the pool they wanted, but at 6.30 every night, we had the chance to come together and explore a claim Jesus made.

Jen and I had the joy of sitting in on the group discussions each evening, listening as people asked honest questions and explored what it might mean for Jesus to be their Lord and Saviour. There were a range of perspectives and beliefs in the room, but we're thankful for the openness we saw as people listened to one another. One of the most moving moments was hearing individuals share their own stories of how Jesus has changed their lives; both people who had known Christ for their whole lives and those who had been following Christ for only a few months!

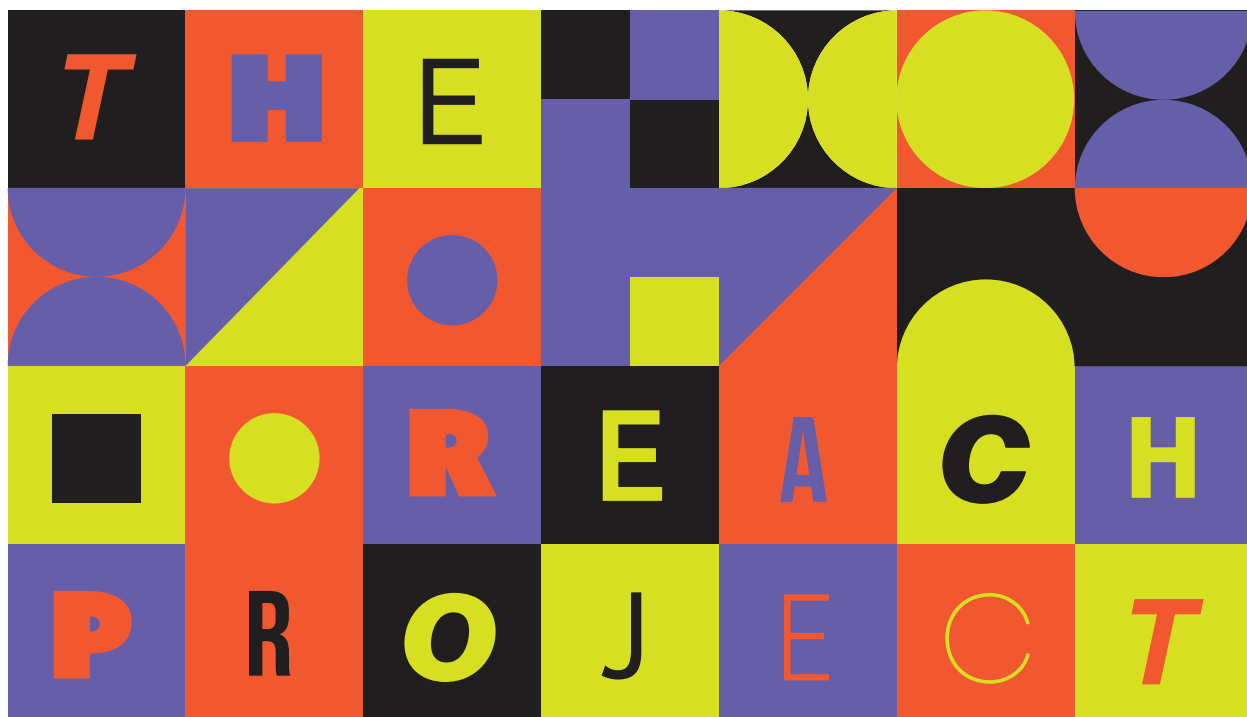
We also set aside an hour around lunchtime each day for anyone who wanted to talk things through in a quieter setting. Sitting in the sun with a drink from the pool bar, we had the chance to hear how people's experiences have shaped their beliefs, the questions they were working through, and some of the things that had previously made it hard to consider Jesus. It was a real kindness from God to see open, thoughtful conversations take place across such a wide range of topics. Of course, it wasn't all discussion! We loved the

volleyball tournaments, pool sessions, silent disco trampoline classes, sunrise runs, evening entertainment, and plenty of belly laughs. There were also moments of stillness - stretching by the sea as the sun went down - that we won't forget. Yet for us, the most significant thing was seeing the gospel continue to take root in hearts and minds. Our prayer is that the seeds planted will keep growing in the months ahead.

We've already seen encouraging answers to prayer: Six people asked for Bibles and have since received them; some attended church for the first time in years; others have now connected into Christians in Sport university groups. A question that came up in various ways throughout the week was, "Is God really for me?". We're praying that the people and resources now around them will help them see that the answer is a gracious and resounding yes.

32 Strangers, 1 Gracious God.





Baron Pierre de Coubertin stated 'What is Olympic is Universal' when founding the modern Olympic Games. Whilst only the best might compete in the Games, Pierre wanted it to be known that the Olympic movement was for everyone. No matter where you came from, what language you spoke, what social class you were a part of, sport was for you.

Today, sport continues to cross barriers like little else. Nationality, language, ethnicity and socio-economic status don't matter as soon as you step onto the pitch, court or track.

This beautifully reflects God's good design for the world. His plan was always to create a people of 'every nation, tribe, people and language' [Rev 7:9]. No matter who you are or where you come from, the God of the universe welcomes you into His family.

These two truths, that sport is open to all who play it and God is gracious to all who believe, are what drive the vision for the Reach project. The project seeks to enable sportspeople to connect their love of sport to the Christian faith within a broader demographic range, recognising that not every young sportsperson will be able to come to Sports Plus, whether that's financial or transport restrictions, and only a minority of sportspeople will go to university and connect with the Christians in Sport groups there. Simply not every sports community will have heard of the work of Christians in Sport, so we want to drive towards a broader 'reach'.

As this is a new project for Christians in Sport, there has been a lot to learn as we've got underway. Now a little over 18 months in, the project has started to take real shape.

TODAY, SPORT CONTINUES TO CROSS BARRIERS LIKE LITTLE ELSE.



running training sessions, matches and tournaments. As part of the Reach Project, we've been able to support their ongoing work by giving a platform to show the young people how Arthur and Chris'

Three particular projects that were run in 2025 give a good idea of the scope of the work. Working in partnership with schools and churches, we've seen good traction in the work of Reach particularly in London and Liverpool.

FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT DAYS

In order to best serve the young people who attend each project, we've been prioritising working with local leaders so they can continue to connect and support each young person throughout the year. As much as possible, we want to serve and support sustainable models.

Two good examples of this have been football projects in Cutteslowe (Oxford) and Hounslow. Leaders in these areas, Arthur and Chris, have been running football projects with young people for years, faithfully booking pitches,

Christian faith is really the driving force behind all they do.

We ran a 'Football Development Day,' consisting of a couple of hours of football coaching with evangelistic talks threaded throughout. Using Colossians 3:17 as a key verse we would take the young people through the gospel message, showing them that a life lived out in thankfulness to God is the only life worth living. The Football Development Day has now become a model we've developed and begun to use in other locations too.

THRIVE

Alongside working with youth projects, Mike 'Swany' Swanson, has been developing and trialling a school resource called Thrive. This





series of six lessons covers topics from PE, RE and PSHE in school curriculums, looking at why we play sport with Christian lenses and explaining how sport, and ultimately faith, impact our identity, our wellbeing, and how we treat others. We're working on this resource to make it widely available for teachers to pick off the shelf and use in their own context.

SPORTS PLUS XTRA

A highlight in 2025 was Sports Plus Xtra, run at The Fulham Boys School. If young people can't come to Sports Plus, then we'll bring Sports Plus to them. A two-day, non-residential sports camp, with some of the best bits of Sports Plus, right in the heart of West London. There was quality coaching, fun competitive games, teaching through the story of the two lost sons in Luke 15, and even Team Challenge.

The Fulham Boys School is run as an independent Free School with the Christian faith as one of its key foundations, and has

pupils from all over London from a range of backgrounds. Comparing the crowd at SPX to those who might attend the average Sports Plus camp in the summer, it was fantastic to see the work reaching a broader demographic. There's still room to grow, to reach more of those in the most deprived areas of the UK. We're thankful for a good start but there's lots more to do.

Josh Strike

Josh delivers our sport outreach projects in Scotland. He plays football in the winter and ultimate frisbee in the summer. He is a member of King's Church Edinburgh.

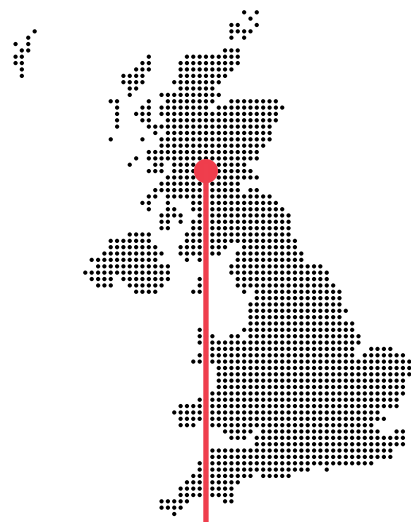
WHAT'S NEXT?



Watch Josh share more of his sporting story and the Reach Project on our YouTube channel.

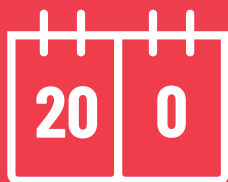
SPORTING SPOTLIGHT:

Stirling



IN SPORTING SPOTLIGHT, WE TAKE A SPORTING DEEP DIVE INTO SOME OF THE UNIVERSITY TOWNS AND CITIES WHERE STUDENTS RUN THEIR OWN CHRISTIANS IN SPORT UNIVERSITY GROUP. THIS TIME, WE FOCUS IN ON THE UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING IN CENTRAL SCOTLAND.

pictured: a recent meeting of our Stirling University group



Twenty's Plenty

If you've ever been on the end of an absolute drubbing, it could always be worse; spare a thought for non-league Selkirk, who were on the wrong end of British senior football's biggest win in the 20th Century.

Stirling Albion, playing at home at Annfield (note that's Annfield, not Anfield) ran out 20-0 victors on 8 December 1984. Orwellian stuff indeed.

Famous Faces

Here are some notable sporting alumni that once graced the University campus:

Duncan Scott

Swimmer, Eight time Olympic Medallist, Double Olympic Champion, World, European and Commonwealth Champion.

Shelley Kerr

The first female manager in British men's football and appointed Scotland national women's football team coach.

Gordon Reid

Wheelchair tennis Olympic gold medalist in 2016.

Stirling Effort

Stirling is one of many Scottish towns and cities to hold an annual Highland Games. 2025 was the largest in modern history.

Held near Stirling Castle, it was in fact a Castle who won the Heavyweight Competitions this year; Aaron Castle from Växjö, Sweden.

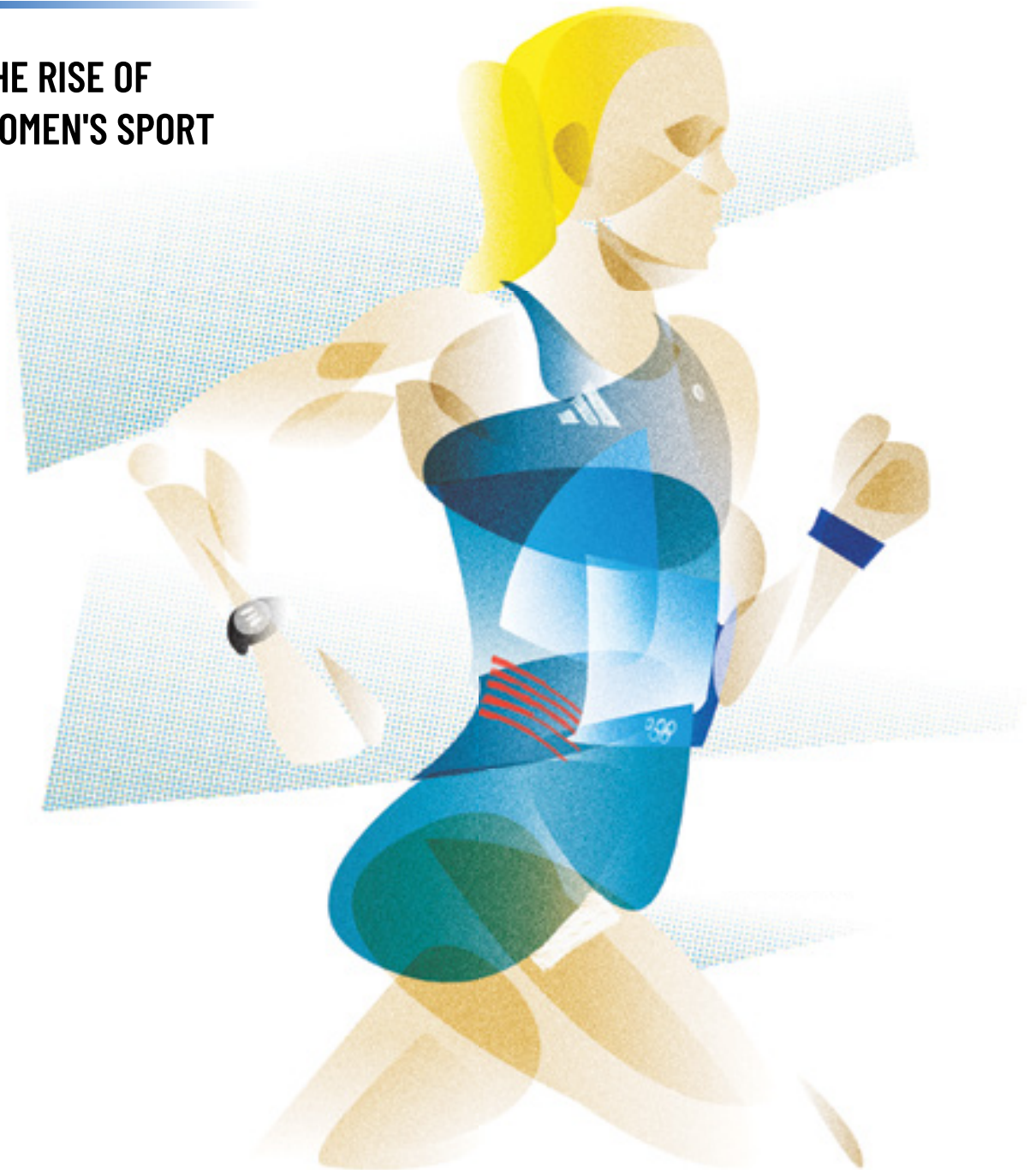
Sporting Artefacts

Stirling is home to the world's oldest football and the world's oldest curling stone. Pictured is the football in question, made of a pig's bladder; not one you'd want to header on a rainy day.



Beyond Breakthrough

**THE RISE OF
WOMEN'S SPORT**





The last year has seen the Netball Super League and women's county cricket become professional, Keely Hodgkinson win 2024 Sports Personality of the Year, women's tennis return to The Queen's Club, The Lionesses retain European victory, and the Red Roses lift the World Cup. With record breaking crowds and unforgettable moments, women's sport is experiencing a landmark moment.

Ann O’Flynn first played club rugby alongside her brother as a young girl in the 1980s, reflecting that she was ‘made for it’. This passion grew, and ‘Flynnie’ went on to become a pioneer of Women’s rugby:

“Playing for England was a fantastic honour, in 2003 I was fortunate to be in the England team who played the first Women’s 6 nations match at Twickenham against France in front of about 150 people, the whole stand was empty on the far side. A couple of years ago we had the Red Roses play against France with a record 58,500 people! The vintage Red Roses, as we call ourselves, had tears running down our faces, everyone’s come here to watch women’s rugby and look how much fun it is!”

Women and girls of all ages and abilities have greater visibility, support and access in sport today than ever before. Yet, whilst there is immense joy and opportunity at the top level,

”

Playing elite sport is a joy and privilege but at times it’s been a challenge that has tested my faith and witness. The earlier I’ve laid out my stall and shared my life as a Christian the easier I’ve found opportunities come to talk about Jesus. More often than not, people listen and talk. Sometimes they won’t, and it might be awkward, but you get over it quickly.

Lena Neill
Ireland Hockey player and Olympian

it’s not always easy being a woman in sport. Elite sportswomen continue to feel the effects of sport being stereotypically a man’s world, with less funding, sponsorship, and research into physiology of female athletes. Training and competition require time and often travel, it can be a difficult and lonely journey at times; for the Christian athlete, community and friendships both in and outside of church can be hard to develop.

At Christians in Sport we have the privilege of walking alongside Elite female athletes in a range of sports from cricket to cycling, rugby to rowing. In regular Bible studies we seek to help players navigate how sport and faith connect, and create opportunity for encouragement and prayer. Our hope is for these women to know they can worship and serve God in their sport, and that they would stand firm in Christ in the highs and lows: confident of His love and grace with them always. Ellie Rattu, Netball, reflects:

“It is such a gift to be able to have this career where I can give my all in sport and to Christ at the same time. I’m excited to see what the Lord’s going to do in the next couple of years.”

Anna Davies, Rugby league, reflects on the support she’s had:

“I had a mentor with Christians in Sport when I first moved to Wigan Warriors and that was absolutely invaluable. We would Zoom every three weeks to chat about sport, faith and life, read the Bible and pray together. It was an absolute lifeline. Connecting with other Christian women in sport to support each other became a highlight of my week. It’s also become a place where I’ve been able to invite

the few Christians I've met within the women's Super League to come along."

We currently host a bi-weekly Bible study on Zoom to support and connect professional footballers in the Women's Super League. Gisela, now a retired player, says:

"I felt there was a need – I've been blessed to have Christians in my football club, but as I look at other teams and leagues there aren't many Christians I know about. I just wanted to connect Christians and see if we can encourage each other, get to know each other and connect our sport and faith in how we play and serve God. And to encourage each other to tell our teammates about Christ."

In some sports, it is current athletes and players who have initiated times of Bible study and prayer whilst on training camps; it's wonderful to hear of several women joining these, finding it a safe space to ask questions on the Bible, faith, life and sport. In a world where authenticity is encouraged, many athletes feel able to take the opportunity on social media too, boldly speaking out about their faith in Jesus and the impact that has on them.

The growing digital connection between fans and young aspiring players has empowered many top-level sportswomen to publicly raise important issues within Women's sport, including body positivity, periods, kit, fertility and diversity. This is inspiring younger women in sport of all abilities, who continue to face barriers to playing. Research indicates that girls are dropping out of sport by the age of 14 at

double the rate of boys.*

How brilliant then to be able to share the gospel with 357 girls at Sports Plus this summer: to speak of the impact that knowing Him can have on identity and relationships in Sport. In a series of seminars on being young women in sport today, girls spoke of the challenge not to compare themselves with other athletes or players - on ability, performance, popularity, looks or body image. Some spoke of often conflicting, 'impossible', beauty standards put on them, as well as the challenge of managing periods and the inevitable impact of the menstrual cycle on training and



@kareadenegan

I am coming home with 3 silver medals in the 100m, 400m and 800m 🏆 Glory to God for this athletics season and this journey. It is only by the grace of God. I raced with joy and freedom knowing that I had nothing to lose or prove in being rooted in identity in Christ ❤️

*From Reframing Sport for Teenage Girls.
Research conducted by Women in Sport & Sport England.

competition. Despite this, there was an overwhelming agreement that the friendships, fun, community and shared experiences built through sport bring deep joy; that the resilience they develop, and the boost to mental and physical health, is like nothing else - often outweighing the challenges. We pray that Sports Plus will increasingly be a context where all girls feel welcome, safe, celebrated and encouraged as young sports women - and that each one would know they are uniquely created by a loving God, and are of infinite worth and value in His sight.

Pressure to 'perform' on and off the pitch is not unique to the teenage years, many of the female students and young adults involved in Christians in Sport also share the complexity of navigating sports culture today. Nearly half our university group leaders are female.

It's thrilling to see many Christian women, across a range of individual and team sports, leading the way in challenging preconceptions about Christianity through authentic and rich friendships, witnessing for Christ in a compelling, authentic and bold manner.

As we continue together to reach the world of sport for Christ, we are thankful for all the women in sport - grassroots to elite - prayerfully representing Him each week in their clubs. We are thankful for the female team leaders and coaches at Sports Plus each summer who speak of Christ and model to younger athletes what it means to be a Christian woman in Sport. We are thankful for the men, fathers and brothers who champion and celebrate the achievements of women from the sidelines to the stands. As the rise of women's sport continues, we are praying for more opportunity to support Christian female athletes and to share the good news of Jesus: that many would find true freedom and joy as they entrust their Sport to him.



43%

OF GIRLS WHO ONCE CONSIDERED THEMSELVES 'SPORTY' DROP OUT OF SPORT AS TEENAGERS.*



61%

FEEL JUDGED BY OTHERS.



45%

FEEL THEY DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT BODY SHAPE.



38%

DON'T FEEL SAFE EXERCISING OUTSIDE.

LISA ELLIOTT



Lisa is part of the Elite Sports Team supporting female athletes. She plays for Liverpool Sefton Hockey Club and is part of Grace Church Halewood.

LAURA MURDOCH



Laura is based in London as a staff worker. She plays netball and hockey and is part of Euston Church.

SPORTS PLUS+

DATES
2026

BELFAST 1	26 - 31 JULY
MONKTON 1	26 - 31 JULY
BRECON	26 - 31 JULY
PERTH	2-7 AUGUST
BELFAST 2	2-7 AUGUST
MONKTON 2	2-7 AUGUST
BELFAST 3	9-14 AUGUST
MONKTON 3	9-14 AUGUST
GIGGLESWICK	9-14 AUGUST
DENSTONE (NEW VENUE)	16-21 AUGUST

FIND OUT MORE:

christiansinsport.org.uk/sportsplus



SERIOUS SPORTING SUMMER



LOOKING BACK ON ANOTHER EPIC YEAR AT OUR SPORTS PLUS CAMPS

Serious sports action for the serious young sportsperson – this has been Sports Plus for 30 years, and it’s why we love it!

Under God’s grace, this summer we expanded from eight in 2024, to ten camps across six venues throughout the UK, enabling close to 950 young people to come to Sports Plus. Each residential week involves specialist sports coaching and team competitions with Bible teaching programmes integrated throughout each day. Whether all in on following Jesus or yet to investigate the claims of Christianity,

our aim is that Sports Plus creates a context where every young person can open the Bible, explore the good news of Jesus and learn more about how the Christian faith can connect with a passion for playing sport.

LIFE TO THE FULL

This year, evening Bible teaching focused on the book of John, themed ‘Life to the Full’, with John 10:10 as the memory verse, sung every evening to the tune of a popular song.



"THE THIEF COMES ONLY TO STEAL AND KILL AND DESTROY; I HAVE COME THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE, AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL."

John 10:10

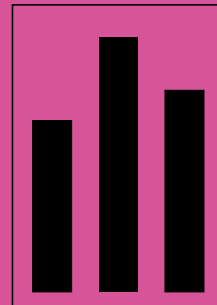
Evening meetings covered six of Jesus' 'I am' sayings as we journeyed through John's account of Jesus' life, looking into the claim that 'life to the full' is only found in Him. This is a wonderful truth that brings freedom and rescue to those who accept His offer of forgiveness and choose to follow Him.

The morning teaching theme was focussed on identity, and continued in the coaches' water break talks that drove home the application of God's word in sport. Titled 'This is me', the series centred on Ephesians 2:8-10. The aim was to enable young people to grasp that being a Christian means that they are the 'handiwork' of God - saved by grace to do the good works God has prepared in advance for them to do. It was great to see young people making this connection, which lead to joy and a sense of safety and security going back into their clubs and teams.

SERVING THE NEXT GENERATION

Sports Plus cannot run without the sacrificial service of many volunteers every year. In 2025, 660 leaders, trainees, and development squad members served together, all sharing the vision to reach the world of sport for Christ.

SPORTS PLUS STATS



10 CAMPS



941 YOUNG PEOPLE



62% MALE

100 MAIN MEETINGS AND BIBLE TALKS



660 LEADERS

**488 LEADERS/COACHES
85 TRAINEES
87 DEV SQUAD**

10 EPIC WEEKS OF SPORTS PLUS!





SERIOUS SPORTS ACTION AT REPTON SPORTS PLUS



THE MORNING JOG IS A WONDERFUL WAY TO START EACH DAY OF SPORTS PLUS





SPORTS PLUS IS WITHOUT A DOUBT THE HIGHLIGHT OF MY CHILDREN'S YEAR. IT'S SO HELPFUL TO THEM TO KEEP THEIR SPORTS IN PERSPECTIVE AND HOW TO MARRY IT WITH THEIR FAITH. THE LEADERS ARE SO ENCOURAGING AND ENERGETIC. JUST AMAZING - THANK YOU!

Feedback from a Sports Plus parent this year

THANK YOU FOR GIVING MY SON AN AMAZING WEEK OF SPORT, CHRISTIAN TEACHING AND ENCOURAGEMENT!

Feedback from a Sports Plus parent this year

Leaders undergo their own Bible teaching sessions each week, whilst the Development Squad and Trainee leaders follow a training pathway alongside their peers. Every day of Sports Plus sees volunteers engaging in sessions together, applying God's word to sport, and thinking through questions from within the culture of sport together.

This enables Sports Plus to play a vital role beyond the summer - training and equipping leaders and encouraging them in their mission to sportspeople, and service within the local church. It's a wonderful encouragement to see volunteers returning year on year, and exciting to continue to welcome new volunteers to serve this growing mission.

THE YEAR AHEAD

We are thankful to God for His work in the lives of young people over 30 years of Sports Plus and we know that this work continues to depend entirely on Him to bear fruit. Looking forward to next year, we long to see more young sportspeople hear and respond to the good news of Jesus and we're excited to see how God will use Sports Plus in 2026 as we plan ahead of next summer.

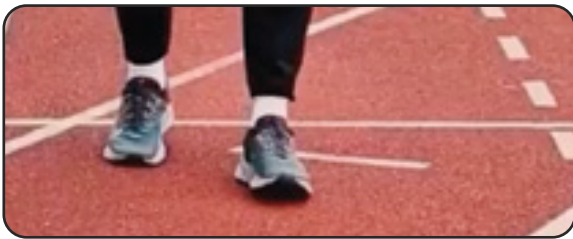
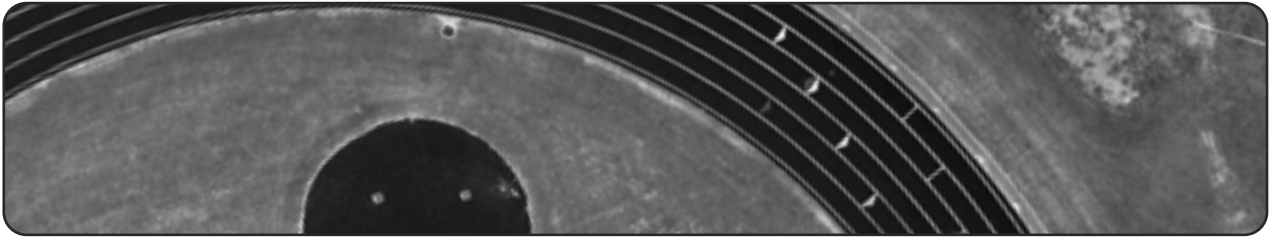
WHAT'S NEXT?



Bookings for Sports Plus 2026 open Monday 19th January. To find out more head to:

christiansinsport.org.uk/sportsplus

LIFE



TO THE



FULL.

**WATCH THE FULL
FILM HERE:**



THIS YEAR, EVENING MEETING BIBLE TEACHING AT OUR SPORTS PLUS CAMPS FOCUSED ON THE BOOK OF JOHN, THEMED 'LIFE TO THE FULL.' OUR THEME FILM FEATURED A SPOKEN WORD POEM BY CHRISTIANS IN SPORT STAFF MEMBER JOSH STRIKE, REPRODUCED IN FULL HERE.

LIFE TO THE FULL

WHAT IS LIFE?
 I MEAN, IN THIS WORLD FULL OF STRIFE —
 WHAT IS LIFE?
 LIKE, HOW DO I WIN?
 BUT NOT JUST IN THE SEASON —
 I'M TALKING ABOUT TRULY LIVING,
 A LIFE DONE RIGHT,
 WITH PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE LOOKING BRIGHT.

NOT JUST GETTING BY,
 TRYING TO SURVIVE,
 BUT LIFE TO THE FULL —
 ABLE TO THRIVE.

DO I FIND IT
 AS I COMPETE IN MY SPORT WEEK AFTER WEEK?
 WHEN I CAPTAIN THE FIRST TEAM,
 OR MAKE IT BIG ON THE SOCIAL SCENE,
 RUNNING ANOTHER PB
 OR RUNNING FOR TEAM GB?

DOES IT COME WITH THE MONEY AND THE FAME,
 WHEN THE FANS ARE SINGING MY NAME?
 OR IS LIFE TO THE FULL FOUND AT SCHOOL
 THROUGH GOOD GRADES,
 OR BEING COOL?

DOES IT COME WITH MY VIEWS
 ON INSTA, TIKTOK, OR YOUTUBE?
 OR IS IT WHEN I'M LOVED BY A BOY OR A GIRL —
 WHEN I BECOME THEIR WHOLE WORLD?

BECAUSE IF THESE ARE ALL I'M LIVING FOR,
 THEY'LL ALWAYS LEAVE ME WANTING MORE.
 A CAREER IN SPORT IS UNFORTUNATELY SHORT,
 AND GOOD GRADES ARE JUST ENOUGH FOR THE NEXT
 STAGE.
 MONEY AND FAME?
 THEY QUICKLY FADE.

BUT IF LIFE ISN'T FOUND IN WHAT I DO
 BUT FOUND IN SOMEONE —ETERNALLY TRUE.
 SOMEONE WHO, EVEN WHEN LIFE GETS TOUGH,
 WILL ALWAYS CONTINUE TO BE MORE THAN ENOUGH.

**IF YOU REALLY
 WANT TO WIN,
 BELIEVE IN
 HIM.**

“

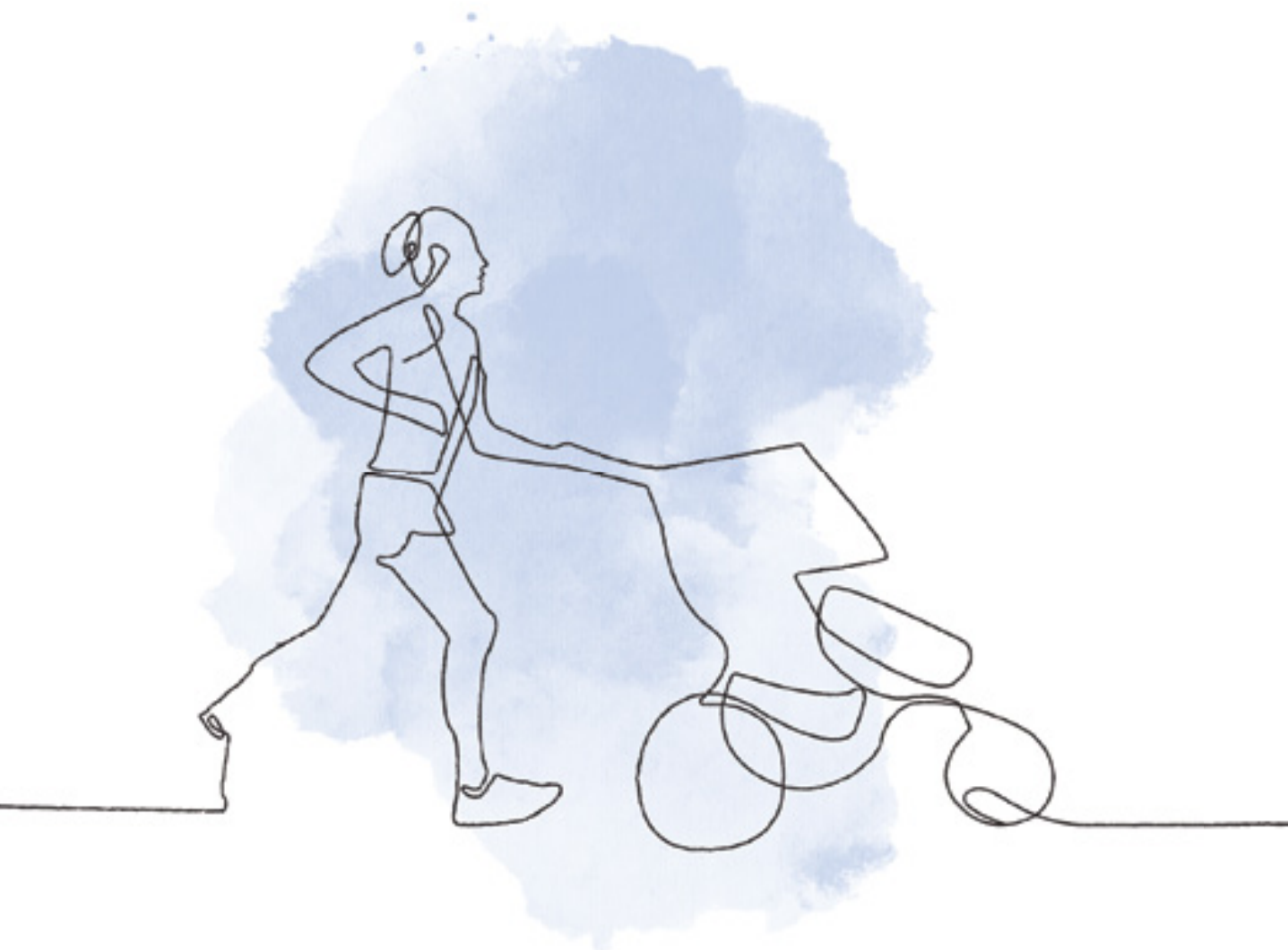
IN CHAPTER TEN, JOHN'S GOSPEL,
 JESUS OFFERS LIFE TO THE FULL —
 BECAUSE HE CAME, LIVED, AND DIED,
 I'M COMPLETELY SATISFIED.

YOU SEE, HE PROVIDES FOR OUR NEEDS.
 IN THE DARKNESS,
 HE HELPS US SEE.
 HE KEEPS US SAFE IN THE NIGHT.
 HE'S OUR SHEPHERD — READY TO FIGHT.

HE HAS POWER OVER DEATH,
 AND THROUGH HIM WE HAVE FULL ACCESS
 TO BE FRIENDS WITH THE SON,
 TO ABIDE IN THE ONE
 WHO SAYS,
 "IT IS DONE."

SO, YEAH —
 THERE IS MORE THAT YOU CAN LIVE FOR.
 YOU CAN ETERNALLY STRIVE,
 BECAUSE JESUS CHRIST
 MAKES YOU ALIVE.

IF YOU REALLY WANT TO WIN,
 ALL YOU DO
 IS BELIEVE IN HIM.
 BECAUSE EVEN THOUGH THIS WORLD IS CRUEL,
 JESUS OFFERS
 LIFE TO THE FULL.



KNOWN & LOVED

AFTER GIVING BIRTH, WOMEN MAY FEEL MOTHERHOOD BEGINS TO DOMINATE THEIR IDENTITY, PUSHING OUT THINGS LIKE SPORT. ROSIE WOODBRIDGE SHARES A PERSONAL REFLECTION INTO THIS UNSETTLING FEELING, AND HOW TURNING TO JESUS CAN REASSURE MOTHERS OF THEIR TRUE IDENTITY...



Maybe I'll go for a run tomorrow. Enough months have passed since the birth of my baby. It's time to get back out there.

Going for a run will be good for me. I know how good running is for my mental health. It's movement. It's freedom. And how good it will be for my body! Maybe I could lose some of the baby weight. Get back to how things were. Get back into my old clothes.

My first run is a big step on the road back to competitive sport. Oh how I miss the thrill of competition. The companionship of a team. The grit of training. The feeling of being fit.

My first run is a big step on the road back to being... me again. Yes, I'll go for a run tomorrow! But now it comes to it...

When will be the right time? I've got to fit it around the baby's feeds. And who will look after the kids? Is it OK to ask for 'me time'?

And if I do get some child-free time... there's the cleaning, the shopping, the cooking, the washing, the admin. Shouldn't I be doing them?

And I'm so tired. The baby has been up half the night. The toddler has been up since the crack of dawn. I'm too tired to run. Can my body even handle running?

Yes, my Mummy MOT* cleared me to run, but sleep deprivation leaves me more open to the risk of injury. So do the breastfeeding hormones. Will running be comfortable for me as a breastfeeding mother? And will my pelvic floor hold up?



I MISS WHAT I USED TO BE. I FEEL FRUSTRATED ABOUT WHAT I AM.

So maybe I won't go for a run.

Nevermind.

But I do mind.

I miss what I used to be.

I feel frustrated about what I am.

And I grieve for what I will never be again.

Sport was such a big part of my life. A big part of me.

I thought I would be one of those mothers who bounced back from childbearing into a decent level of sport again. I've seen many friends and

former teammates do it. But that hasn't been my story.

The truth is that motherhood can strip us of so many of the things which define us. Our sport, our work, our productivity, our friendship circles, our body image, our independence.

Many mothers are left wondering where is the me that's left behind in all this? Who even am I anymore?

And it's not just about being a parent. Motherhood aside, I know I will never be the athlete I was at my peak in my 20s. For all sorts of reasons many of us have sport stripped away from us - be that age, injury, illness, time,



**Postpartum physio check - strongly recommended!*

or numerous other circumstances.

And what do we do with that?

What does Jesus have to say to us in this?

"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me - just as the Father knows me and I know the Father - and I lay down my life for the sheep."

Jesus says I am your good shepherd and I know you.

I know you as deeply as I know the Father who I have known in perfect intimacy for eternity.

I know you and I love you so much I laid down my life for you.

You might not know who you are but I know you and I love you.

Known and loved.

Whether you're a sports player or not.

Whether you're elite or amateur.

Whether you're proud of your sporting career or full of regret.

Whether your sporting future looks bright or is over.

Whether people recognise your achievements or never know your name.

Known and loved.

Whether you're a mother or not.

Whatever your body looks like.

Whatever your employment status.

Whatever you've done today.

However you view yourself.

Known and loved.

You might not feel you know yourself anymore.

But by Jesus you are known and loved.

Forever.



WHAT'S NEXT?

For more of our best stories, news and resources, sign up to receive Back Pages Online in your inbox each month:

[christiansinsport.org.uk/
backpagesonline](http://christiansinsport.org.uk/backpagesonline)

by Rosie Woodbridge

Rosie is a Mum of two. She attends St Mary's Church, Basingstoke and writes occasionally for Christians in Sport.

Scottie Sheffler:

SAYING THE QUIET PART OUT LOUD



Scottie Sheffler surprised the golfing world with his comments before the 2025 Open at Portrush. Jonny Reid examines what we can take from his statements, and how they can point us to an identity beyond sport.

Scottie Scheffler is not a nihilist.

At least, I don't think so. I've never met him. But the comments that have sent the golfing world into a frenzy come not because he said something shocking—but because he said the quiet part out loud.

"This is not a fulfilling life," he admitted during a thoughtful press conference before teeing off as the tournament favourite at The Open in Royal Portrush.

Sport—even when you're the world number one—isn't meant to fulfill us completely. It can't. And Scottie Scheffler had the honesty and courage to say that.

"There are a lot of people that make it to what they thought was going to fulfil them in life... You get to number one in the world and they're like, 'What's the point?' I really do believe that, because what is the point? Why do I want to win this tournament so bad? It's something that I wrestle with on a daily basis."

Scottie isn't the first to express this—but he may be the first to say it from the very top.

And understandably, that confuses us.

A STONECUTTER CULTURE

Have you heard the fable of the stonecutter?

A poor man, content in his hard life, delivers a stone

to the house of a rich merchant. Envy strikes. He wishes to be a merchant—and his wish is granted. But then he sees a prince, then the sun, then a cloud, then a mountain—each more powerful than the last—and wishes to become each one in turn.

But in the end, he finds his greatest power was simply to be the stonecutter.

Scottie Scheffler, in our eyes, has become the mountain—the world number one golfer. And yet, he admits it hasn't satisfied him. That unsettles us. It certainly seemed to puzzle many in the golfing media, who have long fantasised about standing where he stands.

In a culture that prizes upward momentum and achievement as the highest form of self-worth, we simply cannot comprehend someone reaching the top and saying: "It's not enough."

Scheffler is wealthy, successful, married—by all standards, he has "everything." And yet he confesses that, in eternal terms, everything is really nothing.

“
There are a lot of people that make it to what they thought was going to fulfil them in life... (they) get to No. 1 in the world and they're like, 'What's the point?'”

Scottie Sheffler, Portrush 2025

LIFE AS A GIFT, NOT GAIN

In the fable, the stonecutter comes full circle. He learns that true power lies in being who he already was. For Scheffler, the restlessness of sport finds peace in an identity outside of himself.

For Scheffler his angst at golf finds its peace in him placing his confidence, not in himself, but in an identity outside of himself.

He's spoken openly about the tension he feels: that golf is both deeply important and entirely irrelevant. As sports journalist Kyle Porter put it:

“It’s an unsatisfying venture. I love competing, but it’s not what satisfies me.”

Scottie Scheffler

“He holds the line between ‘cares a lot’ and ‘identity not tethered to outcome’ perfectly.”

That’s because, as Scheffler has said before, his identity is rooted not in performance but in faith in God.

On the day of his 2024 Masters win, friends reminded him that his true victory was secured on the cross. Scheffler later reflected:

“That’s a pretty special feeling to know that I’m secure for forever, and it doesn’t matter if I win or lose this tournament. My identity is secure for forever.”

This eternal security doesn’t make him bitter about golf. Far from it. Lost in the philosophical weight of his comments was this joy:



"I love being able to play this game for a living. It's one of the greatest joys of my life. But does it fill the deepest wants and desires of my heart? Absolutely not. This is not the be-all and end-all."

In other words, two things can be true at once: Sport is good. But it's not ultimate.

THE WISDOM OF ECCLESIASTES

The writer of Ecclesiastes says it like this:

"Meaningless! Meaningless! ...Everything is meaningless."

(Ecclesiastes 1:2, NIV)

The Hebrew word used here, *hebel*, doesn't mean "worthless" so much as "vapor"—fleeting, insubstantial, elusive. Life is real, but not graspable. Beautiful, but not controllable. Important, but not ultimate.

David Gibson, in *Living Life Backward*, writes:

"By relativizing all that we do... death can change us from people who want to control life for gain into people who find deep joy in receiving life as a gift."

That's what Scheffler seems to grasp. His honesty is Ecclesiastes in real-time:

"It's an unsatisfying venture. I love competing, but it's not what satisfies me."

THE INVITATION TO LIVE

Saying the quiet part out loud is a good place to begin.

God's Word interrupts us, not to condemn joy, but to redirect our hunger to the one who gave us joy in the first place. Golf, success, family—these are good

gifts. But they aren't the Giver.

As Ecclesiastes teaches, we are not meant to avoid life, but to enjoy it with the end in view. That doesn't detach us from the world—it roots us deeper in gratitude for every good and imperfect thing.

"Find life in God and his gifts."

We can enjoy our passions—like golf—not as our identity, but as expressions of the God who made us. We can love our families, serve others, pursue excellence—all without envy or striving for significance.

BE LIKE SCOTTIE

Scheffler reminds us that faith in Jesus gives us the freedom to care deeply without being consumed, to strive without being enslaved.

So, friends:

Hold lightly to the things of this world, but find great pleasure and joy in them.

Recognize they are not ultimate—but they are good. Live with the end in view.

And when the quiet part rises up in your heart—say it out loud. That's where real life begins.



Jonny Reid

Jonny is the Director of Engagement at Oak Hill College and also writes for *Christians in Sport*. He plays cricket at Cumnor Cricket Club and is one of the leaders of Town Church Bicester.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Hear more from Jonny on BBC Radio 2's *Pause for Thought*:



ELITE TOUR: LIFE ON THE ROAD

Reaching & Disciplining athletes
living life on Tour



“They slept in hotel beds more than their own in the last year...”

Sounds glamorous? For some possibly. But this isn't the performance lifestyle tour athletes chase in most cases. It's just how it is for many individuals working to compete at the highest level in tour sports.

We've walked alongside individual athletes, coaches and staff in golf, tennis, track & field and more for years, recognising our unique opportunity to serve. This is a context where it's impossible to have or build a normal relationship with a local church. Trust is hard to build, yet athletes, whether followers of Jesus or not, benefit massively from a listening ear for today and a chance to discuss the bigger questions of the future.

Two of our elite team, Si Poole and Kenny Crawford, reflect on a year working with athletes on tour.



KENNY CRAWFORD

It's a real privilege to play a part in DP World Tour golf life and have the opportunity to contribute to the pastoral support of several golfers. In many ways, these professional players live an exciting existence as they travel to lovely locations around the globe competing against the world's best for big prizes. But when you regularly experience 'behind the scenes' access at events, it becomes clear that these players are just real people who go through all the everyday ups and downs of life, whether that is in relation to their work or their circumstances away from the golf course. Add to that, the sporting pressure and expectation of performing well enough to retain the right to play at that level, you realise that our

presence to offer pastoral support and discipleship is extremely valuable.

There are opportunities at DP World Tour events to meet up with a handful of Christian players and caddies for individual or small group Bible studies and prayer. Often, short but worthwhile pastoral chats can also be had on the practice range or as we walk a few holes on the course together during practice rounds. Sometimes, as an added extra, we use Christians in Sport postcards to hand them some written encouragements, or reminders of Bible verses studied.

During events, players and caddies have a lot of practice, commitments and vital rest and recovery to pack into their daily routine. However, our contacts also very much appreciate the pastoral and discipleship input Christians in Sport provides. One caddie remarked that it's like having "a Christian big brother" to bounce things off on Tour, while one player offered this comment in reflective gratitude:

"Thank you very much for putting God first in our conversations. I put God at the forefront of all my success and without Him it would not be possible to do what I do. Thank you very much for keeping me on the right track when we see each other and when we talk."





SI POOLE

I think you see in track and field that even at the very top, your career is always on a knife edge. It's not just fine margins between winning and losing in major competitions, its fine margins being selected or not, or getting a contract or not, or travelling for a race or competition.

There can be an overwhelming feeling of instability which pulses throughout the whole of an athlete's life and existence and really plays into the challenge of where those individuals find their identity.

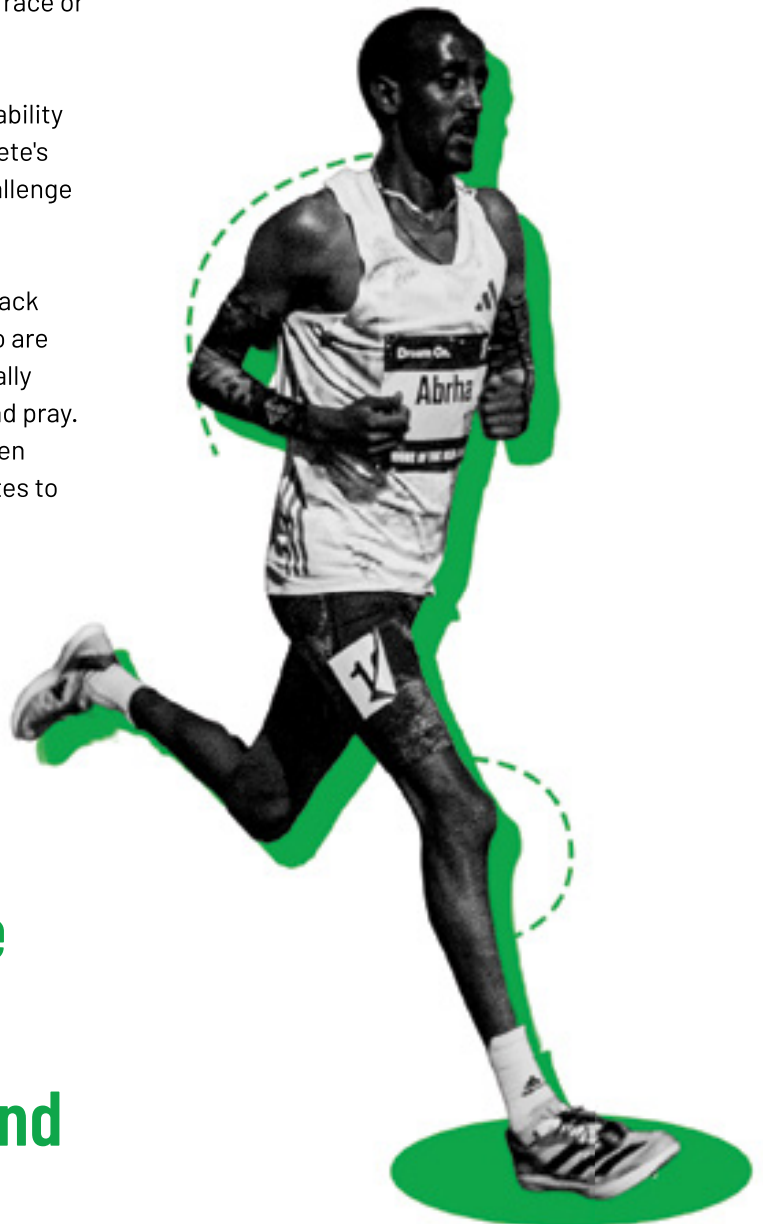
It's been hugely exciting to see a number of track and field athletes that are right at the top who are consistently at big races and major events really keen to meet up to encourage one another and pray. With that ongoing presence there has just been more and more opportunity to find new athletes to

“

It becomes clear that these athletes are just real people who go through all the everyday ups and downs of life...

connect with and support. One athlete in particular said:

“sometimes you've got your routines but when you go to these competitions away from your usual support it can feel a bit harder to express your faith in the way you're used to, that's why I really enjoy the work Christians in Sport do and it's something I've come to look forward to approaching these big competitions.”





●

PSALM 16

Keep me safe, my God,
for in you I take refuge.

I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord;
apart from you I have no good thing."

I say of the holy people who are in the land,
"They are the noble ones in whom is all my delight."

Those who run after other gods will suffer more and more.

I will not pour out libations of blood to such gods
or take up their names on my lips.

Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup;
you make my lot secure.

The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
surely I have a delightful inheritance.

I will praise the Lord, who counsels me;
even at night my heart instructs me.

I keep my eyes always on the Lord.

With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;
my body also will rest secure,

because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,
nor will you let your faithful one see decay.

You make known to me the path of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence,
with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

TRUE BELONGING

PSALM 16:1-2



One aspect of sport that many of us will love is the sense of belonging it gives us. It is brilliant when we feel part of our club or team or training group, alongside other sportspeople who are striving with us as we compete together. On the flipside, sport can be really hard when we don't have that sense of belonging with a settled group of teammates.

It is a good thing to feel like you belong in your sports club or team. But as Christians, our ultimate belonging is found elsewhere. In Psalm 16, verse 2, the Psalmist says to the Lord "You are my Lord".

This is what it means to belong as a Christian: to know the one true God as your Lord. It starts from a place of commitment to the Lord. That is, as a Christian follows the Lord Jesus, you belong to God. You have forgiveness of sins and new life through the cross of Christ, and the God of the universe is your Lord. You belong to Him. You have, in the words of verse 1, taken refuge in God; and have been transferred to His domain.

And in light of that, the Psalmist goes on to make a remarkable statement in verse 2: "You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing". No good thing other than the Lord! That's a huge statement – that there is no good thing to be found other than in the

Lord. But where does that leave us with sport?

Well, it does mean that trying to find ultimate belonging or joy in sport will both lead us into sin (as it leads us away from God) and will disappoint (as it cannot satisfy). Sport as an end in itself will only ever frustrate us; but sport will be a source of great joy for those who belong to God and whom He has wired to love it.

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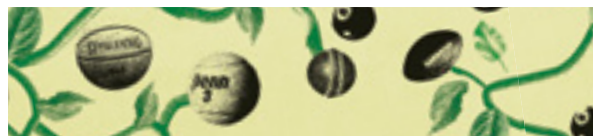
I BELONG TO GOD – I COMPETE NOT FOR MY GLORY BUT FOR HIS

For there is true delight to be found in belonging to God. The Christian can say: "You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing". And the privilege for you, as a Christian in sport, is to enjoy God's goodness through His good gift of sport. The privilege is to say, "I belong to God – I compete not for my glory but for His; not to earn my identity but in light of my identity; not to find joy but from a place of joy". He is your good: not victory, not relationships with teammates, not a sense of belonging to your sports club.

To belong to God is to know that that He is good and is the source of all good. And what an amazing thing it is, this Game Day, to compete as someone who belongs to the eternal God of the universe. To compete knowing that if you win or lose, come off injured or score the winner – you belong to God. And He is all the good you need – may we know His goodness this Game Day.

TRUE CONTENTMENT

PSALM 16:5-7



Is there a better feeling than: scoring a last minute winner; getting a PB after months of training; or celebrating a nail-biting win with teammates? Sport can bring remarkable highs, yet the lows are real and painful. Injury, retirement, poor form, getting dropped, having to move clubs – can be very difficult experiences. In sport, contentment can be elusive. We chase the highs, but the highs never last. We endure the lows, but more lows may follow.

Psalm 16:5-6 sets out how we can know true contentment through such ups and downs.

Verse 5 speaks of the Lord alone being the Psalmist's "portion and cup". The Lord satisfies the Psalmist's hunger and thirst. This means that true satisfaction, is found in the Lord Himself. Contentment is not found in God's good gifts including sport – but in knowing God, in light of which we enjoy His good gifts.

Verse 6 speaks of "delightful inheritance". The Psalmist knows contentment in the present because he is sure of what is to come. 1 Peter tells us that through the resurrection of Jesus, Christians have been born again "into a living

hope", and "into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade". That is God's promise to those who belong to Him through faith in Jesus. So, may we think more often of heaven! How good will it be to use our resurrection bodies in worship to the Lord without the strains of weariness, ageing or sin?

Verse 7 speaks of the Lord's counselling and instruction. Through His Word and His Spirit, the Lord guides us in the right paths of living – on which we will find contentment. In our sport, let's pray we live our lives more and more in accordance with how the Lord would have us live, as we seek to be moulded by His Word.

The unpredictability is part of what makes sport so exciting, and it is a wonderful thing to know the Lord God when life and sport are filled with uncertainty.

Jonny Wilkinson famously kicked the last-minute drop goal to win England the Rugby World Cup in 2003 – the stuff of dreams. And yet he "never felt emptier" than he did the next morning.

You are free to play as someone who's contentment does not depend on your performance, the outcome of the match or the referee's decision going your way. You can know contentment in Jesus now and have the privilege of playing for His glory from a place of great security and freedom. Contentment need not be elusive – for Christ died and rose that you may know Him and follow Him, now in your sport and through into eternity.

TRUE SECURITY

PSALM 16:8-9



Sport can be precarious. A new player may take your spot: you may get injured; age will slow you down; maybe you don't love your sport like you used to; or it is increasingly hard to find time to train around other life commitments. Or maybe all is well in your sport and it's going brilliantly – praise God! But we know it won't last forever. Whether it's retirement or injury or something else – we will all at some point play our sport for the last time in this life.

In verse 8 of Psalm 16, the Psalmist sets out the remarkable security that we have as Christians: "With [the Lord] at my right hand, I will not be shaken". This Game Day, if you know Jesus, you are unshakeable in the Lord. And how does this play out as we compete today?



YOUR PLACE IN THE TEAM MAY WOBBLE – YOUR PLACE IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD WILL NOT.

Well, these wonderful promises are true of those who have committed themselves to the

Lord. The Psalmist keeps his "eyes always on the Lord" and has the Lord at his "right hand". Are your eyes on the Lord today? Are you running with perseverance the race marked out for you, fixing your eyes on Jesus?

It follows from the Psalm that when we take our eyes off the Lord, we can lose sight of the blessing of His promises. If you are feeling shaky today – keep your eyes on the Lord.

We will all experience ups and downs in our walk with the Lord, but if you have trusted in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins and new life, then the Lord is at your right hand. He is with you as you compete today: win, lose or draw.

And because the Lord is with you this Game Day, you are unshakeable. And because you have that unshakeable security, you can know joy in Jesus this Game Day. The Psalmist says, in verse 9: "Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure". A glad heart, a rejoicing tongue and a secure body. The Psalmist's whole person, in his physical and spiritual nature, is secure and joyful in the Lord who is with Him.

This Game Day, security is not something that you have to earn or retain. Your place in the team may wobble – your place in the kingdom of God will not. So, you are free today to go and enjoy your sport, using the talents that God has given you. You do so as someone who is secure in Christ, unshakeable because He bought you at the cross and is with you now. Let's pray now that we know the unshakeable security of knowing Jesus this Game Day, and that we would play and speak in such a way to point others to the great hope we have in Him.

TRUE JOY

PSALM 16:10-11



In sport, our joy tends to come from present or past activities. We celebrate a win, we're happy after a good training session and we smile at fond memories of past sporting glory. Of course we get excited for upcoming training, matches and competitions – but it's different, because we don't yet know the outcome. We enjoy the anticipation and may anticipate joy – but we lack the certainty needed for present joy.

Yet the Christian can have present joy as to future events. Psalm 16:9 reads: "my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure". Why? Well, verse 10: "because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead".

The Psalmist knows he will spend eternity in heaven, not hell, therefore his heart is glad and his tongue rejoices. The certainty of God's eternal promises are rooted in what He has done. So often I lose perspective on God's work in history and His promises of what is to come – and joy becomes elusive. So, let's fix our eyes back on Jesus today. Remember what He has done and will do. "The Lord will not "let [his] faithful one see decay" (Psalm 16:10.)

Paul echoes this verse in Acts 13:37: "the one whom God raised from the dead did not see

decay". Jesus did not see decay. He reigns today having triumphed over death, so His followers have certainty that they also have life after death. Jesus' past resurrection from the dead means we can have present joy in the certainty of our own resurrection to come. Heaven awaits with better bodies, greater joys, and the full presence of our Maker and Saviour.

May we know that joy, and compete with freedom as those who know where we will be in one hundred years, whether we get there tomorrow or in the decades to come. May we urgently hold out the risen Lord Jesus to our teammates who, as things stand, are destined for "the realm of the dead". For there is no better thing, and there is no more important thing, than trusting in the Saviour who makes known to us the path of life. Win or lose – may we know the joy today of being able to say verse 11 of Psalm 16:

"You make known to me the path of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence,
with eternal pleasures at your right hand."

BY DAVE MEIKLEJOHN

Dave is a lawyer who plays for Finsbury Park R.F.C. He attends St Nick's Church, London and is a former Christians in Sport intern.

WHAT'S NEXT?



This article is taken from Game Day, the weekly devotional for sportspeople.

Sign up to get Game Day in your inbox each week:

christiansinsport.org.uk/gameday

A Brief Theology of Sport

Thinking Deeply, Playing Fully

Sport is more than a game. For many, it is a passion, a calling, a source of community, and even a platform for expressing faith. Over the years, I have met countless Christians who give, pray, and support sport in its many forms, yet who have not fully considered its theological significance. *Spiritual Game Plan*, which I co-authored with Jonny Reid, was written to bridge that gap—offering both a theological lens and practical insight for Christians who want to engage thoughtfully with the sporting world.

This article offers a snapshot: a brief theology of sport designed to help you reflect on faith in sport, share that vision with others, and inspire deeper exploration in the full book.

WHY SPORT MATTERS TO GOD

Sport mirrors life in miniature. It demands discipline, teamwork, leadership, resilience, and courage. For Christians, these qualities are not just physical or social—they are deeply spiritual. Scripture calls us to steward our gifts (1 Peter 4:10), practise discipline (1 Corinthians 9:24–27), and serve others (Mark 10:45). Sport provides a tangible arena to cultivate these virtues, visibly and faithfully.

Spiritual Game Plan explores sport across three dimensions:

- **Theological foundations** – why sport matters to God and how it can glorify Him.
- **Practical application** – how athletes, coaches, and supporters can live out their faith in sport.
- **Missional potential** – how sport provides a platform for witness, service, and community transformation.

Viewing sport in these ways allows players, volunteers, and supporters to see it as more than competition. It becomes a training ground for character, worship, and mission.

A CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER PLAYBOOK

Each chapter can be seen as a position on a sports field, shaping a holistic understanding of sport and faith:

1. The Field of Creation – God as Creator, Sport as Gift

Sport reflects the order, beauty, and creativity of God's world. Our bodies, talents,



and communities are gifts to be stewarded responsibly. Recognising sport as a gift is the first step in integrating faith with participation.

2. Rules and Boundaries – Discipline, Ethics, and Fair Play

Just as rules govern a game, God’s law guides life. Sport teaches integrity, humility, and fairness—values Christians are called to embody. Sport is more than recreation; it is a laboratory for character formation.

3. The Team and the Body of Christ – Community and Leadership

Teams mirror the Church: different roles, shared purpose, mutual dependence. Leadership on the pitch reflects servant leadership in God’s kingdom. Every interaction offers a chance to practise patience, encouragement, and accountability.

4. Sacred Competition – Excellence, Glory, and Worship

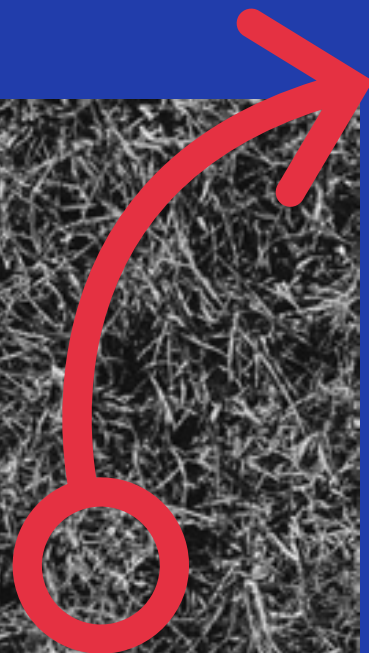
Competition is not about self-promotion. Striving for excellence can be worship when our efforts are offered to God and serve others. Winning matters, but playing in a way that reflects God’s glory matters even more.

5. Resilience and Redemption – Suffering, Failure, and Grace

Loss, injury, and setbacks are inevitable. Sport teaches resilience, echoing biblical themes of endurance and hope. Grace transforms failure into an opportunity for growth. How we respond to adversity tells the story of our character and faith.

6. The Audience and Mission – Witness and Influence

Sport draws attention. Athletes, coaches, and supporters have a unique opportunity to demonstrate Christ-like character publicly.





Every match, interaction, and decision is a chance to reflect God's love and integrity.

7. Equipping the Next Generation – Mentorship and Legacy

Sport provides a platform to mentor, disciple, and inspire. Investing in others—passing on both skill and faith—is a lasting legacy that extends far beyond the scoreboard.

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR SUPPORTERS

Many Christians support sport financially, through prayer, or by volunteering. Spiritual Game Plan is not just for those on the field. Understanding sport theologically equips you to:

- Advocate for ethical, faith-informed sport programmes.
- Pray more specifically and effectively for athletes, teams, and communities.
- Encourage young people to see sport as a platform for God's glory, not only personal achievement.
- Reflect critically on sport, adding depth to your giving and support.

In short, it turns good intentions into informed action.

SHARING THE VISION

One of the joys of writing this book has been seeing how it sparks conversation. The insights can be shared with church groups, youth teams, or prayer networks. The book provides both the vocabulary and confidence to explain why sport matters to God—and why it should matter to all Christians.

Understanding sport theologically allows us to see every game, practice, and encounter as an opportunity to glorify God, encourage others, and model Christ-like character.

THE FINAL WHISTLE: AN INVITATION

Sport is a divine gift, a human calling, and a missional opportunity. By engaging deeply—through prayer, giving, mentoring, and reflection—we can see it as more than entertainment. It is a way to glorify God, build character, and serve others.

Spiritual Game Plan invites you to explore the intersection of sport and faith, to play well, serve wisely, and witness boldly. For those ready to move from admiration to understanding, from support to informed engagement, this book offers the tools to make a lasting difference. Pick up a copy, join the conversation, and start turning sport into a spiritual game plan.



Buy "Spiritual Game Plan" here or at:

christiansinsport.org.uk/book



Graham Daniels

General Director of Christians in Sport and co-Author of "Spiritual Game Plan"



SAVE THE DATE



CHRISTIANS IN SPORT

2026



We're excited to join you for an evening to celebrate God's work in sport, share the vision of Christians in Sport and to explore how we can enable the future of this mission together.

DATES

CARDIFF

Friday 24th April

LONDON

Monday 27th April

EDINBURGH

Thursday 30th April

GLASGOW

Friday 1st May

OXFORD

Thursday 7th May

CAMBRIDGE

Friday 8th May

GATESHEAD

Thursday 21st May

SHEFFIELD

Thursday 4th June

BELFAST

Saturday 6th June

BATH

Monday 8th June

SAVE THE DATE

- GET A DATE IN THE DIARY
- SPREAD THE WORD
- INVITE A FRIEND

MORE DATES TO FOLLOW...

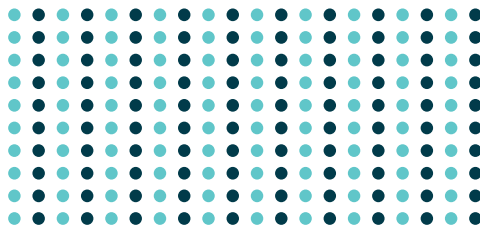


ANNUAL REVIEW

Here's a short summary of the work from across some aspects of the work in 2025, from discipling elite athletes in the public eye, to young people discovering their passion to compete and those behind the scenes working, coaching or volunteering.

ELITE & YPA

200



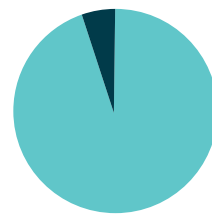
In 2025, 200 Group Bible studies, and 220 1-2-1s took place with athletes at an elite level within their sport.

"When you go to these competitions away from your usual support it can feel harder to express your faith in the way you're used to, that's why I really enjoy the work Christians in Sport do and it's something I've come to look forward to these big competitions."

GB Track & Field athlete speaking to Si Poole, Christians in Sport elite team

STUDENT

95%



In 2025 95% of students who attend our university groups reported having gospel conversations with their teammates. 40% took a teammate to church, and 20% had read the Bible with a teammate. The groups delivered 71 evangelistic events.

"25 footballers came to our house after training for breakfast and an opportunity to discuss the Bible. One lad didn't have questions at the time, but he's started coming to church with me. He can see the difference following Jesus makes, and where that's lacking in his life and he's hungry for change. I'm praying he'll continue coming to church with me as he works that out."

Elijah, student football player

DIGITAL & RESOURCES



1

1 new book release: "Spiritual Game Plan", co-authored by Graham Daniels and Jonny Reid.

"Millions play, watch, enjoy sport across the world. This book is full of good stories, appropriate Bible verses, and will help anyone develop a wise Christian perspective on sport."

Spiritual Game Plan review by Henry Corbett, Vicar in Liverpool & chaplain to Everton Football Club

RESEARCH



2

2 New research projects launched examining Christian faith within elite football and support for parents of young people on performance pathways.

"I'm thinking: should he sign a contract? Does he need an agent? A financial advisor? How do we think this through with his faith as well? How can we deal with it biblically? That's why the sessions we've had with other parents over the last 3 years have been really great."

**Parent of an Academy footballer player interviewed for:
'Christian Parents' perspectives on guiding and nurturing elite young athletes'**

SPORTS PLUS

10



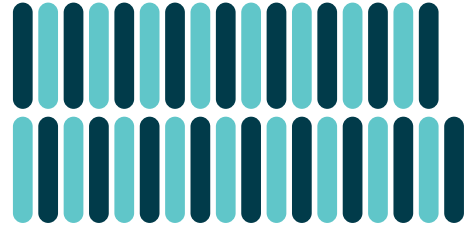
This year, we delivered a record 10 camps across the UK, helping young people connect sport and faith.

"Sports plus is without a doubt the highlight of my children's year- both as camp attendees and as a leader. It's so helpful to them to keep their sports in perspective and how to marry it with their faith. The leaders are so encouraging and energetic- just amazing- thank you!"

Parent of a young person who attended Sports Plus in 2025

REACH

35



47 pioneering projects delivered through 20 partners reached 4,870 young people.

"Developing models like Sports Plus Xtra, Football Development Days, piloting a curriculum and putting these into practice has enabled exciting opportunities to engage more young sportspeople with the good news of Jesus. We're thankful for partnerships with individuals, schools, churches and sports clubs inviting us to deliver such programmes and we're excited to see this work grow under God in 2026."

Ian Lancaster, Mission Director

TRAINING & INTERNATIONAL

40



Alongside existing relationships in over 150 countries, the global leadership development programme, launched in 2023, has supported partners in over 40 countries.

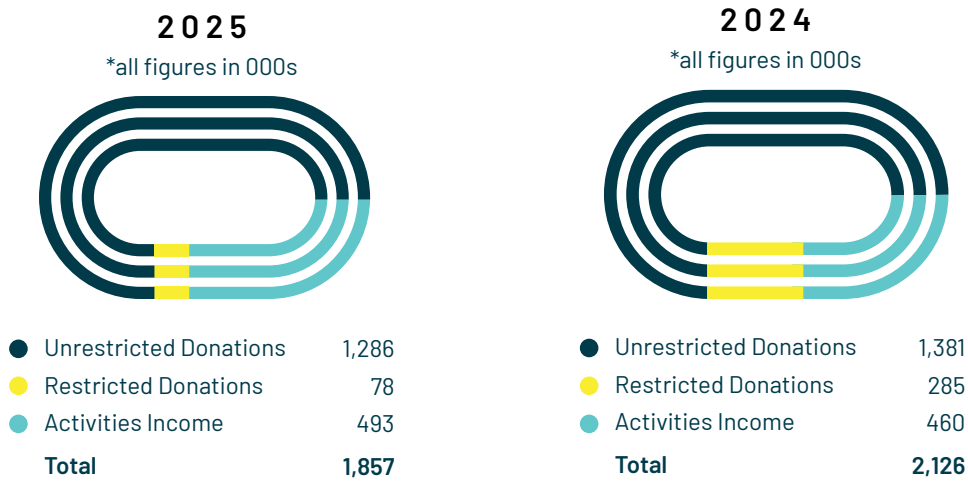
"The impact of these opportunities are huge for young people. Young basketballers in Ukraine have experienced war and extremely difficult times. Here they can relax and think about identity in Christ in community with Christians. It's so important for me as a coach and mentor."

Leo, Head Coach, Admirals Basketball Academy Ukraine

FINANCIAL REPORT

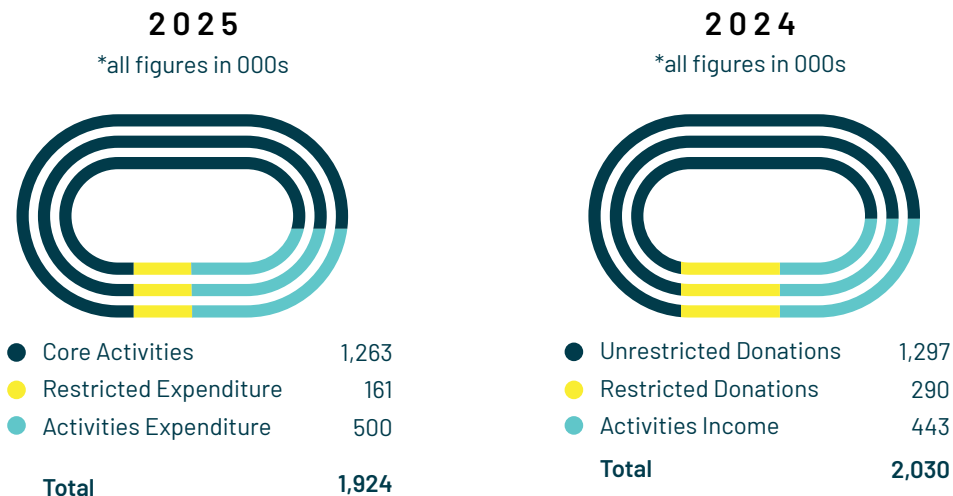
INCOME

Total donations fell by over £300k (18%) in 2025 due to expected reductions in giving from a small number of major donors unable to give at previous levels which had been fully communicated and planned for. Outside of this the number of donors and value of donations stayed broadly the same with some churn as new starters and increased giving was offset by reduced giving and others who stopped. Regular giving increased by 2% over the period of the year. Activities income increased given the growth of Sports Plus and training conferences.



EXPENDITURE

We planned to utilise some of our reserves this year with expenditure exceeding income by £67k. At the same time we reduced some of our activities as we adjust to a reduction in donations as well as seeking ways to steward our resources as effectively as possible given the continued opportunities we face. Activities expenditure increased due to the growth in camps and conferences and all restricted expenditure was spent in alignment with the purposes for which it was given.



2026

IS SET TO BE ANOTHER MASSIVE YEAR FOR SPORT – AND FOR CHRISTIANS IN SPORT.

WE ARE PRAYING FOR A 10% INCREASE IN COMMITTED GIVING AND £100,000 IN ONE-OFF GIFTS. CAN YOU PLAY YOUR PART?

TO GIVE TODAY VISIT:

CHRISTIANSINSPORT.ORG.UK/GIVE



OR SIMPLY SCAN THIS QR CODE USING YOUR MOBILE DEVICE.