

100-year-old runner, ex-fighter pilot and Christian author sets five world records



Orville Rogers recently broke five world running records for the 100 to 104 age group.

Originally published in [Fox News](#)

A 100-year-old Texas man says he's on "the top of the world" after breaking five world running records for his age group during a championship meet in Maryland last weekend.

Orville Rogers, a Dallas resident who trained bomber pilots during World War II, is proof age is just a number after his record-setting performances at the USATF Master Indoor Track and Field Championships.

"I have a total of 18 world records and I'm very grateful that God has blessed me with the ability and the motivation to run well," Rogers told Fox and Friends Tuesday.

The centenarian entered his first race when he was 90. He competes in the 100 to 104 age group.

He is also the author of *The Running Man: Flying High for the Glory of God*.

Rogers explained his secret for living to 100.

"I'm a Christian and God promises a long life," he said. "I have a wonderful wife who died 10 years ago. I have a great family. I have lots of friends and I keep active mentally, physically and spiritually."

The USATF posted video of Rogers, in a blue top, setting a new world age group record in the 60-meter dash with a time of 19.13 seconds.

He secured his other age group world records at the 2018 Indoor Championships in the 200-meter, 400-meter, 800-meter and 1 500-meter events.

Rogers said during the Korean War he flew the biggest airplane in the world, the B-36 strategic bomber.

"We had 16 crew members and 16 20-millimeter canons on each airplane for defence and we had a capability and we had the responsibility to retaliate against Russia if war had been declared," he said.

First Nigerian to qualify for action sport in Winter Olympics



Simidele Adeagbo, the first African woman to qualify for the sport of Skeleton in the Winter Olympics.

Originally published in [CBN News](#)

Simidele Adeagbo is the first African woman to qualify for the Winter Olympics in the sport of Skeleton.

The 36-year-old athlete will be representing Nigeria after only taking up the sport last year – a feat for which she gives all glory to God.

“It’s official! I’m an Olympian! I’m honored to be the 1st Nigerian, African & Black female athlete to be represented in the sport of Skeleton at the Winter Olympics! Faith has turned my God-given dream into a reality! Thx everyone for all ur

love & support. Next stop is Pyeongchang!” Adeagbo wrote on Instagram when she first announced the big news.



It's official! I'm an Olympian! I'm honored to be the 1st Nigerian, African & Black female athlete to be represented in the sport of Skeleton at the Winter Olympics! Faith has turned my God-given dream into a reality! Thx everyone for all ur love & support. Next stop is Pyeongchang! #breakingbarriers #historyinthemaking #bsfnigeria #godissogood @candicewardphotography

A post shared by [SimiSleighs \(@simisleighs\)](#) on Jan 15, 2018 at 7:53am PST

This isn't Adeagbo's first bid for a spot at the Olympic Games. After moving to the United States from Nigeria as a child, she spent much of her time training as an athlete.

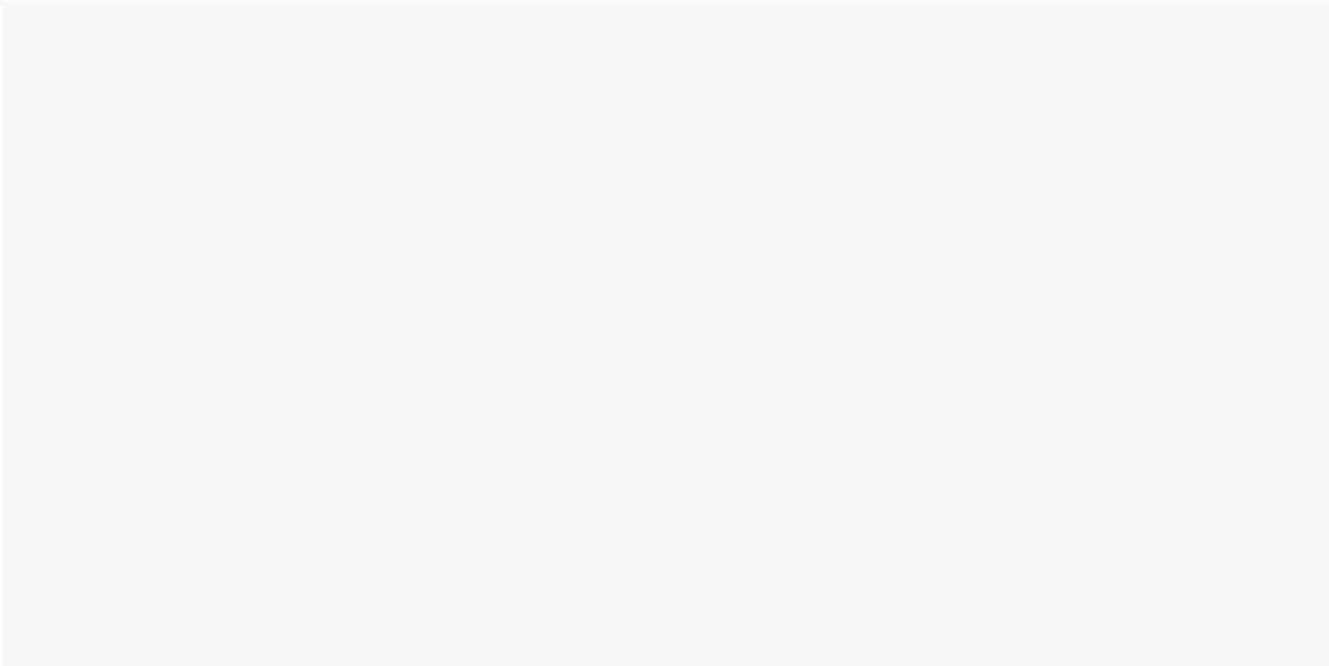
By age 26, she held the National Collegiate Athletic Association record in triple jump at the University of Kentucky. However, when she attempted to qualify for the

Olympics in triple jump she didn't make it.

Disappointed, Adeagbo gave up on being an athlete. Fast forward 10 years later and she still couldn't shake her dream of going to the Olympics. So, she decided to learn Skeleton, a sport in which an athlete rides face down on a sled reaching speeds up to 80MPH with nothing but their body weight to steer.

She quickly became a world champion and after a lot of hard work and prayer, she finally achieved her goal of becoming an Olympian.






10* days (depends on ur time zone) to go until the 2018 Winter Olympics! I'm prayed up and ready to go! Swipe to check it out. Thx @everynation.rosebank family. Keep the prayers coming please! ☺☺#whenjesussaysyes

A post shared by [SimiSleighs \(@simisleighs\)](#) on Jan 29, 2018 at 1:25pm PST

“10* days (depends on ur time zone) to go until the 2018 Winter Olympics! I'm prayed up and ready to go! Swipe to check it out. Thx @everynation.rosebank family. Keep the prayers coming please! #whenjesussaysyes,” she posted on [Instagram](#) a little over a week before the Olympics began.

Adeagbo has also used her Instagram to share scriptures and positive encouragement to her fans.





Happy Sunday everyone! “Worship renews your faith and restores your joy”-
@pastorrickwarren☐☐Isaiah 40:31

A post shared by [SimiSleighs \(@simisleighs\)](#) on Jan 21, 2018 at 8:39am PST

Happy Sunday everyone! “Worship renews your faith and restores your joy” – @pastorrickwarrenIsaiah 40:31

NBC Superbowl commentator stands by his comments on star quarterback’s faith



Tony Dungy former player and coach looks on from the field prior to Super Bowl LII between the New England Patriots and the Philadelphia Eagles at US Bank Stadium. (PHOTO: John David Mercer-USA TODAY Sports)

Originally published in [Urban Christian News](#)

NBC commentator Tony Dungy has been attacked over his remarks that Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Nick Foles would 'play well because his Christian faith would allow him to play with confidence'.

Dungy, a former head coach for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and Indianapolis Colts, described Foles' strong Christian faith on air during Super Bowl LII.

Foles is outspoken about his faith and has said he wants to be a pastor for high school students after he finishes his NFL career.



Tony Dungy [@TonyDungy](#)

Follow

Congratulations to the Eagles. Nick Foles told me last week that he felt the Lord had him in Philadelphia for a special moment and he played like it tonight.



10:21 PM - 4 Feb 2018

After the game, Dungy reported that 'Foles told me last week that he felt the Lord had him in Philadelphia for a special moment and he played like it tonight.'

Some critics ripped into Dungy on Twitter, accusing him of 'preaching on air'.

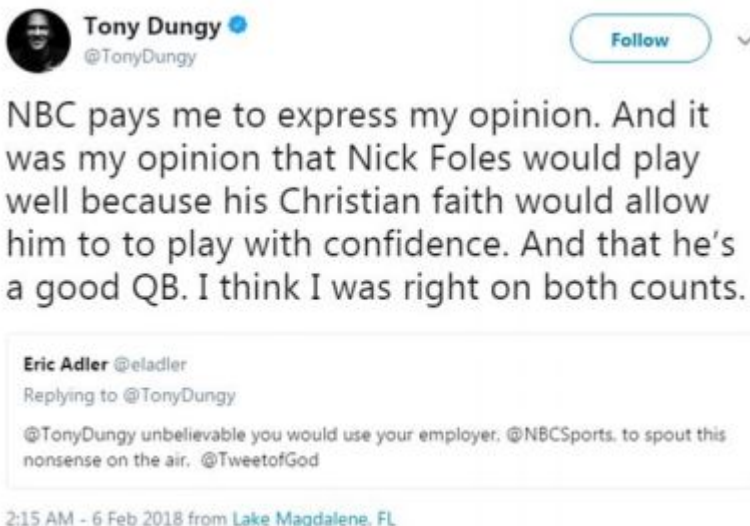
'Really think the LORD is into football? Get a grip,' wrote one critic.

'Why would He not be?,' replied Dungy, who spent much of Monday patiently replying to the scorn heaped upon him by online critics.



Nick Foles raising the Super Bowl trophy after the Philadelphia Eagles beat the New England Patriots. (PHOTO: Matthew Emmons-USA TODAY Sports)

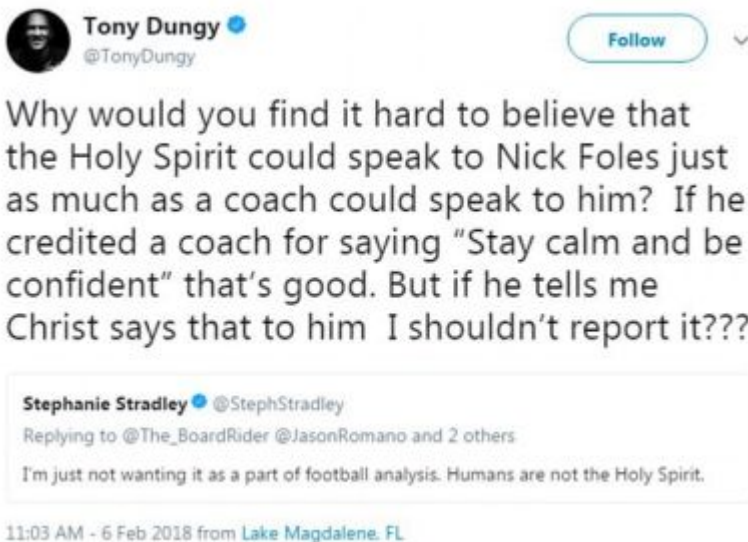
Some accused the former coach of somehow discrediting NBC with his remarks about faith. 'Unbelievable you would use your employer, @NBCSports, to spout this nonsense on the air,' one wrote.



'NBC pays me to express my opinion,' replied Dungy. 'And it was my opinion that Nick Foles would play well because his Christian faith would allow him to play with confidence. And that he's a good QB. I think I was right on both counts.'

'Why would you find it hard to believe that the Holy Spirit could speak to Nick Foles just as much as a coach could speak to him?' Dungy continued.

'If he credited a coach for saying 'Stay calm and be confident' that's good. But if he tells me Christ says that to him I shouldn't report it???'



After the Eagles' upset victory over the New England Patriots, Foles said he gave 'all the glory to God' during the nationally televised awards ceremony.

Many were surprised by the moment, with one Twitter user writing: 'It's just so rare for people to thank Jesus after they win. Amazing!!'

To Christian critics who said he was trivialising the religion by involving it with mere sports, Dungy replied that they had missed the point.

'This was much bigger than the score of a football game,' Dungy wrote.

'How many young boys are going to look up to Nick Foles because of what he did in this moment? When they do they'll see something about LIFE!'

What is your motivation? – Cobus Kruger



A monthly Christian sport column by Cobus Kruger, a professional triathlete who is passionate about evangelism, leadership and community development through sport.

This, for me, is always an exciting but difficult time of the year. It is as if everybody wants to do all the things they didn't get to do in the year, but it is also the time of the year when the body is tired and just needs that break over Christmas, which is so close but yet so far. So at this time of the year I'm always taking a look at what my motivation is for doing what I'm doing.

Do you feel the same about this time of the year? If so or even if not, the question that I want to ask you today is: what motivates you?

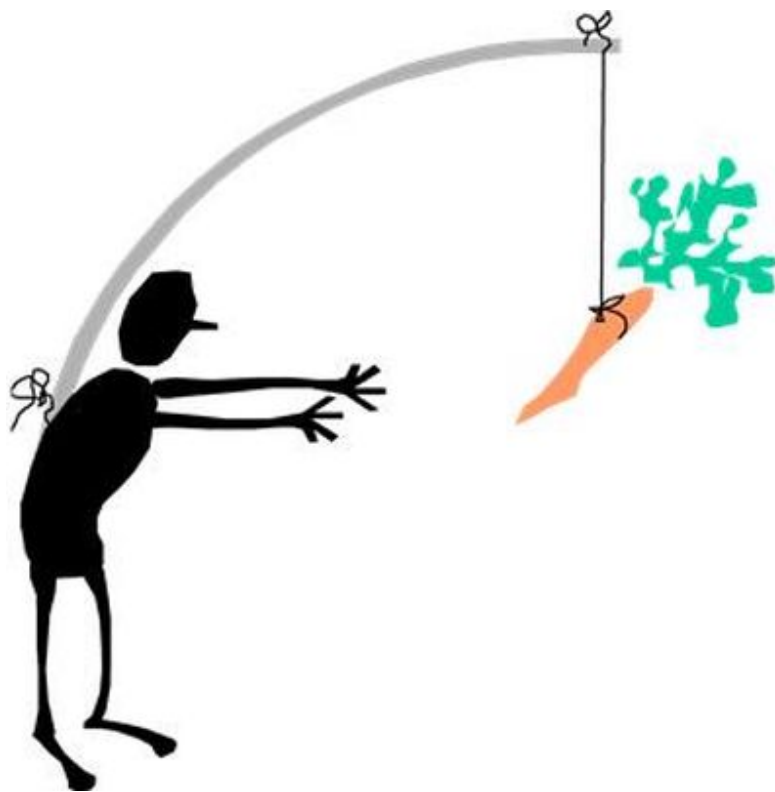
Recently my wife and I assisted Athletes in Action with their Ultimate Training Camp. One of the principles that we use on this camp is the "Inside Game" principle.

We help sports people work through the theory and practicality of this principle. The purpose of this session is that the athletes take a look at their lives and sport to discover what their motivation is.

If the athletes truly understand their identity in Christ, then His love, grace and truth would fuel and form an entirely new motivation for competition and life.

Let me explain

If we look at the sport world then we see many different motivations that drive sports people pursue their ultimate performance, but these motivations are not everlasting. These motivations can only drive you to train and perform in certain conditions and periods of your life and sport career. These motivations can be fear of failure, revenge, recognition, pride, accomplishment, anger, coach, parents, friendships, money, winning – and there are so many more outward motivations that are not everlasting.



(IMAGE: [Lynn Albro](#))

For example

A practical observation that I have made as I have worked with athletes through the years is that when we play a game just for points and teaching purposes of the principles, then the intensity changes from low to moderate and back during the

game. It is not constant. But as soon as we play the final game where we have a big prize for the winning team, then suddenly the intensity level goes much higher in the game.

The question that I normally ask after the game when we evaluate the players' motivation points is: Why did our intensity suddenly go up? The answer normally is because there is this prize that motivates us to play harder.

Here is my point

If Jesus – His love, His grace, His presence – who gives us life to the full from the inside, is our motivation, should we not then always play with full intensity for the sake of His Glory, and in His Grace, whether there is a prize or not? Should our intensity level not stay more constant then? Something to think about...

So at the end of this year, when you are maybe tired and frustrated, think of what or who your motivation is for what you do.

God's love moves us from fear into freedom – let's walk into this inside motivation as we do what we do in the freedom of glorifying God without the fear that our outward motivations could give us.

May Jesus be your way, truth and life!

Have a blessed Jesus Fest over December!

Blessings!

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It's all about SHAPE – Cobus Kruger



A monthly Christian sport column by Cobus Kruger, a professional triathlete who is passionate about evangelism, leadership and community development through sport.

Today I want to talk about the coaching side of sport.

As an athlete and coach myself, and as a pastor that is involved with the coaching of coaches in sport and life, so that they can coach holistically for a lot of years, I picked up a few common mistakes that coaches are making as they coach. It is interesting that we as believers also fall short in a lot of these aspects in our mission to reach the world and work as a “coaching” team together for the growth of God’s Kingdom.

Let me explain. This past weekend I attended a workshop on spinning instructing. (For you that don’t know, I have been a spinning instructor for a lot of years in gyms, as a ministry tool to reach people for Christ.)

In this workshop the facilitator went through some important things that we as spinning instructors should take note of.



A spinning instructor leading the class by example. (PHOTO: [Mom in the city](#))

Coaching principles

Firstly, it is important that you know what you want to achieve in the class. Do things with an outcome in mind for that class. This actually goes for any coaching. If you, as a coach, pitch up for every session and drill in the training, it should build up to what you want to have as an outcome at the end of the session.

It is important that you know what you want to achieve in the class.

The second thing is that if you are a spinning instructor, you should make sure that you do what you want your class to do correctly, because they will follow how you do it. And the fact is that you as instructor should therefore be in shape, so that you can do things right so that people can follow you and also do it right.

You should make sure that you do what you want your class to do correctly, because they will follow how you do it.

I personally feel really strong in all of my coaching that I should do illustrations of drills and movements correctly, because the athletes that you coach will follow what you do. That is why I normally will let somebody that can do it better than me do the demonstration if I coach

sports that I'm not mastering myself. Like when I coach high jump or long jump at schools, I will coach well because I know exactly what I want them to do, but when it comes to the illustration I will go through the coaching points with an athlete who can do it well, so that he or she can do the illustration. Or I will even show a video clip with the correct illustration if needed. Even when I coach something like swimming or running that I do well, but as the coach I'm not able to be in the water or in the correct clothing to illustrate, I will then let an athlete that is in the water, and who can do it well, demonstrate. Why? Because the athletes will do what they see, not what they hear.

And the third point that stood out for me is that you should keep on educating the class on the fundamentals of how to cycle correctly, while you showcase it in the class, so that the members also can get into shape.

You should keep on educating the class on the fundamentals.

These three points are some basic important things for a coach to understand and do if he or she wants to get the athletes that he or she is coaching to their optimal SHAPE and potential.

The coaching principles in our lives as believers

In the same way, we should apply these three coaching principles in our lives as believers.

- We should always spend time building relationships with believers and non-believers with an outcome in mind, with a purpose. Jesus illustrated it well for us when He was on earth. He was always clear with His goals and purpose on this earth, and He also showed love and brought change in every person that He touched. Then, after He rose from death, He gave us as believers the

authority to do the same and more than He did on earth. So we should do what we saw Him do. Love people, not for the sake of our own ministry, structure, denomination, business or sports team, but for the sake of God's Kingdom to grow on earth as it is in heaven.

- We should be in shape and practice the fundamentals and truths of Christ in every action and thing we do in daily life. We are ambassadors for Christ on this earth and as we love and share Jesus as the main fundamental of Christianity, and start to coach them to walk and live in this truth, we should make sure that we are in SHAPE. Why? Because people are going to do what they see, not what they hear from you.

Are you in SHAPE? Here are some coaching points for us to look at to evaluate if we are in SHAPE:

S – Spirit Filled – Did you accepted Jesus as Saviour? Are you Spirit filled? Why? Because we receive power to walk in this earth in Jesus through Him, and fulfilment in His Spirit. Read John 1:12 and Acts 1:8.

H – Honest – Are you honest with yourself, and your life? Is Jesus your leader? Do you do what Jesus showed us to do in your daily life?

A – Accountable – Are you accountable to Jesus Christ as Head of the Church, and His Body, the fellow believers?

P – Practical – Is your faith and belief practical? Or is your faith without action? It should be faith in action.

E – Evangelical – Is your life evangelical? Is Jesus so real to you that you cannot stop living for Him, and you cannot stop sharing and talking about Him, because you know He is the only way, truth and life as we read in John 14:6? Did you take the evangelical call on your life that we

SHAPE

S – Spirit Filled

H – Honest

A – Accountable

P – Practical

E – Evangelical

read about in Mark 16:15, and Matthew 28:28, to go out into all the world and preach what to live? And are you making disciples?

Follow me as I follow Christ

If we are in shape like this, then we should also be able to say to people all around us the words that Apostle Paul used:

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1).

Let's go and ponder on the following scripture, and ask the Lord to help us to get into shape so that we can coach and help the world and Church to get in shape for the sake of God's Kingdom:

You Will Know Them by Their Fruits

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them. (Matthew 7:15-20)

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Para-athlete Fanie van der Merwe shining in darkness – Cobus Kruger



A monthly Christian sport column by Cobus Kruger, a professional triathlete who is passionate about evangelism, leadership and community development through sport.

In the journey of bringing unity within the body of Christ, I started to set a lot of my time out to meet with, and to hear the heartbeat of fellow believers in different ministries, different areas and different situations. As I spent time last week in Stellenbosch with training and ministry, I met many wonderful brothers and sisters in Christ on and off the sports field.

I want to share the story of one of our fellow brothers in Christ, Fanie van der Merwe, a veteran professional athlete who started winning medals at the IPC World Championships in 2006 as a para-athlete in the 100m and 200m T37.

Fannie retired from professional athletics last year after the Rio Olympics and currently lives in Stellenbosch where he runs a coaching ministry called Inspired2Become. As I spent a bit of time with Fanie last week, I just felt that I should share

his story with all of you.

In this month's column I'm going to share his testimony, and then next month I'm going to write more about his ministry, and his work as a retired paralympic gold medallist.



Fanie van der Merwe raising the South African flag in celebration. (PHOTO: [Springs Advertiser](#))

Fanie's athletic achievements

Let's first take a look at some of Fanie's greatest achievements as a professional athlete:

Like I said, he won a lot of international medals since 2006. He won his first paralympics golds in Beijing a 2008 in both the 100m and 200m T37.

He won gold again in the 2012 London Paralympics in the 100m T37, and in 2014 he won gold in the 100m T37 at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. Fanie ended his Paralympics career last year in Rio where he won bronze in the 100m t37.

Although this all looks really impressive on paper – and is really impressive – I got the idea as I spent time with Fanie that he really understood that there is more to life than gold

medals ... Jesus. He loves God with all his heart, so let's be inspired with his story in his own words.

Fanie's testimony

"My journey started as a pre-schooler running trials at the 'big-school'. I was in the front for all of the race, but fell just before the finish line! This basically describes what I experienced throughout a lot of my school career in sport – big expectations that often came with big disappointments." Growing up I loved doing sports but always felt held back by my disability, and my disability seemed so purposeless. The only thing I wanted in school was a chance, but never felt like I really received that fair opportunity. I made peace with the fact that I might not get far in sport, but I would take part because I loved it!

But God knew about that desire in my heart. Little did I know God was preparing me for the big chance He had planned for me from the beginning.

"When I was young, I would get offended when people asked me if I was disabled or why I was limping. But my disability – the very thing I thought was placed in my life as a 'curse' – God turned around into one of the biggest blessings in my life!

In school, all I wanted was just to make a school team. God's plan looked so much different, He gave me a gold medal at the Paralympic Games!

If I hadn't go through the suffering I did, if things just always went my way, there is no way I would have handled my journey in the same way.

The thing is, I knew I had no future in sport, and made peace with that, but God in His goodness decided to turn things around. I can confidently say that the career I had in sport was a gift out of God's hands, something I didn't deserve, and

therefore I can't boast in it!



Fanie van der Merwe (left) with Ilse Hayes (middle) and Charl du Toit (right) at the Rio 2016 Paralympics. (PHOTO: [AFK Sports](#))

“So in Grade 11, I made the able-bodied school team, which was a big achievement for me. That was also where Miss Wessel saw the opportunity to get me into athletics for people with disabilities. New doors started to open for me, I missed out on Athens 2004, but if anyone asked me what my dream was, I would say: to go to the Paralympic Games in Beijing in 2008!

“As things got closer I realised I could be a medal contestant. As a young believer, I remembered one thing: I didn't want to do this alone, I embraced this journey with the Lord.

I remember thinking on the way to Beijing, on the airplane, what it would be like sitting on the airplane heading back home! All I can say, sitting on the airplane on the way back, I was in awe of what God did.

“After my semi-finals in the 100m, the Chinese athlete had a brilliant race 0.70 seconds faster than my time. My first

thought was 'I've to settle for silver', but as I got back in my room I listened to the same song I listened to that morning, saying "God will lift up your head soon and in joy". I jammed that song going crazy in my room, believing I could win that race (and if I didn't it would be okay, but I'm not going into that race thinking it is impossible, I'm going in with faith). We prayed before that race, just submitting under God's will.

"I got into the call room and the Chinese athlete wasn't there, he didn't race, and only afterwards did I hear that the head classifier had a look at the athlete and found that he wasn't in the right class. I would not hope that for anyone, but what happened there was actually impossible. To have a permanent classification changed just before the final is unheard of. My friend said God opened a door for me to receive that gold medal. And not just one, God gave me two gold medals at my first Paralympics!

"I remember a lot of people asking me what is my favourite place I've been to, but I always connect it to my best experience, especially experiencing God. The most precious thing about my athletics journey has been discovering God's father heart and getting to know Him through all the highs and the lows – Him showing me He is always with me, and experiencing His constant, unfailing love.

"A lot of the times we take our eyes off Jesus and stare at the world, or get intimidated by it. God will use the hard times to draw you closer to Him and give you back the joy of living for Him alone, if we will only let Him and I am still challenged with this (living for an audience of one that is what we were created for).

My athletics is also an opportunity to connect with people I otherwise would have never had the chance to do so, to shine in the darkness, and to trust and believe God for the impossible."

Scripture references Romans 8:28; 1 John 4:16 AMP; 2 Corinthians 5:7; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Philippians 2:14-16a.



Fanie van der Merwe acknowledging God. (PHOTO: [Inspired2Become](#))

So fellow believers, let's go and read and ponder and apply the scriptures that Fanie gave us at the end of his testimony. Be inspired and let's live for Jesus day by day, and glorify God in whatever we do.

There are more stories from Fanie, but I'm going to write some of them in my next column as I look into his coaching and ministry.

Be inspired, and remember Jesus is the way, truth and life ... Jesus loves you!

Blessings

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Bear with each other in unity – Cobus Kruger



A monthly Christian sport column by Cobus Kruger, a professional triathlete who is passionate about evangelism, leadership and community development through sport.



South West District in action against Eastern Province on Tuesday July 18 at Craven Week. (PHOTO: [RNews](#))

This is an exciting week of Rugby. On the one hand we have the Super Rugby Quarter finals this weekend where we will see if our three top teams can go through, and on the other hand we have the Craven Week Rugby currently on the go at St Stithians College in Randburg, where the under 18 provincial teams are playing each other to become the winner of Craven Week.

I spent a bit of time yesterday at the Craven Week Rugby giving some support to some of my fellow believers and ministries that are working with these teams for the sake of God's Kingdom. They are doing a great Job. Please keep them in your prayers.

But as I sat at this event and while I mingled with some of the players and parents, my eyes caught two teams as they lined up to play their game. The Eastern Province team was standing in a line in front of me. My eyes scrolled through each player, I looked at their form, their focus, their look, their colour, and then my mind went deeper and I tried to picture each player's background as well. Then it hit me...

Here I'm looking at a team that comes from different

backgrounds, that have different cultures, different talents, different languages, different schools, and are from totally different communities but they have been put together as a team to represent their province. This team with all their diversities are bearing with one another, and are putting their bodies on the line for one another for the sake of the team and to play the best rugby they can play to win for their province.

What a beautiful picture this was ... I'm getting tears of sadness in my eyes as I think of the next part that I need to write...

It saddens me that sport teams can bear with each other in their diversity for the sake of the team, but we as the Body of Christ don't do it for the sake of God's team...

Let me explain...

I'm on the one hand surrounded with a lot of sports people as I train, mentoring and coaching some of them, and on the other hand I'm surrounded with a lot of Pastor's and different ministries as we try to build relationships and get through diversities and try to partner for one goal in mind, one name in mind, JESUS, and His Kingdom!

But a lot of the times this team that I'm speaking about is not united, is not bearing with each other's differences and backgrounds. I wonder actually if we truly can call the Body of Christ a team with one goal in mind? Can we call the Body of Christ a united team that is working together for the goal God called us to despite our differences in background, community, skin colour, denomination, ministries, status? Do we operate in unity to answer God's call to enlarge God's Kingdom in heaven and on earth?

Are we as the Body of Christ following the instructions as the Apostle Paul wrote it in the scriptures? Let's read what he wrote:

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you have a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on Love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. (Colossians 3:13-14 NIV)

Come on fellow brother and sister of Christ!! Let's ask the Lord Jesus Christ to show us where we need to change our mindset, our ways and our actions, where we need to repent and make right with each other, so that we can stand in line like this young Eastern Province rugby team. So we can with our diversity, different backgrounds, different cultures, different communities, different talents, and different languages play in unity the game of our lives as part of the team of all teams, the Body of Christ, for one goal, God's Kingdom!

Be blessed!

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Jesus plays centre for UK rugby star



Jamie Jones-Buchanan points to the sky, acknowledging God, as he celebrates his opening try against Hull KR at the start of his 19th season for Leeds Rhinos. (PHOTO: [Yorkshire Evening Post](#))

Rugby star Jamie Jones-Buchanan has picked up a crock of medals in a glittering Super League career spanning half a lifetime – but Jesus is clearly his greatest treasure.

The second-rower with Leeds Rhinos, for whom he first played in 1999, is now in his 18th season with the Rugby League club, having played 371 games and scored 73 tries – winning six Grand Finals, three World Club Challenges, three League Leaders Shields and the Challenge Cup.

The 35-year-old has overcome many setbacks in the process, which he says has refined his character and taught him what is most important in life. And in the meantime he has also taken up journalism and acting, and become a governor at his former school.

And although he has reached the pinnacle of sporting success, also representing England and Great Britain, his Christian faith has become the focus of his life, as he shared with an

audience in a Doncaster church.

He has not gone soft, however – he was under suspension with the Rugby Football League for a dangerous tackle as he spoke!

Invited to church

Everything changed in 2004 when New Zealand player and fellow second-rower Ali Lauitiiti invited him to church one day.

“I knew there was something different about him, and he wasn’t shy about his faith.

“I did not have a Christian background (although I’d always believed in God) and thought everybody would be dressed in their Sunday best, but in fact they just shared a common love for Jesus.”

He began reading Mark’s Gospel, took a Christianity Explored course and became a committed member of the City Evangelical Church where he was baptised in 2009.

Now he says: “I want Jesus to be right at the centre of everything in my life. I even have In Christ Jesus written in Aramaic (the language Jesus spoke) on my wedding ring.”

Jamie is married to Emma, whom he met when he was 14.



Jamie Jones-Buchanan lifting the Challenge Cup at Wembley for Leeds Rhinos, August 29 2014.

Find out truth about faith

Acknowledging that religion gets a bad press, he blames the media for giving a wrong impression of Christianity. “They’re constantly missing the point. I want to encourage people to find out the truth about faith. There’s a lot of difference between religion and the Christian faith – the former is about the process, not about the heart.

“Come and be a part of it and understand what faith is. There is no lasting value in material things like medals. Jesus is the only thing in life that is eternal. I’d encourage people to understand who the person of Jesus is and why he had to die for our sins.”

The Bible, he says, is a very practical book with much wise

advice on things like diet, sleep, money and keeping your house in order.

And it's because of his faith that he has invested in much more than his rugby career, so that he actually looks forward to retirement. The idea of coaching appeals because it is about getting people to understand their God-given gift – “I believe we're all made in God's image.”

He is proud of the fact that his four boys – Bane, Lore, Dacx and Kurgan (each named after science fiction characters) – are growing up in a “Jesus-focused home”. It wouldn't bother him if they decided not to play rugby. “I just want them to work out what gift God has given them and use it for the service of other people.”

He is also proud of the fact that, though he has been on the *Questions of Sport* TV quiz programme only once, he has twice appeared on the BBC's *Songs of Praise*.

Drawn by his faith

His outgoing personality, infectious sense of humour and gift of the gab are all attractive qualities, but friends and colleagues are no doubt also drawn by his faith – when they get a chance with him on his own, questions are asked about what the Bible has to say on various subjects.

Those who knew him before his conversion qualify anecdotal stories of the time with the tag ‘Jamie BC’, indicating how much Christ has changed him.

He has learnt that the Bible has much to say about teamwork – that little can be achieved alone whereas the support of team and family (both Christian and natural) is vital.

Although flushed with success, he attributes adversity as having done more to make him the player he has become. As a youth, he suffered a severe groin injury from which it took him nearly two years to recover. “At the time they thought my

career was finished.”

But he learnt to persevere. As with the crucible for silver and the furnace for gold (Proverbs 17:3), the fierce heat of trouble gets rid of impurities, he points out. Among his favourite Bible characters is Job, a righteous man who came through the fires of severe testing in losing his entire family along with all of his great wealth, only to be doubly rewarded in the end.

He admits it’s a tough sport. “It’s fierce, but not as bad as it looks. You don’t feel the bumps and bruises until you get out of bed next day.”



Jamie Jones-Buchanan in rehearsal for *Leeds Lads*. (PHOTO: Macolcolm I. Johnson)

Risks part of the game

But there are risks, which have been of especially great concern to his Nana (grandmother), who is so worried about him being hurt that she once ran onto the pitch to break up a fight during a youth match. More recently, when he was being stretchered off injured, she came running onto the field again in a state of panic.

Jamie jokes that though some have mistaken him for an Arab

(due to his flowing beard), he's as Yorkshire as they come; he was actually born in Bramley, Leeds, on August 1 – Yorkshire Day – in 1981.

Like most other boys, he wanted to play football, but the family just happened to move in next door to a pair of rugby league players. And he has played rugby at Elland Road, the iconic stadium of Leeds United!

A venture into journalism started with a blog on the club website and has since progressed to writing a column for Rugby League World and co-hosting a TV and radio project called *Rugby AM*.

He has also taken up acting, appearing in a poignant play called *Leeds Lads*, marking the centenary of the Battle of the Somme.

Inspirational Wayde runs another world-best



Wayde van Niekerk after running the

fastest 300m ever yesterday. (PHOTO:
Facebook).

Inspirational athlete and outspoken Jesus-follower Wayde van Niekerk, 24, did it again – as he set a new world-best time for the 300m at the Ostrava Golden Spike yesterday, surpassing world-bests by Michael Johnson for the second time in less than a year.

His 30.81 seconds at Ostrava broke Johnson's previous best of 30.85 seconds set in Pretoria 17 years ago. In August last year he won Olympic gold in Rio, destroying Johnson's 400m world record for good measure.

Van Niekerk's 300m time also shattered the meet record of 30.97sec – previously the second fastest time ever run – set by Usain Bolt in 2010.

And the great Jamaican Bolt, 30, who is retiring from athletics this year and won the 100m at Ostrava with an under-par performance, once again tipped Van Niekerk to succeed him as the world's next star of sprint.

"I think he really wants to be a sprinter because he's set a personal best in the 100m this year. He's shown he's ready for the challenge. He's really down to earth, he's really humble, he's a great person. He listens and wants to be good and if he continues like this he'll take over track and field." said Bolt yesterday, reports thesouthafrican.com

Before this week Van Niekerk was already the first sprinter to run sub-10 in the 100m, sub-20 in the 200m, and sub-44 in the 400m. And now he can add an impressive sub-31 in the 300m to that résumé. He will be running the 200m and 400m at this summer's World Championships in London.

Never hesitant to acknowledge his faith in Jesus, Van Niekerk posted the following comment on his Facebook page earlier this

month: “I trust and believe firmly that the Lord is with me during my career and would love us all to have a relationship with him. Never be afraid to take the leap of faith and allow the Lord to ‘Use you’ “

Ghana church holds Chelsea thanksgiving service



Reverend Azigiza thanked God for Chelsea's success [PHOTO: BBC News]

Originally published by [BBC News](#)

A church in Ghana's capital, Accra, has held a thanksgiving service for Chelsea following its recent success in the Premier League.

Long-time Chelsea fan Pastor Azigiza encouraged people to come wearing football tops of their favourite team.

Standing behind a Chelsea cake on a stage made to look like a football pitch he said: “Chelsea, by the grace of God, came first.”

He told the BBC he wanted to use the power of football to talk

about God.

Azigiza also led the congregation in a verse of the Chelsea anthem Blue is the Colour.



There was no doubt that it was a celebration of Chelsea (PHOTO: BBC News).

The pastor, who at one time was a radio DJ, was also teasing his immediate boss at the Living Streams International Church, Reverend Dr Ebenezer Markwei, who is an Arsenal fan.

In his sermon, Pastor Markwei talked about “the good, the bad and the ugly of rivalry” suggesting that football fans should engage in friendly rivalry.

He said there was fellowship in rejoicing in others’ successes, so when it is your turn others would do the same. The one blemish in Chelsea’s domestic season was that they lost the FA Cup Final – 2-1 to Arsenal.

But during the service Azigiza thanked God for Arsenal’s victory “because it means that [Arsenal manager] Arsene Wenger will stay” and they cannot win the league with him, he said.



Fans of different teams were encouraged to embrace each other (PHOTO: BBC News).

Fans of all teams were welcome to the service and Azigiza told the BBC that he wanted to defuse rivalry between supporters of different clubs.

Although, he added, they were reminded that Chelsea had just been crowned Premier League champions. Chelsea won the Premier League in May with 93 points, seven ahead of their nearest rivals Tottenham.

The English Premier League has a large and passionate following in Ghana. Research carried out by Twitter in 2015 suggested that Chelsea is the most popular side in Ghana and much of the rest of West Africa.