

## From Sport to the Saviour

*By Missionary*

I grew up as a typical skater kid. I listened to punk music, jumped fences, was chased by security guards, hung out with drug dealers and I wouldn't dare step a foot in church.

I skated every single day from the age of 12, rain or shine. I achieved every 16-year-old skater's dream of being sponsored, winning competitions, being in magazines and videos. Skating was my life; it consumed me. I was living the dream. Until something greater than skating came along...

When I was in grade 10, a missionary who also happened to be a skater, came to my high school. We immediately connected over our love of skating. He went on to tell me that:

God is our creator (Psalm 139) and He is the true King (Psalm 95:3) but we rebel against him (Isaiah 53:6) and deserve hell as punishment (Matthew 25:41), yet God sent Jesus to this world (John 1:14) to live a perfect life (1 Peter 2:22) and to be crucified for our sins (1 Peter 2:24) and later rose from the dead (Mark 16:5-6). If we trust in Jesus, we will be saved and have eternal life (Romans 10:9-10).

This blew my mind!

That very day I trusted in Jesus, was forgiven for my sins, and made it my goal to tell as many people as I could about how they can also be saved. A few years later the Lord sent me to a closed nation in South East Asia to be a missionary. I thought my skating days were over as I retired my skates into the closet. This country I was going to was just jungles and slums, with barely any rideable concrete, let alone a skate park.

Or so I thought.

About a year later I was sitting in a shopping centre when I heard the distinct sound of a crisp 'ollie'. I rushed to the back of the shopping centre to find a shabby skate park, with a small crew of skaters. We immediately became friends over our love of skating and I found myself hanging out with these guys every day.

I quickly realised that none of these skaters were Christians – they had never heard about Jesus before and I was the first Christian they had ever met. I knew I needed to reach them with the good news of Jesus; just like that skater missionary did for me.

God used me to establish the first skate ministry in that country. I organised an official group of core skaters to spend every day with and witness to. We started with about five members. During this time a law that prohibited more than five people to be together at one time was lifted, and skating BOOMED throughout the country! We went from five members to 700 members in a year! Even today the numbers keep growing and so do the opportunities to share the gospel!

This group of skaters has been growing like crazy. Both national and international media does a story on our group seemingly every week; we hold nation-wide skating competitions; we do skate demos and tours around the whole country; we were even invited by the Olympic committee to skate overseas! Next month we are also competing in the X Games in Malaysia!

The most exciting project is the creation of the 'Skate Bible' – a Bible with testimonies of Christian skaters translated into the local language. I believe God will use this to bring salvation to hundreds of skaters (Isaiah 55:10-11).

God is using sports as a way to reach the nations, whether surfing in Sri Lanka, hockey in Holland, or volleyball in Vanuatu!

So go! Do not hesitate to reach your teammates in your own neighbourhood, or sports participants on the other side of the globe. See the sports field as your mission field. Share the gospel, and see where the Lord takes it (John 12:32) – you will be surprised!

Use your passion for your sport as a gateway to the gospel (1 Corinthians 9:19-23). Sport is a common connector of mankind – use it for your advantage to share the gospel and do it for God's glory!



Sport God's Way