

Laura Kyte and Fabio Gonzalez
Serving in partnership with Verite Sport and
the Confraternidad Cristiana del Deporte in
Cachi, Salta province, Argentina.



What is Verite?

- Verite Sport exists to promote a Christian presence in sport, to take the teachings of the Bible and to apply them to sport. While Verite Sport is a fairly new missionary organization, its Executive Director, Stuart Weir, has been involved in sports ministry for over 25 years.
- Stuart describes our work in Argentina as “incarnational ministry”, explaining: “Laura is a runner who has a passion for serving the athletic community in Argentina and for sharing the love of Jesus with them. She does this not so much as a ‘traditional missionary’ but as a fellow runner living out the Great Commission. Athletes know her mainly as someone they train with or compete against. By being part of a club, competing and training with athletes, she is part of the ir world in a way that a chaplain or more traditional foreign missionary never could be.”
- Stuart and I are in regular communication via Skype and email, including a detailed monthly update of activities which I send to him and a select group of supporters. I have access to space on the Verite website which is updated with photos and a bulletin which is sent out every two months to a wider network of supporters. In addition, I send out a shorter document to prayer partners in Argentina and Spain.
- In order to strengthen partnerships within Argentina sports ministry, I have recently formalised a ministry link with non-profit organisation, “Confraternidad Cristiana del Deporte”, whose director, Julio Bautista, has been serving in Argentina for 20 years. I saw this as an important step forward in working in unity within the country, rather than just as part of a “foreign project”, and where we particularly share a common vision is in the desire for churches to understand sport as a mission field and how young people can be served and shown Christ’s love in the practice of sport itself.

Short-term/current projects



We live in a small town called Cachi, in the far north of Argentina. It is a popular stop-off point for tourists and an extremely popular venue with athletes training at altitude for periods of between 3 and 6 weeks. We rent out a room (and there is another one nearly finished) for up to two or three athletes at a time which, apart from providing us with a small monthly income, is as a great opportunity to share our lives and faith on a daily basis. We are challenged to pray for those athletes, to show how the Lord makes a difference in our lives and sport and to say something of His transforming power (Colossians 4.2-6).

- “Más que Vencedores”, or the “More than Conquerors” athletics team, began as soon as Fabio arrived in Cachi and has about ten regular members. Our overarching desire is to show God’s love through building relationships built on trust and honesty between athlete and coach, as well as training in a way that places emphasis on **values** (e.g. discipline, effort, self-control, perseverance) rather than solely on results, thus avoiding an identity built on sporting success or failure. We are concerned by the **“whole” athlete** and their well-being (school, family, pressures, motivation etc.).
- As Christians, our vision is to use this platform as a way of sharing the love of Christ through the way in which we relate to our athletes not just on the track. We have welcomed the young people into our home, holding group meetings to encourage team spirit and share something of God’s word. We would like to use some of the Alpha youth materials in order to explore life’s big questions and the claims of Jesus Christ.



- We have presented our project to the town council of Cachi and the provincial authorities for sport, including our desire to form “athletes of integrity who would go on to contribute to the well-being of society”, based on Biblical principles. We take great delight in sharing our lives and our faith with the young people and eventually, their families. Salta’s small world of athletics is grateful to have Fabio on board as a valued and esteemed promoter of the sport, for which he has been awarded a small bursary from the local authorities, although our project is primarily self-funded. We continue to look for opportunities to promote what we are doing but we are expected to cover any expenses incurred as coaches. We consider it a priority to travel with our athletes, especially to major championships. The relationship between coach and athlete can flourish and there is more time to share words of encouragement, to pray and minister to the athlete, who is usually more vulnerable and open to listening to advice, as competition can take them of their

comfort zone! This is especially true of the young athletes we are working with currently, with many travelling for the first time, and we take very seriously our responsibility to get alongside them. We value all support available in order to enable us to invest as much time and energy as we are able to in the young people and their spiritual lives.

- As athletes, we want to make the most of any media opportunities that come our way, notably Fabio in his home town of Cachi and the provincial capital of Salta, where he has several contacts with major radios and newspapers, and also opportunities that road-racing in particular provides for me to proclaim God's goodness and talk about our project in Cachi.
- "Deporte y Biblia, qué tiene que ver?" is a Facebook page where I regularly publish devotionals in Spanish which apply Biblical principles to the sporting environment. There has been a steady growth in followers from all over South America, made up of both Christian and "seeking" athletes, pastors, ministry colleagues and many of the young athletes in Cachi.
- I make a conscious effort to remain in contact with athletes in and around Buenos Aires, and any others whom I meet along the way (I am still in touch with several from the Parapanamerican Games in 2011), remembering important races, keeping up with results and sending messages of congratulations and encouragement during moments of disappointment.



Medium-term

- Buenos Aires will host the 2018 Youth Olympics, which would be the first major multi-sporting event since the "Juegos ODESUR" (like a South American Olympics) held in the capital in 2006; a potentially very big and exciting ministry opportunity with the chance to involve local churches and Christian volunteers as well as getting alongside athletes, coaches and officials from all over the world.
- Fabio is plans to add to his level I IAAF qualification, as well as looking into opportunities as a funded/salaried coach, especially with 2018 on the horizon. I also hope to invest in some coaching qualifications over the coming year.
- I am keeping an eye on any major events chaplaincy opportunities that may come up, notably the Pan and/or Parapan American Games in Toronto 2015. Stuart also mentioned an annual Christian coaching conference in the USA which would be of great interest, which is on our radar at some point over the coming years.



Long-term

We have one long-term project in mind, thinking ahead a good ten years or so. Fabio, as a native of Cachi, is entitled to a plot of land within the district of Cachi. We have been thinking and praying over the location, size and what kind of plot to ask for; those within the “urban” area tend to be smaller and more populated, whereas a few kilometers out of town, there tend to be bigger and more rural plots on offer. Cachi is an ideal place for retreats, outdoor activities and general rest and relaxation, thanks to its breathtaking landscape and tranquility.



We decided to make a formal request for a large plot about 2km from the town, for which we have the following ideas:

- Construction of a more spacious home which would also have room to accommodate a small group of guests;
- An additional living and dining room area (separate building) where as well as sharing meals with a larger number of people, there would also be room for indoor activities, such as conferences, meetings or talks;
- Small block with toilet and shower;
- Space for picnics, with permanent tables, seats and for pitching a tent;
- Space for outdoor activities like games, sport and physical activity.

We imagine being able to offer some kind of sports pastoral activities to our young athletes, perhaps over the course of a weekend, with complimentary activities and talks. We would love to host church retreats, small-group conferences and any other activities organised by the people of Cachi or elsewhere in the Salta province (particularly thinking of our links in the city) that fit our values and principles as Christian coaches and educators. Perhaps by this point we will also be in a position to talk about what it means to be “whole-life coaches”, sharing our experiences with and training up other coaches to do the same.

Los Guayacanes 146, Salta, 4400, Argentina
00 54 9: 11 4157 3005/387 4543 317
laurakytedegonzalez86@gmail.com
fabengo@hotmail.com

www.veritesport.org

Skype: laura_kyte

www.ccdconfraternidad.com.ar

fabio.marchista