

# Athletes in Action

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“We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.”  
1 Thessalonians 1:8

Hello again! In our lives as campus ministers, the month of May always feels like a big transition. The hectic pace of the regular school year has slowed down and our thoughts naturally shift toward how ministry might look come the fall semester. This month also brings with it the scramble to figure out which student athletes are sticking around for the spring and summer terms to train and take classes. Once we get a picture of who will be here, we can put summer bible studies and events in place. This year it has been particularly encouraging to see how God is shaping up this spring semester. Toward the end of last month, Nicky, one of our student leaders on the soccer team, sent a text out to her teammates inviting them to be a part of a bible study she would be leading this summer. A few weeks back they had their first bible study and six girls showed up! That night I got a text from Nicky saying, “First bible study was today. It went awesome!”, followed by a text the next day saying, “Have u ever had someone in ur small group swear a lot?”. I had to laugh when I got the second one, thinking about how great it was that the “swearing” girl was at bible study :) We will be praying for those gals that God will meet each one of them wherever they are at in their journey with Him, and that He will use Nicky in an amazing way in their lives to love and minister to them. To God be the glory for advancing His Kingdom here among these precious students.

## Loving on Students

With the slower pace of campus life in the summer, we like to take advantage of having more students over to our home for dinner. Our kids absolutely love it, as they view any student coming over as an automatic playmate for the night for them!

Last week we had one of the early enrollee freshmen football players over to experience the Keefer dinner table. He’s a guy Colby has been meeting with throughout the winter semester, getting to know him and building into his life spiritually. When I asked what had been a few highlights for him since moving to Ann Arbor in January, he said two things: the spring season of football, and being involved in Athletes in Action.

I was really touched by his answer as it reminded me that these young people are coming to college desiring to be loved and pursued, and wanting a sense of purpose and meaning in life. It is an absolute privilege to be here pointing them to Jesus, and sharing our lives with them.



Our crew with a couple of “playmates” that came over this month. They had a pretty good game of “Pig” going on in our driveway.

## Running toward Jesus

As we continually evaluate what's going on in our ministry and where we can trust God for greater growth, we are regularly led to pray for those athletic teams where we have little or no student involvement. The Michigan women's cross country team is one of those teams.

This fall God, in His faithfulness, brought Kali, a sophomore on the cross country team, along to some of our weekly meetings. Kali was drawn to the people she was meeting there and after hearing the gospel, prayed to receive Christ and began a relationship with Him. I can't tell you how encouraging it has been to meet for one-on-one discipleship with Kali all year and literally watch God change her!

Kali now has a huge heart to reach out to her team with the same life-changing message of Christ that she has experienced. She has been instrumental in helping to form a bible study with her teammates for the spring and summer term which around ten of her teammate have shown interest in. As we met earlier this month for our first track/cross country bible study, it was such a joy to hear those that were there share about how they are excited to develop a community together where they can talk about spiritual things and grow together.

This has definitely fired me up to keep praying for those teams who don't have someone following hard after Jesus here at Michigan. God definitely hears those prayers and is faithful to do things that seem impossible!



Me and sweet Kali

## What's next?

If you have been on our team through the years, you know that we usually receive a summer assignment from Athletes in Action — a place other than Michigan to serve for part of our summer. This year Colby has been assigned to staff our AIA Ultimate Training Camps in Minneapolis and Santa Barbara, CA. These are both one week camps where student athletes from all over the country come and learn what it means to worship God through their competition...such good stuff!

Colby's role while there will be to observe our student interns, as he is taking over the job of student intern coordinator and developer next year. He will also be conducting interviews with the non-majority culture interns, asking them about their experience there in the hopes of creating greater opportunity for diverse cultural expression for non-majority student-athletes in the future. These interviews are also a part of a research project he is doing for his seminary class, which he has been working so diligently on. More to come on all of that next month.

The kids and I are staying back in Michigan while daddy is gone for about a month...yikes! Prayers for us are appreciated :)

Please pray...

...for the different bible studies going on here this spring and summer term — women's soccer, women's track and the men's all athlete study.

...for teams where we have no students involved — men's and women's lacrosse, men's and women's tennis, and men's and women's rowing, to name a few.

...for Colby as he travels to the Ultimate Training Camps. Pray that God would give him wisdom to know how to help our ministry be more inclusive to non-majority culture athletes. Pray for me and the kids as we hold down the fort at home.

*The gospel is going forth here and you are part of making that happen! Thank you for all you do for us!!! God bless you!*



May brings a couple of celebrations around our home...our 16th wedding anniversary and Jairus' third birthday!