

Who We Are



Our Vision

“To see an international movement of sports ministers using the powerful relational tool of sports, within a strategic church-centered approach, to transform the lives of youth, their families and their communities with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Our Mission

“To empower churches and church planters to use the universal language of sports to develop effective evangelism and discipleship strategies which result in dynamic church growth and new churches planted throughout Africa, Asia and South America.”



Our Strategy

Sports Friends seeks to be a servant resource to Christian leaders in Africa, Asia and South America in the development of effective, church-centered, youth-focused sports ministries by:

1. **Stimulating a vision** for the use of sports as a ministry tool by churches and church planters. It has been said that there are two universal languages – music and sports! Sports cross over the boundaries of race, tribe, class, age, and religion that so easily divide us and hinder the advancement of the Gospel.
2. **Training Christian leaders** how to develop fruitful church-centered sports ministry programs. Sports Friends offers four levels of integrated training which focus on the development of effective sports ministry strategies. Sports Friends also offers a curriculum in sports ministry which can be used by seminaries and Bible schools to further educate and train sports ministers.
3. **Equipping sports ministers** for effective service. In addition to training, Sports Friends offers ongoing support to sports ministry leaders to help them grow in their ministry. This support includes providing advice, strategic planning, networking, training of coaches, Bibles and other ministry materials, and various types of sports equipment.
4. **Developing organizational leadership capacity.** Sports Friends partners with denominations and church planting organizations to provide intensive training and support of senior leaders at the national level. These leaders provide the vision, guidance and management of the sports ministry movement within their organizations. Sports Friends also works closely with these denominational coordinators to develop effective sports ministry leaders at the local church level.

Our Identity

Sports Friends is a ministry of the multi-national, interdenominational mission, SIM (Serving In Mission). As such, Sports Friends affirms SIM's mission statement, core values and statement of faith (reference www.sim.org).



The purpose of SIM is to **glorify God by planting, strengthening, and partnering with churches** around the world as we:

- evangelize the unreached,
- minister to human need,
- disciple believers into churches, and
- equip churches to fulfill Christ's Commission.

Our Focus

In pursuing our vision and ministry, Sports Friends has a number of important focuses that further define and direct our efforts.

1. **Youth** - While people of all ages enjoy sports and games, Sports Friends focuses on young people between the ages of 8 and 25 -- an age group with a strong interest in and attraction to sports. These youth provide a gateway for further ministry with their families and communities.
2. **Intentional Ministry** - Our focus is on effective ministry, not creating large sport and recreation programs. Every sports minister is trained and encouraged to have an effective prayer, evangelism and discipleship strategy as the foundation for their sports ministry.
3. **Local Leadership** - Sports Friends is committed to training and equipping local leaders for the work of evangelism and discipleship within their own countries and communities. Sports Friends missionary staff are encouraged to quickly transfer skill, knowledge and responsibility to local leadership teams.
4. **Multiplication** - Jesus' model of ministry was one of multiplication. He invested Himself into disciples who in turn reproduced themselves into other disciple-making disciples. Sports Friends seeks to follow this model by developing and training sports ministry leaders who further extend their ministry by recruiting and training additional sports ministers.
5. **Interdenominational** - Sports Friends seeks to serve the entire Body of Christ. We desire to see multiple denominations working together in unity to develop sports ministry programs that advance God's Kingdom.
6. **Partnerships** - At its core, Sports Friends is a partnering organization – partnering with denominations and church planting organizations in its ministry locations to develop sports ministry movements. Sports Friends also acts as an agent to partner churches in the western world with churches in the developing world. Our desire is to accelerate the development of effective sports ministry programs and to further stimulate a passion for missions and evangelism in both worlds.

7. **Creativity** - There are many varieties of sports, strategies and initiatives that can be used in the development of sports ministry programs. Sports Friends seeks to train local church leaders and church planters how to contextualize the Gospel and apply key ministry principles to their unique situations. Our desire is to stimulate creativity, not stifle it.
8. **Sustainability** - Sports Friends' goal is to see the local church create and sustain effective and fruitful sports ministry programs. Sports Friends' financial investments are intended to serve as a catalyst to launch or strengthen ministry initiatives, not to create ongoing dependency.

Our Distinctives

Certainly, there are many effective sports ministry organizations ministering throughout the world today. What makes Sports Friends distinctive when compared to other sports ministry organizations?

Historically, most of the efforts of the international sports ministry community have been parachurch in character and focused on big one-time sporting events and the professional or high-caliber athlete. Sports Friends distinguishes itself from this traditional approach to sports ministry, as outlined below:

1. **Focus on the Church** - We believe that God's primary means of relating to and transforming the world is the Church. Sports Friends' sole focus is equipping churches and church planters to use sports as an effective ministry tool – integrated with the church's other ministries and supportive of its overall mission.
2. **Church-Planting and Missions** - Sports Friends seeks to train and mobilize church planters and missionaries from developing countries in Africa, Asia and South America to use sports to build relationships with difficult-to-reach people groups and to share with them the love and saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.
3. **Relational Evangelism** - Sports create one of the quickest and best ways to build meaningful friendships. Through those friendships, Christians can share the love and word of God in a natural and non-threatening way. Sports Friends focuses on this type of relational evangelism, rather than on mass evangelism methods at large sporting events.
4. **Ongoing Ministry and Discipleship** - Sports Friends' focus is the ongoing ministry of the local church. Sports Friends believes that a consistent voice, over an extended period of time, will produce change in a young person's life. Sustainable, local-church ministry is the foundation for relational evangelism and effective ongoing discipleship.
5. **Grass Roots** - Most people who enjoy sports and games will never achieve a high level of performance or become a professional athlete. Sports Friends' ministry is focused at the grass roots level on the vast majority of people who simply want to play and have fun.



Sports Friends International—Strategic Overview

6. **Use of Any Sport** - Sport is a magnet which draws people into a rich relationship-building environment. Any sport or game which is enjoyed can be used in sports ministry, and these preferences vary from country to country and region to region. Sports Friends trains church leaders how to use any sport as a bridge for building relationships and conducting effective ministry.



7. **Investment in Leadership Development** - One of Sports Friends' highest priorities is identifying, training and supporting national denominational leaders in sports ministry. A well-trained, full-time sports ministry leader is one of the greatest investments we can make in a country.
8. **Incarnational Model** - Sports Friends pursues an incarnational model for training and leadership development. Creating passionate, well-equipped sports ministry leaders is a process that takes time. Sports Friends' progressive, integrated training curriculum takes place over time and allows a depth of personal investment that leads to transformed lives and fruitful ministry.

Our Desired Outcomes

What does Sports Friends want to see happen in regions where it serves? By prayer and in dependence upon the Lord, we hope to see:

- **A large movement of churches and church planters using sports** to build relationships with youth and their families that result in **fruitful evangelism and discipleship opportunities**.
- **Transformed lives, families and communities** through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, worshipping God and giving Him glory.
- **New churches planted** among difficult-to-reach people groups.
- **Denominations and church-planting networks working together in unity** to reach their communities with the love of God through sports.
- Effective sports ministry **leaders, reproducing themselves** in other leaders.
- **Movements of young people** from both the western world and the developing world who are passionate about Christ and about making Him known.
- Sports ministry programs at the local church level that are **self-funded and sustainable**.