

SportsReach Austria 20 years



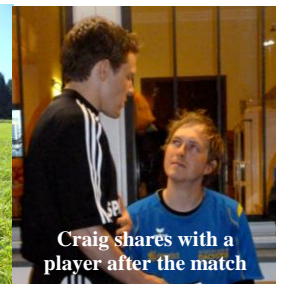
Bbq with students at Tauernhof



Action at Grobming



Trophy for the tournament



Craig shares with a player after the match



Graham sharing

How it all began...by Graham Stamford, Founder

I had been lecturing at Tauernhof since 1983. In the 90's the work of SportsReach was developing, and the purpose of its work was that through the avenue of sport, people would be given the opportunity of hearing the good news about Jesus. Hans Peter asked if I would tell the students about the work, and I said it would be better to demonstrate what we did against a local team. A team from Ramsau gave us our first game, and I was amazed



Sharing at Mitterburg

how warmly and attentively they gathered to listen to our presentation at the end of the match. The following year, a further game was arranged with Rohrmoos and so the work grew. Now so many teams want to play us that we take on the almost impossible task of playing 10 games in the 2 weeks of our visit. Over the years, hundreds have heard the message, which I often call the 'Greatest Life on the Planet', based on the words of Jesus in John 10:10 "I have come that you might have life and have it to the full." Christianity is not a religion, it is a life. We always give the teams a plaque and sports Bible and Christian literature which has led to players and their wives becoming Christians. At every game an invitation is given for players to turn to Christ and commit their lives to Him. It has been a wonderful privilege to see those who have responded and received Christ and personally discovered this new life.

Encouragements along the way, and looking to the future...by Will & Sue Marsden, Directors

Over the 10 years I have been coming to Tauernhof with SportsReach as a player and now as co-Director with Sue, it has been tremendous to see many lives changed by God. Not only players in Austria, but also members of the SportsReach team too! Staying at Tauernhof for two weeks gives a great insight into Bible School life and many guys have come back to Tauernhof or gone to other Torchbearers centres to study and spend time growing in God, and then into full time ministry. We have had guys come with us and receive Christ for the first time and some have even found their wives on tour!! Several who have come to Austria with us over the years refer to Tauernhof as their spiritual home.

One team from the region has even visited us in the UK and that has had a major impact on the deepening of friendships and respect between the teams. After his visit to us, an Austrian player explained how Sue's testimony and the literature from Wilhelm Busch helped him to see that although his life was good, it was not complete, writing "Step by step I understand and now I feel happy in my life and in my soul. Thank you for helping me to find the right way to Jesus." Praise God for bringing SportsReach and Tauernhof together and using us in partnership to glorify His name.

This year saw an exciting new development as Sue was able to take a team of students and Lara from the Kitchen staff to represent SportsReach in a match against Pichl Ladies, with Tauernhof receptionist Anna as the translator. What a great night! An immediate warmth and depth of friendship was created leading to a second match two weeks later, and invitations to return with a girl's team in the future! Please pray for this opportunity, the 'Classics' team that come in September, and that lives will continue to be saved and transformed through this work in the region.



The girls! Praying, sharing, playing...

