

## ROZZA'S REPORT - SPORTSREACH TOURS 2017

**AUSTRIA** - Until two weeks before this tour was scheduled, I was not going! It was only after Will asked me would I also like to go on this tour, did I decide to go to Austria as well as France. And I have to say... it was absolutely worth it! **The time in Austria was most certainly some of the best days of my life.** The team had instant chemistry and an incredibly high team spirit – mainly down to Graham's antics! Within the first few days we discovered the joys of volleyball at Tauernhof leading to a much loved and looked forward to past time every day, and for several hours a day I must add! Plus, the shout of 'Volleyball!' began and continued to be shouted throughout the rest of the tour, becoming the greeting between teammates throughout the week!



One highlight from our time was a game against the refugees, which was a blessed evening. Despite a rather one-sided result, it was *after* the game that really mattered. We had a fabulous opportunity to share with the refugees, with Will sharing excellently. It was also wonderful to see after the match the refugees lifting the trophy aloft like they had won the FA Cup! You could tell it meant a lot to them that they were able to play a game of football against a proper football team. Some verses in Austria that I found in 1 John that were incredibly encouraging - ***“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us—whatever we ask—we know***

***that we have what we asked of Him.”*** 1 John 5:14-15

The time in lectures was a real highlight. Graham spoke excellently about **the victorious Christian life** and was a real blessing to listen to. Steve Volle speaking on Elisha was also really interesting and enjoyable to listen to. Being able to be a part of the Bible School, attending lectures, eating and spending free time with the students I found to be a real blessing and made it very enjoyable. There was always someone wanting to play volleyball with us or having a laugh and a joke with us during meal times. They really took us in and made us all feel a part of the Bible School! It was great to be with them all and (hopefully!!) they also enjoyed us being with them.



On our final evening in Austria, after our game against the students in the day (which we won 8 – 2!) some of us took part in Austrian dancing that had been organised for the evening. It was great fun, and another great highlight of my time there. I can safely say that I cannot do Austrian dancing, but I had a great laugh and fun whilst trying!

To sum up Austria, then - an incredible, blessed, hilarious, unforgettable time, bringing together some truly godly men and women, all seeking to see the same thing – lives saved. These 10 days were some of the best in my life; making some truly special friendships that I'm hopeful will last a lifetime and strengthen further those I already had.

I loved Austria, loved the time there and will certainly be returning again!

**FRANCE** – This was the original tour that I had signed up for, and knowing all the lads going, I was looking forward to it! I knew there was a great group of lads going and I was hopeful for a really fruitful time, both on and off the pitch!

Our second game of the tour was against Hurigny. Despite the result, it was the time afterwards that was a real blessing. **John shared a really great talk**, using a 10-euro note to illustrate worth and our worth in God's eyes and after that we were able to share with the guys from the team. I walked over to the left back who had been marking me most of the game and said 'Bonjour, je m'appelle James, comment tapelle tu?' (Hello, my name is James, what is your name?) and, expecting the guy to



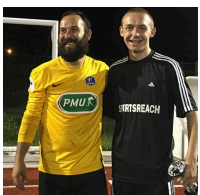
either not understand me or start talking in very complicated French that I had no chance of understanding, he said 'Hi, I'm Axel' in excellent English! It turned out his English was very good and my attempt at French was in vain! However, aside from my language troubles, we can be so thankful for what happened with Will and a man named Pierre. Will had a conversation with him, after which he was able to lead him to the Lord! *Prayers were answered!* We were delighted and so thankful to God for answering our prayers! The first person to be saved whilst out on tour in France! **Please remember to pray for Pierre**, I'm sure being a new Christian in France cannot be easy!

Another highlight from France was the game we played against a **local Muslim team**. They did not play in a league and did not get many games – especially due to the terrorism problems in France over the past few years, so it was great to be able to play with these guys and show them the love of Christ. The game – although competitive – was probably the toughest of the tour and we lost 7 – 1! Despite the result, we kept going and tried to show them a real difference in us than other teams, keeping playing for each other and encouraging each other, despite the score line. Afterwards, we were unable to share with them, as they had requested for us not to, but, fortunately, we were able to chat to a few of the guys from their team, who had stayed behind to chat. What was more impressive about the game against the Muslim team was that they were in the midst of Ramadan and unable to drink anything before, during or after the game, until sundown! I'm not sure how well we would have coped – especially in the heat!

One final highlight from France was being able to spend an afternoon with some **Albanian refugees**. Again, these people are shunned from society and nobody really wants to know them or help them, so it was great to be able to show them the love of Christ and have a great, fun afternoon with them all! Although we did not play a proper game with them, we did play 5-a-side games against them, which were tiring and very competitive! Afterwards, we had bought some pizza and drinks for them to enjoy, whilst John shared with them. They all listened intently. It was a really great afternoon and they told us several times that they looked forward to us returning next year!



Again, France was another really enjoyable tour. Will's devotions were very encouraging and challenging. This tour, from the very start, had been **filled with prayer**, which was very encouraging. Even before we left for France, we had a prayer meeting at John's house, spending at least 1½ hours praying with each other. Everyday, we would spend time praying, whether on our own, with someone else or with the team. We had prayer meetings some morning – which was a great way to spend the day! I know a lot of the lads found the times we spent praying a real highlight and very encouraging to them.



Alors oui, la tournée française était très bonne, stimulante et encourageante!  
(So yes, the France tour was very good, challenging and encouraging!)

*James Rosendale*