Inside ...
South Africa Blog 2
South Africa quotes 5
Alumni Game 6
2013 Schedule 6
Quick Click ...
• Sports
  www.gcc.edu/sports
• Women’s soccer
  www2.gcc.edu/sports/W-Soccer/wsoc.htm
• Alumni & Friends
  www.alumni.gcc.edu

THE IMPACT OF WOMEN’S SOCCER AT GCC

By Melissa Lamie

After 20 years of coaching the women’s soccer team at Grove City, I can honestly say my number one goal for the program is not to win a national championship, but to have a positive impact. Over the years I have seen the impact that a simple game can have—on those who play, coach, officiate and even just watch the game. The former coach at Messiah, Dave Brandt, says his goal is for his program to have such an impact that if the program ceased to exist, there would be no way to replace its impact (my version of his quote). This is a lofty ambition for a soccer program. Obviously Messiah, who wins national championships year after year, has a different audience to impact than our program might, but to have a great impact on any audience is no less lofty a goal.

In my experience, I have seen our impact as threefold. First of all, it starts with the impact we have on each other within our team. Learning to be a great teammate is a key to the development of our players. It doesn’t happen overnight. It is a developed skill just as any other skill in the game. Sometimes it takes the course of a four-year-career before someone really understands what it means to be a great teammate. But the cumulative effect of those efforts means that everyone on the team benefits from having people around them who work at being great teammates to each other. This is how we build our team chemistry and our team culture. This is why every one of our alums can look back and see the meaningful relationships that are formed during their time with the team. This is why we can say that we are truly a family, 20 years in the making.

Our second area of impact is on our immediate campus surroundings and local soccer community. We have built a reputation here on the campus as a true team. Other GCC teams can look at our team and see a group that is living out the word TEAM, on and off the field. They see people dedicated to each other, and a team that is about more than winning. In every match, the opposing players and fans can witness our efforts toward being a different kind of team—a Christian team. They see us giving a full effort on every play, without complaint if things don’t go our way. They see that there is a way to play the game that doesn’t represent negativity toward teammates, opponents or officials. And hopefully, they recognize that this is the way the game is meant to be played, and it can be replicated!

Our final area of impact is around the world. For seven years now our program has been involved with the work of Ambassadors in Sport in South Africa. In the AIS office there hangs three GCC jerseys from each of our three trips there. We have been and will continue to be a part of their efforts in using soccer to spread the gospel. We will continue to use the lessons learned on those trips to impact our team here in the U.S., and we will continue to seek out ways we can support and encourage their ministry to the soccer community of South Africa. I hope you enjoy reading about our most current trip on the following pages!

After 20 years of coaching here I am proud of the impact we have had and continue to have through the beautiful game. I truly have the greatest job in the world!

-Head Coach Melissa Lamie

The Full 90 is the official newsletter of the Grove City College Women’s Soccer Team.

Full90_Summer13.indd   1
8/19/2013   8:18:30 AM
The Grove City College women’s soccer team embarked on a journey this summer to South Africa to lend a helping hand throughout less fortunate communities, all while bringing their love for soccer along for the ride.

**Day 1**
Well, we made it through our 17-hour plane ride and arrived last night. We woke up early and left our hotel around 6 a.m. to head to Rivers Church in Johannesburg where we helped prepare over 1,000 sandwiches for local school kids. The organizer of the church’s outreach programs gave us a tour of the mega church (they have five services every weekend and have over 7,000 members). The church is involved in multiple outreach ministries, along with their feeding program. Currently, the church feeds over 3,000 kids every week and the goal is to feed 10,000 children every week by the end of the year...

In the afternoon/evening we went to Ambassador in Sport’s “Hope Academy.” After school, 39 students (mostly elementary school age) came to the soccer field for practice. The coaches served them a meal and then teach students a life lesson. The program has seven core values, including self-discipline, integrity, humility, respect, compassion, equality, and excellence. Our team was blown away by how respectful the kids act toward their coaches. Before changing into their uniforms, all of the children lined up, introduced themselves to us and shook our hands. The life lesson today involved learning and discussing what it means to have humility. After the lesson, they had a soccer practice and our team got to participate in the drills as well. Overall, we have had a great first day in South Africa and are looking forward to the rest of our time here.

(post by Sam)

**Day 2**
On our second day in South Africa, our group left the hotel at 6:30 in the morning to drive to a Montessori school to run soccer clinics for the students. Throughout the morning, we divided into groups and ran a series of soccer stations, including skills training, shooting, dribbling and passing. The students were between the ages of 5-12. Before the students rotated to the next station, we talked to them about the connection between soccer skills and life skills. We encouraged kids to cheer each other on, to focus on their dreams and goals and to give 100 percent effort in all that they do.

In the afternoon, we traveled to the impoverished Mamelodi Township, where Ambassadors in Sport are trying to start another Hope Academy at the local school. Most of the kids at the school did not know much English, but despite this language barrier, they all understood the language of soccer. We were able to be unified through this sport, sharing smiles and laughs and hugs with many of the kids while kicking around the ball before their practice started. We divided into groups and helped the coaches of Ambassadors run a clinic for 60 students, all U13 boys and girls, and all passionate about soccer. At each station, we connected soccer to a specific life skill again. When the students dressed into their practice clothes and stepped onto the field, many of them did not have any shoes. They practiced for two hours in their bare feet, running around on the rugged field that somewhat resembles our own practice field … and ignoring the many instances of being stepped on by their teammates. Toward the end of the practice, the students separated into teams while we refereed their scrimmages.

(post by Chelsea)

**Day 3 — Game Day!**
Today we got to sleep in a little bit! We had breakfast at 8:15 a.m. and then headed out to the same township we had held the clinic at yesterday. We were playing a local team, composed of girls from ages 15-22. The game was supposed to start at 10 a.m., but started on South African time … about 45 minutes later. Our squad included a guest player named Happiness. She was 13 and she trained in a youth pool for the national team!

The game was a blast. The other team was strong and not afraid to push us around! We definitely had a fan club, as several of the kids who were at the clinic yesterday lined the field. Chelsea was a minor celebrity and a fan favorite. Every time she touched the ball, the kids yelled for “Capella,” the African name they had given her yesterday. When she scored the first goal, the crowd went wild! Shannon’s goal (the game-winner) was pronounced as “TV stuff” because it was so good. The whole team played well and also made some fast friends. After the game, we greeted the girls, especially the ones who had the same number.

(post by Sarah)

**Day 5**
This morning we were off on an adventure to the Lion and Rhino Park. It was amazing to see the majesty of God embodied in his creatures. After the park we headed back to Tuks’ fields. We were excited, but a little bit nervous—we were supposed to train with the Tuks team, the team we watched scrimmage the other day. We had no idea how the practice would go. We walked past the U16 and U17 girls’ national team and sat at the edge of a field next to three Tuks girls. The rest arrived as we put on our gear, and their coach introduced us.
Practicing under the lights on a great soccer field is amazing no matter the country, but it was given an extra boost of awesomeness since we were doing it in South Africa. The Tuks girls were extremely nice, and made us feel welcome right away. We started off with some dynamic stretching, but they did the moves on a beat like they were dancing … some of us struggled! We ended the practice with a scrimmage which was great fun. Throughout the whole practice, players chatted and learned about each other, and afterwards exchanged contact info. The team members said they were very interested in coming to the United States to do a soccer tour.

The members of Tuks really showed us love in how they welcomed us and how they played. Their coach came to Christ through Ambassadors and tries to bring Christian principles to the team—she wants her team to play for an audience of one, just like we do. The whole experience exemplified how soccer is a universal language—a truism that has been confirmed so many times this trip. It was great to be able to play with the team and build some bonds that will hopefully continue in the future.

(post by Holly)

The women posed for a picture after practice with the Tuks

**DAY 7**

Wednesday was our first day working at Fellowship Christian Bible School in Cape Town. We spent the morning in orientation with Pastor Danny who told us a little bit about the history of the church and school and then took us on a short drive through the shanty town where most of the kids live. The conditions are heartbreaking. Besides the terrible physical living conditions, unemployment and crime rates are very high. Despite their circumstances, however, the FBC School children are full of energy, enthusiasm and joy. I know our team has been extremely impressed with the church’s approach to the problems facing this community. They not only educate the children, but also focus on morals, nutrition and emotional stability. The growth they have seen in the kids is unbelievable.

After our orientation, we headed out to the soccer field to set up. In the morning we worked with the 4th – 7th grade boys, and in the afternoon we worked with the younger boys and the 4th – 7th grade girls. The boys had a lot of natural talent and enjoyed playing competitively against each other and against our team. Our afternoon session with the girls had to be ended early since many of the younger children had finished school and were literally attacking us trying to steal the soccer balls away from us. It was very frustrating and definitely wore us out. BUT, despite the chaos, our team has continued to focus on our call to serve at this school this week.

(post by Sam)

**DAY 8**

Thursday was our second day at the school. We were much more prepared and organized, which paid off. Because of rain, we played under the roof of an old manufacturing warehouse where the school is located. We started with the younger girls, playing games like hopscotch, head it/catch it and a short-sided game with huge blow-up soccer balls. It went really well—they were laughing and smiling and enjoyed a nice break from school.

In the afternoon, we focused more on soccer with the older boys and girls. Even on our makeshift field, they played well and really got into the game. The boys loved playing against each other and made the games very competitive. As a team, we also practiced a few skits for the Friday morning assembly at the school.

(post by Sam)

**DAY 9**

On Fridays, the kids get out of school early around noon. We spent the morning with them running tournaments. Thankfully, it was sunny again, and despite the soggy ground we could play on the grass. We used the portable soccer field to create a field for 5 v. 5 and 6 v. 6 games.

One of coolest things about the last day was how happy one of the boys was while playing soccer with us. When he first came to the school, he never smiled. At home, he deals with physical abuse on a daily basis and often steps in to protect his mother. Because of this background, his pure joy in soccer is striking—when playing; he is totally absorbed and focused. He was also the most skilled player we’ve come across.

After the tournament, we had a farewell luncheon with the teachers where we gave them each a gift bag. We enjoyed talking with them a little, as we’ve mostly worked with the children. They pour a lot of time and energy into the school every day.

(post by Holly)

After finishing our day at the school, we arranged to go to Table Mountain, knowing this would likely be the last day of decent weather while we are here. Pastor Danny dropped us right at the base of the mountain at a trailhead, the hike was difficult, but it was just about right for us to finally reach the top and feel like we had really accomplished something. And then once you get to the top, the hard part is forgotten and you just focus on the sheer beauty surrounding you. There is a virtual 360 degree view at the top that includes mountain ranges, a look over the city of Cape Town and the ocean. And to top it off, the clouds were moving very fast off the ocean, changing the look of everything so, seeing something one minute could be seeing a very different thing a few minutes later.

After an afternoon basking in the beauty of God’s creation, we spent the evening seeing a very different part of it. Even though
God is sovereign over every square inch of His creation, man has made a mess of much of it. We met at the church for a night of prayer. After opening with some worship, we went in cars with people from the church for a prayer drive through the town. We would stop at various places to pray for a particular concern, asking God to intervene and praying for people who are lost in sin. Our eyes were opened to the stark realities of sin, none of them unique to this city. We ended the trip at another church right in the city that has a huge ministry on the streets of the city. We met the pastor who told us all about the ministry then got to pray for their ministry.

I was very encouraged by the willingness of the church to engage in the task of “standing in the gap” for the city. It is not often that I think in terms of being a prayer warrior for my town or state or anything bigger my immediate surroundings. I was also struck by the fact that there are plenty of places in the United States that have these same problems, and here I am praying for the city of Cape Town, yet I have never prayed for the cities in my own country. It definitely was a good time to wrestle with some more things that God is opening my/our eyes to on this trip.

(post by Coach)

DAY 10

After spending three days at the school, our team decided to go back today to help Pastor Danny and his wife clean up the old manufacturing warehouse next to the school. There were several piles of rotted wood, tons of broken glass and enough dirt to fill a couple of wheelbarrows. After clearing out the wood piles, we swept the floors (this was a really big building), and used a power washer to finish the job. Despite the torrential downpour, the girls worked hard and got a lot accomplished. At the end of the day, Pastor Danny’s wife told us she now feels comfortable enough to let all of the children play in the building during recess. Although the work was really tiring (and everyone was soaked/cold to the bone), it felt really good to clean up an entire building enough for the children to be able to play soccer in when the weather is bad.

(post by Sam)

DAY 11

Sunday morning we woke up early and attended the FBC church service. Despite the low temperatures and the pouring down rain, we were excited to worship with the members of the church. Our team led a few worship songs and performed a skit for the congregation. Shannon and Chelsea also shared their testimonies.

In the afternoon, we traveled to Paarl to play a game against a local club team. Since the fields were unplayable because of the rain, we actually had the opportunity to play 5 v. 5 on an indoor turf field. The field had been built by a group of Christian British businessmen who had visited the area several years ago. The team we played was part of a soccer ministry group that got started in an attempt to battle high rates of teen pregnancy by encouraging more young girls to play soccer. The club team we played against was living proof that the program had accomplished its goal. Almost all of the girls on the other team had friends who already had several children, but none of them had ever been pregnant.

We ended up winning by a significant number of goals, but we were impressed by the other team’s positive attitude and desire to compete. The game was a lot of fun and we enjoyed talking and praying with the girls afterwards. In our prayer time, the other team actually prayed the Lord’s Prayer in their native language. I am not sure why, but I always think there is something powerful about hearing a prayer in another language. I get the same feeling when I play soccer in another country. It’s incredible that we can come from such different backgrounds, families, races, languages, skill-levels, education levels, etc., yet still pray to the same God and play the same soccer game.

(post by Sam)
time spent at this beach was a blessed ending to our trip as we revealed in the beauty and power of God, but also as we simply laughed and enjoyed each other's company on the final day of our trip.

After the trip to the beach, we visited the markets once again to shop around for any souvenirs we may want to bring back home. May it be noted this is the market where Molly bought her ‘cow tusk’ and where Sam purchased her famous giraffe she used as a model in the rest of her pictures of the trip!

The end of the day was spent at a modern African restaurant called Moyo (the same place visited by each of the GCC teams on the last night of their trips). Here, we enjoyed a true African experience. The night started out with laughs as each one of our faces were painted with white dots in some sort of intriguing design. Next, we enjoyed the fine food of true African descent which consisted of springbok sausage, antelope and many more African dishes and desserts. During this dinner, we recalled all of the memories and relationships we had made in the past two weeks. It was our very last planned event of the trip and one that will be remembered.

(post by Bethany)

The Final Day
We packed up our luggage and mentally prepared for our journey home. Before our drive back to the airport, Coach shared a final devotion with us where she recognized each of us and how she saw God use us throughout the trip. Bethany:

THE IMPACT OF SOUTH AFRICA ON US

LAURA SHIPLEY – 2007 Trip
In South Africa, I learned a lesson that continues to affect me today: make the most of every opportunity the Lord gives you to share the Gospel. I was so blessed by the people’s willingness to hear our message. Unlike many wealthy nations, they understood their worldly poverty as their need for the Lord and not their need for material possessions. The Lord used my experience in South Africa to lead me to an internship with Ambassadors in Sport in the UK after my graduation.

COURTNEY (SICHER) SHINDELDECKER – 2007 Trip
I believe our trip to South Africa had every bit as big a spiritual impact on us, both individually and as a team, as we hoped it had on AIS and the people they reach out to. Culturally, we witnessed the deep problems and pain of a country much different from our own. We showed up and just tried to love people, and in doing so, we saw and were part of the very same Gospel we had known most of our lives at work in a culture we were struggling to even understand. The love of Jesus crosses all boundaries. And I think it did us a lot of good to meet Christians in South Africa and see their (dancing, touching, super thankful) joy! As a team, I think it helped us want to be a part something much bigger than just ourselves when we returned to the U.S., and it at least helped me remember (and motivated me to act on) the fact that we were more than just a team, but also a witness.

CARA COLLEY – 2010 Trip
Our trip to South Africa was my first experience with incorporating a sport with missions. I learned that not only can it be done, but it can be an effective tool on the mission field. Because of our mutual passion for the world’s favorite game, we were able to connect and bond with the other teams we played with and the kids we coached. God allowed those small bonds between us to work for His greater plan by opening the doors of trust. Now I am better able to appreciate when I hear people refer to soccer as “the beautiful game” because, to me, it means so much more—it amplifies God’s glory.

MICHELLE PECK – 2007 and 2010 Trips
Going to South Africa with the team transformed what it meant to me to be a Christian athlete. I had the perspective that being a soccer player who happened to be Christian was enough. The Lord taught me on the trip that we are called to glorify God on the field in how we play and interact with opponents, teammates, and referees. The team came back from the trip desiring to be significant, not just successful.

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Shannon Bishop
Chelsea Tarolli
Bethany Kolodziej
Kristi Lathrop
Sam Weber
Holly Spofford
Molly Weitzel
Sarah Flenniken
Micaela Carter
Coach Lamie

2010 Trip Roster
Michelle Peck
Bethany Preston
Cara Colley
Emily Hurley
Christen Villimont
Morgan Osterhouse
Arielle Goyzueta
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Opponent</th>
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<td>TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 9</td>
<td>PAC Championships</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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* PAC match
% Gettysburg Classic
^Senior/Parents Day
# Double-header game

Please join us during Homecoming weekend for a celebration of the Grove City College soccer family! On Friday, October 4, there will be a women’s and men’s doubleheader against Waynesburg with the women playing at 2 p.m. and the men’s game to follow. The men’s team is celebrating their 75th season of soccer here at GCC, so come and support both teams! Then on Saturday, the 5th, we will play our women’s alumni game at 8:30 a.m., followed by the men’s alumni game. We will have brunch at my house following our game on Saturday. Please make an effort to join us for this fun family event!