

Laura Kyte & Fabio Gonzalez  
Cachi, Salta, Argentina  
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Between us, Fabio and I have covered a fair amount of air and road mileage, with various commitments taking us from **Cachi to Salta, Jujuy, Rosario and Buenos Aires**. I rounded off a couple of months ago mentioning that Fabio would be competing in the National Athletics Championships, representing and expected to gain a medal for the Salta province. Unfortunately, as can be the nature of race-walking, he was **disqualified**, which was disappointing having made the trip. A couple of weeks later I journeyed to the capital in search of personal bests and comeback from illness, and was also left frustrated with some under-par performances, a long way off the brilliant form I showed back in March. However, some successful results for our **little Conquerors** gave us much to celebrate!

We organised an athletics tournament in **Cachi** at the beginning of May, with the idea of taking a group to compete at the end of the month in **Salta**. This attracted a handful of newcomers, but as often happens, only a very select number remain consistent, especially as temperatures; don't forget we are in winter here in the Southern Hemisphere! We **pray** that our indecisive teenagers might find their enthusiasm again; however, we **give thanks** to God for our two highly talented and highly motivated "babies" of the group, **CY and LG**, and the ever-consistent and experienced **PG**, whose hard work and dedication continues to pay off as he was recently crowned **National u-18 Champion** in Mendoza over the 10.000m race-walk.



Fabio and 14 athletes en route to Salta, May 21st



Fabio, LG, CY and GY (CY's Dad) in Jujuy, May 22nd



PG comes out on top, Mendoza, May 28th

With winter finally here to stay, in athletic terms, this must mean...

cross-country! We held Cachi's first ever **cross-country** race for the younger age groups at the beginning of June, which attracted nearly 30 participants, a very positive number. We are also about to begin the preliminary rounds of the annual national **"Evita Games"**, culminating in a multi-sport finale held in **Mar**



XC Cachi style! Typically sunny (and cold!), and never short of a hill or two...

**del Plata**, the host city for the 1995 Pan American Games. Many of our less consistent teenagers will participate, although our star athletes above are either just that bit too young or too old to participate! We **pray** that this would re-ignite some enthusiasm of those that have drifted since mid-May, as in addition to their results or fitness, we desire to **support** them both on and off the track.

This vision for supporting athletes is what has led us both into the area of **Sports Chaplaincy**, and I have been so privileged to serve during two Parapan and one Pan American Games. **Prayer** is still required about whether or not I and other international chaplains recommended will be going to the **Olympic and/or Paralympic Games** in **Rio**. We initially had some good news, but just a couple of days later we were back to a “we know nothing” situation.



Looking beyond **Rio**, there is plenty to be praying for in the area of serving athletes. Some of you may know that my Verité Sport “boss” Stuart has fantastic relationships with many athletes and British Athletics workers. We pray that a door may open for some chaplains available during the **World Athletics Championships** that will take place in **London** during July and August, starting with the Para Athletics Championships, followed by the IAAF Championships. These dates potentially coincide with a big trip back to the UK to see you all...so it would be wonderful to be part of it.

Whilst in **Buenos Aires**, I began to wonder about chaplaincy at the **2018 Youth Olympics** which the city will host. I mentioned this to a knowledgeable chaplaincy contact, and he informed me that there is a different system for the Youth Olympics put in place by the International Olympic Committee, due to the fact that the athletes are under 18. Instead of volunteer chaplains, each delegation selects an “**Ambassador**” to act as a mentor, usually a current or past Olympic athlete. However, he suggested we continue to communicate and think about ways in which the local church could support the event and offer to serve, without there being any intention to overstep boundaries that are in place.

Finally, in South American terms, the **2019 Pan/Parapan American Games** will take place in the Peruvian capital of **Lima**, and we think this would be a good opportunity for Fabio to gain experience as a chaplain at an international event, sharing his experiences and walk with the Lord as a professional athlete, having reached the Pan American Games himself back in 2011.

Going back to sporting results, I am happy to say that despite a frustrating start to competition, I did manage a big **PB** in my last race (10.000m, that’s 25 laps of the track), which I was thankful for, and so in the same way that I ended a spell of racing on a higher note, it is a blessing to end this update in the same way, recalling the great lesson of perseverance: “[...] let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith” **Hebrews 12.1-2**.



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