

People and Places

Stories of Young Bahá'í Sportsmen

Olympic triple-jumper Nelson Evora

“Nelson Evora hurtles through the air” says a newspaper report about a Bahá'í who lives in Portugal. Nelson does the triple jump, which is like an enormous hop, skip and jump. He is also very good at long jump.

Nelson has won many gold medals in junior athletic competitions in Europe. And this year he was representing Portugal and competing in the Olympic Games against people from all over the world.

Nelson was born in a group of islands called Cape Verde, off the west coast of Africa. When he was five years old, he and his parents left and went to live in Portugal. Nelson had never heard about Bahá'u'lláh, but in the apartment below him lived a Bahá'í called Mr Ganco. Mr Ganco was an athletics coach and he helped Nelson to jump so brilliantly. He also told him about the Bahá'í Faith and Nelson became a Bahá'í.

“The Bahá'í community has helped me, supported me, and give me confidence to strive to do my best in sports and in aspects of life,” said Nelson.

His coach says Nelson is responsible, humble, good-humoured and helpful. In fact, he is a star!



Wimbledon tennis player Miles Kasiri

A young Bahá'í sportsman reached the finals of the boys' tennis championship at Wimbledon in England this year. Miles Kasiri nearly beat the junior number one player in the world.

Miles says that he has been helped to become so good at tennis because of the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith about self-discipline, being positive and striving



for excellence.

“That’s essential if you are going to be a good athlete,” he said. “It helps me to have a good work ethic and really strive to do my best. And the fact that Bahá'ís don’t drink alcohol is very important if you are going to keep fit.”

Miles was 11 years old when he played in his first international competition.



American baseball player Khalil Greene

This year a Bahá'í called Khalil Green was named as the top amateur player of the year in the United States. As well as training every day, Khalil says he makes sure to always pray every day and read from the Writings. In newspaper articles, reporters describe him as being devoted to the Bahá'í Faith, obeying its moral teachings, and being calm and humble. They say his team mates respect him and everyone loves him.



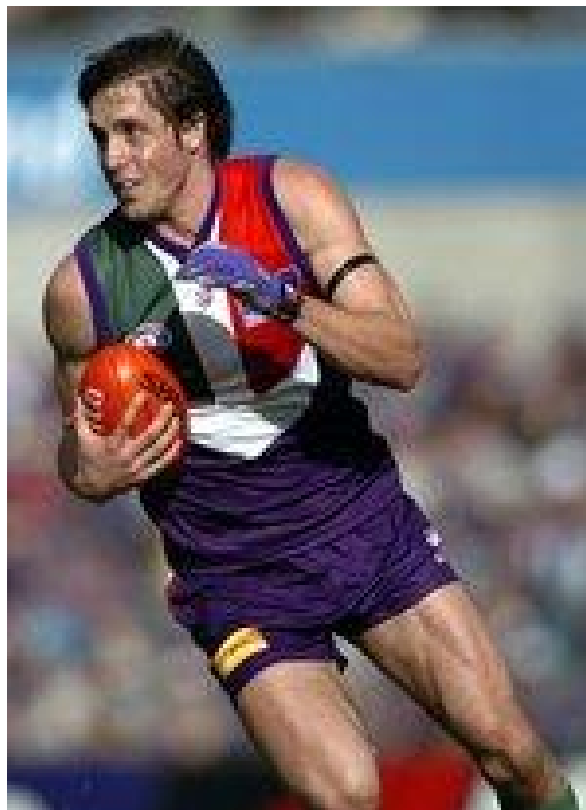
Australian footballer Luke McPhalin

Luke McPhalin plays a special kind of football, which is only played in Australia. It has its own rules. There is a lot of high leaping for the ball and needs skills in kicking and catching while running at speed.

Luke plays centre half-back. Although he is a top player where he lives and enjoys football, he says, "Sport is just one aspect of life—as Bahá'ís we should endeavour to develop all our capacities."

And Luke does just that. As well as practising his football, he is also involved in study circles and visiting the Bahá'í junior youth as often as possible to give

talks. And he plays the guitar, writes songs and sings. His music has been played on major sport television programmes in Australia and many copies of his CD have been sold.



"Do harm to nobody; pray for all; try to make your light shine in the world and let your banner fly high in the Heavens."

'Abdu'l-Bahá