

A Review of Game Changer Sports Ministry Inc.

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I had the pleasure of speaking with Mr. Martin Martinosky, president and founder of a sports ministry called Game Changer. Marty did not accept Christ until his senior year of high school. After that God placed him in different ministry positions with just youth in general and then specifically with athletes. Because God placed Marty in positions to ministry to athletes early on, he was able to learn that ministering to athletes is a lot different than ministering to non-athletes. He said that athletes “like to be challenged and they like to know what it means to play for Christ” (Martinosky, 2020). Before founding his own sports ministry, Marty worked for Fellowship of Christian Athletes. While he was involved with FCA Marty saw how a sports ministry works and determined what he might change if he were to create his own.

Game Changer is a non-denominational ministry that was created over 3 years ago by student-athletes. In their first year as a ministry Game Changer worked on setting everything up; Marty describe their first year as very administrative. They were working on their ministry model and fleshing out their mission. Game Changer’s mission is “to encourage students through the gospel so they may become loyal followers and teammates of Jesus Christ” (Martinosky, 2020). Teammates of Jesus Christ, those words made a big impact on me. We are not supposed to be bystanders in the kingdom of God. We are to be active members, striving alongside Christ and other Christians to accomplish God’s plan.

Game Changer not only emphasizes being a great teammate to Christ but also a great teammate to your team. To really push these messages forward, an acronym was created by a dedicated student athlete. These became Game Changer’s Team Values:

TEAMWORK

We will work to lift teammates and others in expressing our unity in Christ. "Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor."

Romans 12:10

EXCELLENCE

We will strive for excellence. Excellence means doing our very best in all we do.

"So, whatever you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." 1

Corinthians 10:31

AUTHORITY

We will submit to authority of The Bible, Christ, our parents, coaches, and teammates. "Commit your way to the Lord: trust in Him, and He will act." Psalm

37:5

MATURITY

We will demonstrate Christ-like maturity in our decisions and actions. "Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - His good pleasing and perfect will." Romans 12:2

(Game Changer Sports Ministry Inc., 2019)

These Team Values outline how all Christian athletes should act on and off the field. By starting with such a strong foundation, Game Changer set themselves up for success. During their first year, while they were working on the administrative side, they were also able to run a few camps and clinics. They did this just to see how the community would respond. Thankfully,

it was a positive response and the next year they were able to partner with a few high schools. Year three was where things really took off for Game Changer. They were able to run full blown camps for lacrosse, softball, and volleyball. Although this year has been rough, because of COVID, and they were only able to hold a volleyball camp over the summer, Game Changer is still working with 9 high schools and 4 college campuses.

Game Changer is mainly focused in the Western PA area but because of their fantastic reputation they have been asked to set up camps and Teams all over the place. From Central and Eastern PA, to seven other states, and even to two other countries. The word about Game Changer spread very quickly because of their truly apparent love of Christ and their passionate love of athletics.

One of the big reasons Game Changer has been successful is their ministry model. Game Changer has two different areas that they work. First, they work with different schools or college campuses creating groups they call Teams. Every time a new Team is formed at a school they are given a starter pack. This starter pack “includes a table banner, school-themed wrist bracelets, t-shirts, literature, and starting budget” (Martinovsky, 2020). All these amazing things come at no cost to the school, but that is not all the school’s new Team receives. Game Changer is also passionate about helping these programs to be successful they do this in two main ways. First, they provide full team building training and they walk the Team leaders through what it looks like to use social media as a tool for the gospel. Game Changer is also very passionate about showing Teams how to sustain themselves. So, they teach each Team how to fundraise. With the money they fundraise the Team can have pizza and snacks during their meetings. If there is one thing I know about athletes, it is that they love food. So, having food at your meetings is a great way to get athletes to come and a great way to keep them coming.

Game Changers second model is what they do with their summer sports camps. These camps are not your typical athletic summer camp. Game Changer packs their camps full of amazing activities to keep you busy and leave you exhausted by 11pm. Also, at these camps you will receive “top notch training from top notch coaches” (Martinosky, 2020). These camps are for athletes who love their sport and want to get better. The coaches will push you every day and not only improve your physical skills but also your tactical knowledge. Along with the high-quality sports training you will also get a true summer camp experience. Game Changer partners with Camp Allegany and can provide horseback riding, great food, fun bonfires along with so many other fun activities. You will leave the camp as a better athlete and with a stronger Christian faith.

Game Changer has only been around for a little over 3 years, but God has already opened so many doors for expansion. Every donation they receive goes to benefit the students they work with. Game Changer has also been able to partner with 6 other sports ministries to bring their Teams the best training and resources for growth. Game Changer works with an organization called SOS that works very closely with referees. They use the camping facilities of Camp Allegany and Jumonville. These facilities allow Game Changer camps to include all the fun things like horseback riding and campfires along with their amazing athletic training and of course their ministry.

Game Changer’s goal at each camp is to “use the sports platform to bring students into a relationship with the King” (Martinosky, 2020). That is their philosophy of ministry. Their camps have everything including a high level of training, fun non-sport related activities, and a goal to bring each student close to Christ. That sounds like the kind of camp I want to go to and a camp I would recommend to others. Along with the ability to offer such a great summer camp

experience Game Changer can also build an amazing Team in your own school, college, or university.

This sports ministry is providing high level training in both athletics and the gospel. Game Changer's core verse is 1 Corinthians 9:25 "Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever." This verse appeals to the athlete in me. We work hard with a goal in mind, that goal could be a personal goal, to get better at a certain skill, or a team goal, to win the conference or get to a certain round in the NCAA tournament. Whatever your goal, every athlete understands that a lot of work goes into achieving that goal. The same thing goes for our faith. Strict training is something all athletes understand and that makes it easy to transfer it to other areas of their lives.

Game Changer's vision is to support and develop students and coaches through the teachings of the Holy Bible, taking their talents to a higher level (Martinosky, 2020). This sports ministry understands that it is a hard journey to becoming not just an athlete but a Christian athlete, and they understand that it cannot happen overnight. Building a relationship with Jesus Christ is the most important decision anyone can make. So, they will come help you the whole way. Game Changer will be there to first plant the seed but then also come along side you and help you grow as a person and as a Team.

References

Game Changer Sports Ministry Inc. (2019). Entire website. Retrieved Oct 25, 2020.

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