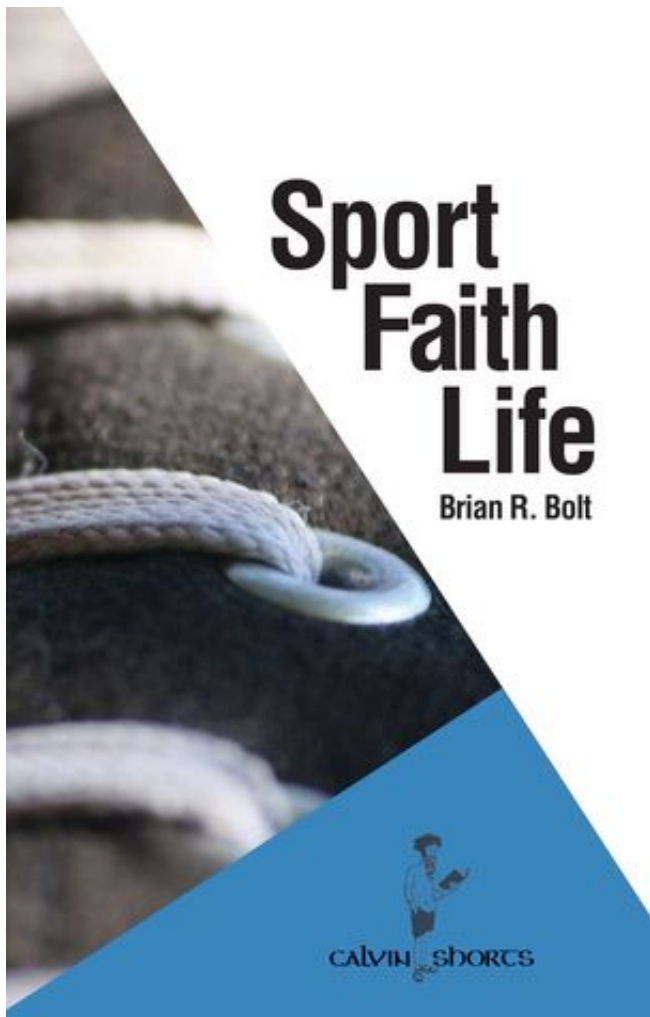


# Sport. Faith. Life.



Sport at its best points us toward a future of play and delight.

Sport is something we do, an experience that is hard to describe because it captures our whole selves. The experience draws us in and brings us back, day after day, season after season. We love to play—and yes, to win, or at least to invest enough of ourselves to have a chance. God’s world includes the myth-like space where sport resides, where we celebrate our humanness, our desire to be excellent, and our need to belong. Sport at its best points us toward a future of play and delight. And God is there with us, in every leap, backflip, tackle, spike, and slap shot.

Sport can train us, educate us, change us, for better or for worse, but that is really not the point. First and foremost, sport is part of a truly abundant life for those who love to play. The meaning of sport is not primarily in its use but in its practice. Sport is something we do, something we experience. Christians know that God delights in the world—including sport. As we experience sport, we participate in that delight by honoring the game, authentically competing, and getting a taste of the freedom that Jesus Christ offers.

## Reviews

"It isn't easy to answer the question: How does a Christian engage in sport? In *Sport. Faith. Life.* Brian Bolt provides guidance that is crystal clear. Drawing from deep theoretical arguments and popular examples, this book is both intellectually sound and amazingly accessible. Every Christian and every sports fan needs a copy!"

—Chad Carlson, Associate Professor of Kinesiology and Assistant Men's Basketball Coach, Hope College

"Recent years have seen an exponential increase in academic publications, conferences and Church-based initiatives surrounding the relationship between sports and the Christian faith. What has been missing, however, is 'accessible' literature (informed by academic research) for sports participants, Christian ministers, coaches, chaplains, parents, and administrators. Professor Brian Bolt's new and timely book, *Sport. Faith. Life.*, helps fill this gap and I unreservedly recommend the book and its author."

—Dr. Nick J. Watson, Associate Professor, Sport and Social Justice, York St John University, UK

"Brian Bolt's book captures the core of sport and the heart of Christian faith, avoiding simplistic platitudes on both sides of the conversation. Refusing to overplay or underplay the significance of sport, this book invites us to move deeper into the created goodness of our physical and competitive selves, and to be open to glimpsing parables of redemptive grace amidst the sweat, injury, exhilaration, frustration, and triumph of sport."

—Dr. Matthew D. Lundberg, Calvin College, Professor of Religion

"While Brian Bolt admits he would rather play sports than read or write about it, he has eloquently and engagingly written about the seemingly hardwired relationships between sport, faith, and life. Throughout his relevant examples and chapters, Bolt adeptly walks the tightrope of sports' seeming contradictions and parallels with Judeo-Christian notions of good and evil, utility and perversion. Bolt leads readers through excellent insights and spot-on evaluations for anyone of faith to more profoundly consider their relationship with sport. This book is ideal for prompting public conversations and would be especially relevant for Christian book clubs and academic conversations on sport and religion—as it tasks readers to consider the role these two major cultural activities have in our lives today."

—Andrew R. Meyer, Baylor University, Assistant Professor of Sport Foundations

"What does it look like for Christians to ponder the perplexing paradoxes of sports, namely the bright side and dark side of sports? Fair and Foul? Serious and Non-serious? Competitive and Cooperative? Winners and Losers? Bolt invites his readers on a journey to consider the contested, complex site of sports and to reflect on their own lived experiences in sports. He aims at starting a deeper conversation about who we are as humans and the kind of people we are becoming in relation to what and how we love sports as we freely and meaningfully enter the make-believe

world of sports. This book asks us to see sport as both delightfully unimportant and seriously demanding as we virtuously pursue excellence together and receive the gifts of sport in gratitude to God.”

—John B. White, Baylor University, Associate Professor of Practical Theology and Ethics

“Brian Bolt’ s book captures the complex relationship between sport and faith and how integral both are in the world we live in. Being a coach, more specifically a Christian coach, this book does an incredible job in making one assess and think about how and why to lead players in competition on and off the court. While it is getting more common to find literature addressing these complex components, *Sport. Faith. Life.* does a wonderful job of providing real-life stories that happen in the lives of athletes and teams. I highly recommend this book to anyone leading a group of athletes in competition.”

—Amber L. Warners, Ph.D., Calvin College, Professor of Kinesiology and Volleyball Coach

## About the Author

[Dr. Brian R. Bolt](#) is a professor of kinesiology and men’ s golf coach at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Bolt’ s academic work focuses on philosophy, psychology, and skill acquisition in kinesiology and sport. He serves as an academic mentor for students in sport management, physical education teaching, and coaching. On the golf course, his team celebrated its first-ever MIAA title in 2010 and first trip to the NCAA Division III Championships in 2011. Since then, they’ ve added two more titles (2013, 2017) and more qualifications for Division III national tournaments. Bolt serves as the co-director of the Sport and Christianity Group who recently authored [“A Declaration on Sport and the Christian Life.”](#) Bolt’ s research and leadership connecting sport and Christianity have made him a sought-after voice, both as speaker and writer, in his local community and internationally.

More information about the author and