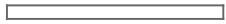


Wayland athletes share basketball tips, gospel message in Europe

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Wayland
Baptist
University
Pioneers
basketball
player
Michal
Polanowski
is
interviewed
by members
of the
media in his
home town
of Konin,
Poland.
Polanowski
and
members of
the
Pioneers
traveled to
Europe this
summer to
work with
Athletes in
Action.
(Photos
courtesy of
Wayland
Baptist
University)

Wayland athletes share basketball tips, gospel message in Europe

By Jonathan Petty

Wayland Baptist University

VILNIUS, Lithuania—Wayland Baptist University’s Pioneers basketball team took time out this summer to spread the gospel—and teach basketball skills—to young people in Lithuania and Poland.

Five Pioneers team members—Danny Storey, Michal Polanowski, Zach TeGrotenhuis, Lee Berend and Jason Griffin—joined Head Coach Robert Davenport and Assistant Coach Quinn Wooldridge in leading a weeklong basketball camp in Vilnius, Lithuania.



Wayland Baptist University Pioneer Danny Storey of Canyon talks with a group of young men during a basketball camp in Vilnius, Lithuania. Storey and the Pioneers led a weeklong camp in conjunction with Athletes in Action.

The Wayland mission volunteers worked with Athletes in Action. The group usually operates two camps in Vilnius each summer, but usually only coaches participate.

“We kind of personalized the camp for the kids because our players were there,” Davenport said.

The Pioneers spent several days with the campers teaching them the basketball fundamentals and sharing their Christian testimonies.

“It was really neat to watch the relationships between those kids and our kids,” Davenport said. “It’s just like our camps here—the kids get attached to them. There were about 35 kids in the camp, and probably half of them asked us to come back next year.”

Next, the team traveled to team member Polanowski’s hometown, Konin, Poland. Local response to Polanowski surprised the other Pioneers.

“Little did we know that Mike is a legend in his hometown,” Davenport said. “It is a city of about 100,000 people. Mike is the real deal there. We all thought that was pretty neat, and we gave Mike a hard time about it.”

While his teammates enjoyed sightseeing and eating the bountiful meals prepared by his parents, Polanowski was interviewed by local newspapers and television stations. At one point, Polanowski related his Christian testimony in for a video that will be used by Athletes in Action throughout his homeland.

“It was kind of neat to see things like that,” Davenport said. “We see Mike every day, and Mike is a great guy and does good things. But back in his home country, it’s amazing how big he is and how much of an influence he can really have.”

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