



The Vindicator

Athletics ministry vs. local inmates

Saturday, August 16, 2008

The games are not open to the public.

STAFF REPORT

YOUNGSTOWN — The Saints Prison Ministry, a nonprofit organization that seeks to reach inmates for Jesus Christ through athletics, will play locally.

The Saints play inmate teams in softball, basketball, soccer and women's volleyball and then present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to them right on the playing field. The team will travel to eight prisons in or near Ohio to play 14 games between Wednesday and Aug. 24.

On Aug. 23, they will visit the Ohio State Penitentiary in Youngstown and Trumbull Correctional Institute in Leavittsburg. The games are not open to the public, Rebekah Bailey, director of communications for the ministry, said Thursday.

Since 1987, The Saints have played more than 1,900 games in 300 prisons in 25 states and Canada. During that time over 17,000 prisoners have made professions of faith in Jesus Christ, according to a press release.

The Saints correspond with 25,000 inmates in more than 400 prisons across the country and around the world. The Saints Bible Correspondence School actively disciples an estimated 2,500 inmate students.

The mission of The Saints is to present the Gospel to prisoners through athletics and to provide them with opportunities for spiritual growth.

Nationally, 75 percent of ex-offenders are re-arrested within four years of their release. By comparison, the recidivism rate for Christian inmates who are disciplined and mentored post-release is 10 percent to 15 percent.

For more information on about The Saints Prison Ministry, visit, www.saintsprisonministry.org.