



How I decide what matters

As the New Year gains momentum, I have been reflecting on the lessons that have shaped how I coached not just this past year but the last few. This is especially the case as my own coaching contexts have shifted. I've begun to work more with university athletes but also with some para and masters athletes plus doing more specialized other sport training. As I have evolved, I've found my decision-making process becomes more important, especially as a 3D coach.

Here's what I've learned: once you begin to see athletes more clearly, the real work becomes deciding what matters enough to act on. Every training plan forces choices about emphasis, restraint, and priority. Over time, I learned that the quality of those choices determines whether a program holds together or slowly unravels.

Despite lots of changes, core principles remain stable over time.

If you looked at my training plans from ten years ago, you would recognise the same core structure I use today. The details have evolved, but the underlying logic has stayed intact. That continuity gives me confidence when trends come and go.

As I reflect on all of this, here are some principles that guide how I make training decisions. I hope they give you something to think about in your own coaching context.

Mechanical efficiency drives training....First Dimension

I believe strongly that mechanical efficiency should lead the conversation. Athletes who move more efficiently tend to stay healthier and tolerate training better over time. Efficiency influences how force is applied, how energy is conserved, and how the nervous system organises movement. When mechanics drift, injury risk and

performance limitations tend to follow. Training does not exist in isolation. How an athlete moves on the track, court, rink or pool reflects what happens outside the session as well. Daily habits, life stress, and therapy inputs all influence posture, rhythm, and coordination. Ignoring those factors creates blind spots when evaluating performance or fatigue.

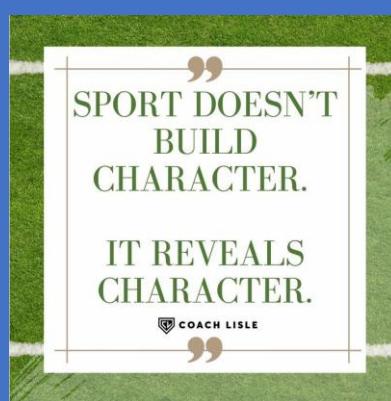
Training must match what the athlete can sustain....Second Dimension

This may seem like a First-Dimension element but it spills over. Some athletes thrive on three or four training days per week. Others tolerate more density. One top ranked athlete I work with has a very light training load. She could not handle more physically and, more importantly, emotionally. Another athlete is very high volume. He needs it to feel he has accomplished something in training. Yes, physicality impacts but the mind and what 'feels' right is equally important. These all impact confidence and drive motivation. These situations force clear decisions about what is essential and what can be removed.

Athletes provide constant feedback....Third Dimension

I listen closely to tone of voice, body language, and the questions athletes ask. Those signals tell me whether the intent of the session makes sense to them. Athletes rarely lie with their movement or their behaviour. That feedback helps refine decisions in real time. This speaks to relationship, character and value. My athletes know I care about them, so they are able to share with me what's going on. This is a key element of my program.

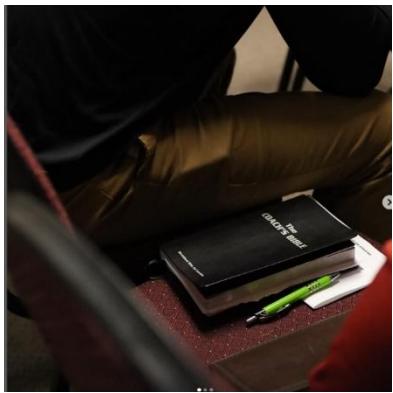
These principles grew out of years of observation, mistakes, and correction. They help me decide what belongs in the program and what quietly does more harm than good. Informed by my posture as a 3D Coach, this has helped guide me through all the different opportunities and challenges I faced in 2025. I can't wait to see what the year ahead holds. Coach, you've got this!



...this holds for coaches as well.

What character are you revealing?

This Issue's Devotion:



This issue's devotion: Joy within adversity

A question I'm often asked as a pastor (and even sometimes as a coach!) is why does God allow the things to happen that He does? Honestly, I ask the same question myself a lot and especially of late as I've gone through some difficult times. Now the experience of other pastors might be different, but I've never had anyone ask me this question when life is going well. It's kind of like this: Me: "How are things going?" You: AMAZING! I can't believe how good things are! I don't understand why God is allowing this to happen!"

Get the point?

No, it's generally in dark times... difficult times... times when you feel the world crashing around you that the question comes up. They are often times of pain.

As a coach I try to be very aware of physical pain in my athletes. I work hard to distinguish between "good pain" which is the result of appropriate training load and "bad pain" which is the sign of injury. I've also studied spiritual, emotional and psychological pain a lot in the years since I've become a pastor. I've done it because of the pain I've seen in others and the desire to help but I've also done it because of the pain I have experienced myself. So pain can be physical, emotional or spiritual, I've had them all and they all hurt....that's adversity.

I've tried to explain and rationalize them. When I'm feeling like an eminent theologian I will say something like this: there is God's moral will which we can know from the Bible. Follow that and things generally work well. Then there's God's sovereign will which we will only know in hindsight. That one's trickier and where faith comes in. Sounds pretty good and it works most of the time.

But what about when it doesn't?

The problem is when you throw in the free-will of sinful people (us included!) and how they act upon it along with a corrupted, broken world this can be a difficult question to nail down.

God himself complicates it also because He does what will glorify Him. He said "my thoughts are not your thoughts, my ways are not your ways" (Isaiah 55:8). Paul echoed this when he reminded us no one knows God's thoughts but Himself (1 Cor.2:11).

So, this leaves us with the real likelihood that at some point we're going to face adversity of some form which will cause pain. For a long time I did everything I could to avoid things that caused pain. This is a wise strategy for the most part and something I encourage. But there are times you can't avoid it: a poor decision from the past, the choice of another. It happens and then you're in a time of turmoil.

Next, I tried I tried to ride it out, to weather the storm. That wasn't too bad but it often led to fear of the thing happening. Then the Lord allowed me to injure my back (through my own foolishness by the way, though I wanted to blame Him for a while!) and after praying and meditating on it a bit I decided on a new course: I would seek joy within the adversity. I would embrace the pain (no, I'm not a masochist) and seek to learn from it. It's been an interesting journey and one that has had some surprisingly sweet and fulfilling moments. Yes, it hurts, yes, it's been frustrating at times, but not nearly as bad as in the past. But best of all, I've not only had no fear but joy throughout. While happiness is based on what happens to us, joy is based on what we do with it.

This journey ultimately led me to James 1 where he writes about dealing with adversity: Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. (James 1: 2-3)

So why does God allow us to go through adversity? I'm still not sure with 100% certainty, that's above my pay grade. He didn't promise a smooth ride, just a safe landing. I do know though in my own experience the sometimes bumpy ride has helped me to grow in ways I wouldn't have given a choice and I can rest on that. I hope you can too!



CHARITY RAFFLE TO SUPPORT FCA HOCKEY!

We are excited to invite you to be part of our upcoming charity raffle, where we aim to make a significant difference in the lives of those who need it the most through our hockey program!

RAFFLE HIGHLIGHTS

Grand Prize:
1 pair of Toronto Maple Leafs vs. Carolina Hurricanes tickets for March 20th, 2026

Other Prizes:
FCA crew neck
FCA Sports backpack
FCA Toque

Team Challenge
The top selling team will win a pizza party after the draw

To purchase tickets:


<https://tinyurl.com/fcahockey26>



DRAW DATE: **13 MARCH** **TICKETS** **\$15 PER TICKET** **3 FOR \$35**

3D Coaching Corner:



FCA Canada is excited to provide world-class training for Canadian coaches through the 3D coaching method. We are the exclusive Canadian partner of the 3D Institute which has developed this unique coaching philosophy and methodology

2nd Dimension Strategy: Motivation

I had two athletes during this past year's high school season with the same opportunity to place high enough at our conference championships they could move on to the divisional meet. This was a reasonable, achievable goal. I developed a training plan to get there. One did and the other didn't. One continues to train with me; the other has quit. What's the difference? Motivation.

Motivation, by definition, is the inclination to pursue or persist towards something with a desired outcome. It is a self-driven concept that requires commitment and effort. This speaks to the athlete's 'why' or what the reason is they are doing the sport in the first place. It can be for competitive or social reasons, each are valid. In order though to lead your athletes effectively you as the coach need to understand what is motivating them and work with that in what you do.

I'd say we all likely understand this intuitively but there is another issue to motivating the 21st century athlete I'd like to talk about a bit.

The challenge for coaches today is we live in an entitlement-based culture where athletes often believe they are inherently owed a certain end. Their motivation is then skewed by this since often they think only of the reward and not the process, or journey, to get there. The result is many are motivated by extrinsic factors which are external in nature- praise from parents, a trophy, identification. The challenge with this kind of motivation is it will never be enough. In addition, this can also have an incredibly negative impact on the mental health of the athlete if they don't get the reward.

Here's a better way to motivate: seek intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic is an internal set of motivators, driven by interest or enjoyment by the athlete. We'd call this SELF-

motivation. That means there is enjoyment in the process, or the task itself. Intrinsic motivation develops a curiosity to grow and develop that is not then based on the end goal. Yes, this is intangible and hard to measure (which drives a lot of coaches crazy!) but when you coach with this 2nd dimension strategy in mind, you'll have athletes who are ready to not just compete but train and practice for the right reasons and will push themselves. Coaches, lead out with this in mind.

Wisdom from Wooden

“Don’t let what you can’t do stop you from what you can do.” - Coach John Wooden

...if you're like me, there are lots of things going on in your coaching practice. There is a temptation to try to 'do it all'. Instead, be clear on what you can and can't

The logo consists of the words "FIT2LEAD" in a bold, sans-serif font. The "2" is smaller and positioned between "FIT" and "LEAD". The entire logo is enclosed within a thick orange rectangular border.

F I T 2 L E A D

Fit2Lead Tip

The power of sleep

Most people think of sleep as something they “should get more of.” A recent study offers a wiser perspective: the way you sleep — not just how long — quietly shapes the length of your life. When five simple habits line up, your body behaves as if it has more time.

Researchers created a simple 5-part sleep assessment, and then followed more than 170,000 adults for four years. The assessment included: getting 7–8 hours of sleep, falling asleep easily, staying asleep, waking up refreshed most days, and avoiding sleep medications.

People who checked all five boxes had a 30% lower risk of dying from any cause, including a 21% lower risk of heart-related death and a 19% lower risk of cancer death, compared to those with poor sleep patterns.

Add it all up, and the adults who met all five “healthy sleep” habits lived up to 5 years longer. And the effect held up even after adjusting for lifestyle, health conditions, and socioeconomic factors.

The researchers believe these habits reflect a body whose nightly recovery systems are working the way they’re supposed to: hormones stable, inflammation lower, stress responses calmer, and metabolism running on smoother rails. When sleep is consistently poor, those systems stay under strain, and the risks slowly accumulate.

This was an observational study based on self-reported sleep, so it can’t prove cause and effect. But the pattern is consistent, and this is far from the only study linking quality sleep to longevity.

So, want to be Fit2Lead? Develop better sleep habits. If you’re looking to improve your rest, here are a few quality checks:

- Try to sleep at least 7 hours per night, and ideally, avoid sleeping less than 6 hours
- Create a short evening routine (such as reading a book) to make it easier to fall asleep.
- If you wake up in the night often, look for triggers like late meals, drinking too much water before you sleep, caffeine, or screens.
- Try to go to sleep and wake up at a similar time each day, which will help you wake up more refreshed.

Pretty simple huh? Okay, so put them into practice and reap the benefits.



Executive Director's Corner- FCA Canada Updates

Happy New Year (I know this is a bit late)! I don't know where you're at in your coaching cycle, but I hope you are doing well, feeling content, and experiencing God's presence in this amazing mission field.

Like pretty much all charities and mission organizations, FCA Canada has to balance opportunities with resources. We have no limit to one and very limited other (I'll let you figure out which is which!). So, we continue to look for ways to maximize our impact within the confines of the resources God has given us. Strategic thinking, looking for partnerships, and staying on mission are critically important. 2026 will be no different.

With this in mind, I wanted to remind you of what we are able to do this year. We continue to offer top quality training on how to be a missional coach through our 3D Coach and 360 Coach platforms. I am still available to lead workshops and training sessions for schools, leagues and clubs. But I have also moved into doing some 1-on-1 coaching development. If any of these may be of interest to you, please let me know.

We also have some great resources such as bibles, studies on character and other topics and devotions. We continue to partner with the Bible app YouVersion to provide you with coach-focused online bible study plans. I've done several and they are excellent. You can find coaching resources here:

<https://www.bible.com/search/plans?query=coaches>

And finally, we continue to partner with churches and ministries to offer missional sports programs that can be used for outreach or for growing in discipleship. We've moved into the area of fitness and strength training beyond our traditional league offerings. In addition, we have started to move into the club sports space as well. So, if this is something you'd like to discuss (or dream about) a bit more about, let me know.

Bottom line, we continue to desire to see Jesus impact the world through the influence of coaches. We're here to help and also to walk with you. Keep letting your light shine!



We're here to help!

www.canadafca/coach

Chris Timm, Executive Director

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FCA Canada is a faith-funded ministry and so are always looking for people, churches or organizations that would be interested in partnering with us in our mission to engage, equip and empower coaches and athletes to experience the fullness of life offered through Jesus. If you, or someone you know, would be interested in exploring how you might be able to support us financially I'd love to chat with you about it.