

Mike MacKay - Manager of Coach Education and Development

Christmas List



Many people have asked me to recommend a book as a gift for coaches this Christmas. Whenever asked to recommend a book, my first response is always a notebook. Most of the great leaders that I have read about or met keep a personal notebook for constant referral. Getting in the habit of writing down what you observe is a special gift we can pass a long to someone else. Moleskine is my favorite and I buy them at Chapters. They are a little more expensive, but I like the features. I prefer small notebooks with a hard cover. This way it can fit in the pocket of my jacket, The hard cover means it will stand up to a little abuse and not lose its pages. I buy the ones with blank pages. This way I can also make sketches. The other feature is the elastic that keeps the book closed. This helps keep your pen or loose papers from falling out. Finally, it has a thread that you can use as a bookmark. By jotting down my reflections, it allows me to formulate my ideas. There is something special about the written word. It becomes permanent. You must make ensure that it sounds the way you want it too. The spoken word can be lost once verbalized. I have made this a habit since graduating university in the early 1980's. From time to time, I will look back into these old notebooks. It helps me revisit my thoughts from the past. This is especially helpful when facing problems. Remembering when I was dealing with a similar situation, I can go back and see how I worked through a problem in the past.

I do have four books that I have recently read that I highly recommend to coaches.

Outliers: The Story of Success by Malcom Gladwell. This is the same author of **Blink** and **The Tipping Point**. He makes one think about how groups of people are successful in certain endeavors. He talks about the role of circumstances and taking advantage of opportunities. He has a chapter about Canadian hockey and the effective of relative age. Those of you familiar with Canadian Sport for Life will understand this chapter and the impact of relative age on youth sport. It is a confusing idea for many people in sport today. This chapter gives one of the best explanations of the effect of cut off dates on children involved in sport.

Talent Is Overrated; What really Separates World-Class Performers From Everybody Else by Geoff Colvin. This book elaborates on the concept of 'deliberate practice'. He makes a strong argument for the importance of process goals vs. out come goals. He debunks the idea that successful people are born and not made. You strongly question current practice to competition ratios that exist in youth sport today after reading this book.

Game On by Tom Farrey. Anyone involved in youth sport needs to read this book. Whether you are a parent, coach or administrator it is a must read. The facts that he has uncovered makes one think about we do in North America to our youth. He compares attending a youth basketball game to that of a cockfight he attended in the Dominican Republic. He also goes into the history of why we have allowed these developments to take place. His chapter on AAU basketball was fascinating. He has done extensive research. He traveled to Australia to visit the AIS (Australia Institute of Sport).

How to Be Like Coach Wooden : Life Lessons from Basketball's Greatest Leader by Pat Williams. I have always enjoyed any book about coach Wooden. When I was still in high school my high school coach gave me the book, **They Call Me Coach**, written by coach Wooden. It changed my life. It was the first time that I realized that you could make a living at being a coach. In addition, there was a science to what coaches did. You had to have a plan. **Practical Modern Basketball** was the next book that I read by Coach Wooden. It is still one of the best books for a beginning coach to read who wants to aspire to a higher level. It started me thinking about developing a coaching philosophy. I also developed my love of quotes from reading coach Wooden. **Wooden: A Lifetime of Observations and Reflections on and Off the Court** is the best summary of Coach Wooden's philosophies. At first I thought this Book by Pat Williams would be just a rehash of what I have already read in the past. I was pleasantly surprised. Pat Williams has done a great job of bring some new stories and lessons to light about Coach Wooden. If you are just starting out in coaching, a book about or by Coach Wooden is a great start to help you build your philosophy and learning how to plan. He is also very good at teaching the game.

