

2228 Paradise Avenue
Coquitlam BC, V3K 1Z4

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Coquitlam Little League

Taking Baseball with Me

Playing baseball for Coquitlam Little League has been the sparkle of my spring since I was a child. From having my dad coach the T-Ball team to playing under legends like Bruce, Jim, and Jonesy, I have learned to appreciate the game in every aspect. Baseball, and the Coquitlam Little League, have influenced my growth as a person. Through teams that made it, teams that failed, from teams where I was barely contributing, to teams where I was a leader, I've discovered perseverance, determination, practice to get the results, dealing with failure and tragedy, and that it's still just a game.

When I was younger, I couldn't really hit the ball. At all. It was mostly strikeouts and weak groundballs to the second baseman. I didn't truly become a better hitter until 14, when technique and swing mechanics were introduced to me. It meant changing the way I swung, breaking old habits and creating new ones, better ones, that would allow me to drive the ball. It took an entire year of tee-work, soft toss, and BP before I saw results—second on Team BC in batting average at the national championship. After that, I became familiar with the opposite field and what solid contact feels like, something I had no clue about as a younger boy. This is one of my favourite personal stories, one that I sometimes share during interviews, as a testament to dedication, following the process, and the results that can be achieved.

Another critical experience in my time with Coquitlam Little League was Postseason, where every team had the goal of winning Canadian Nationals. I was only on four All-Star postseason teams, and we were never able to break through and get that ring. How close we came doesn't make the failures any easier to accept. Knowing that even a tiny difference in performance would have pushed you over the top can be crippling, if you let it. Baseball has taught me it takes time to get over a meaningful failure, and a little bit of forgetfulness. You cannot keep the past as your focus, because time will move on, and so will you and your life. Although I hope to never fail at anything ever again, if I do I'll have experience getting through it.

I am halfway through my university academics, studying Mechanical Engineering at UBC, and currently embarking on co-op work terms. I will keep the above experiences with me throughout my remaining two years of university and beyond. On the first day of a job, if I accidentally spill a coffee on the million-dollar proposal, I'll be sure to not dwell on it. And in the future when I am learning something new, or fixing something old, I'll make sure to slow it down, go through the process, put in the time, and get those great results.

Sincerely,
Derek Fong