







# Why JUDD gets what he deserves

**SIMON LLOYD** talks with Carlton captain Chris Judd about the grounding influences in his life, the decision-making process he went through in moving from West Coast to Carlton, his evolving leadership style, his memories of playing in two Grand Finals, attaining optimal states of arousal, and why he no longer sits on his glutes.

**A**s Chris Judd and I sat down to chat for this interview, I cast my mind back to 2001 when we first met. I interviewed Chris prior to the 2001 draft in my role as sports psychologist with Hawthorn, which had the prized first pick after trading Trent Croad to Fremantle. My role was to screen the likes of Chris and fellow potential No. 1 picks Luke Hodge and Luke Ball. Our initial chat left some clear impressions. As a 17-year-old Chris was mature beyond his years. He was an intelligent high achiever who displayed all the hallmarks of a future leader; he was acutely self-aware and propelled by a burning drive and ambition. At the time, I likened his temperament to that of Chris Grant, the then 28-year-old captain of the Western Bulldogs; he was self-assured, resilient, had a strong character, and an aura of confidence about him.

Our recent meeting reminded me of the renowned British television documentary *The Up Series*, which tracked its subjects every seven years. With an illustrious career at West Coast under his belt, Chris has returned to his hometown and is in his first year as Carlton Football Club captain. While I am somewhat greyer, he sports what has become a trademark shaved head. Many of the characteristics I saw in the 17-year-old are still evident in the 24-year-old, and added to these is a wiser, more learned perspective. While my interviews with

Matthew Richardson, Nathan Buckley and Matthew Lloyd involved veterans of the game, Chris has probably just hit the mid-point of his football career. Today, he displays an incredibly pragmatic approach to the game; he doesn't let the inevitable hype that surrounds him affect his emotions, positively or negatively; he speaks as matter-of-factly about his passion for the game as he does about the physiological aspects of maintaining his form, and he concerns himself only with what he can control. Added to this, he has an informed, scientific appreciation for optimising his performance; he regularly sees a biomechanist to improve his body movement, he is committed to nutrition for performance, and he is the only player in my 10-plus years in the industry who has spontaneously talked about applying the 'Inverted-U' hypothesis for optimum performance readiness (see page 32).

Chris is able to handle intense pressure and explains that he is at his most focused when games are close or in the balance. This narrow focus assists him to be a big game player. He also has perfectionist strivings; he sets very high personal standards and then devotes himself to realising them. He doesn't count on emotions to inspire his success, but instead adheres to a daily disciplined regime that builds his self-confidence to perform each week. In football, as in life, Chris believes you more often than not get what you deserve, and so is willing to go that extra mile to attain his goals.

**Simon Lloyd: Let's start with looking at your experiences living in Melbourne and Perth. What are the differences?**

Chris Judd: Melbourne is home, and I have a life here outside of football, so it is easier to create that balance. Whereas in Perth, I had the football club, and anyone else I knocked around with was generally associated with the club, at least to some degree. So in Perth it was probably all-consuming.

**SL: What was it like playing in a two-team town?**

CJ: When things are done well, and you are playing in Perth, you have the whole state riding the wave with you. Conversely, when things aren't so good, the whole state is down. There is just an extra emotional intensity; sometimes you get a boost from it, and sometimes you pay a price for it.

**SL: What have you enjoyed about your return to Melbourne?**

CJ: I have my family and mates with whom I grew up and attended school with here; it has been good to catch up with them. Many wouldn't know a footballer if they tripped over one. That has been good. Just living in Melbourne is great.

**SL: Were you competitive as a child?**

CJ: Yep, always competitive, particularly in athletics. My mum is very competitive.

**SL: Who are you more like, your mum or your dad?**

CJ: Mum is very competitive, so I am like her in that sense. I have more of my dad's body shape, but mum brings a bit to the table. I have her power and speed; her brothers were body builders, and on the netball court there is a bit of fire in her belly. She is that nuggety type.

**SL: I am sure your mum will be pleased you described her as nuggety. And what of your dad?**

CJ: Dad is much more relaxed, probably a bit more analytical.

**SL: Who was in your support network growing up?**

CJ: My parents, my sister and my mates. The guys I knocked around with in high school were guys I knew in primary school. I didn't play footy with them; we used to go skateboarding a lot, and get into trouble together.

**SL: What was the worst sort of trouble you got into?**

CJ: Nothing too exciting (laughs). None of the blokes I grew up with played footy; none really played organised sport. So growing up with those sorts of friends meant that I led two separate lives: the life of playing school footy or for a club, which those guys would not know anything about, and then my life away from that. It was good; it was grounding. They certainly did not look up to me because I was a footballer. A lot of those guys were much better skateboarders than me, and that mattered. When I was in their circles, I was just me, the person.



**ELITE PERFORMER:** Judd has the ability to make an impact at critical times during games.

**SL: That is really different from how you are treated by the football public. How do you feel when people turn their heads when they see you and recognise who you are? What is it like having no anonymity?**

CJ: It's just the way it is. When you are a footballer there are a lot of people who want to give you stuff, material things or their time. There are a lot of people who are happy to give that freely to you, and conversely, there are those who want to take stuff from you, like your privacy. That is one of the things you just have to accept. You have to live your life within the world the way it actually is, not how you would like the world to be. No use saying, 'That's not fair, I should be able to do this', if you know that you can't. You have to live your life within those parameters.

**SL: Have you set clear boundaries for yourself?**

CJ: I haven't written them down, but I know what I can and can't do. I live my life fully within those restrictions.

**SL: How would you describe yourself?**

CJ: Um...I don't know...

**SL: Well, how would your friends describe you, or your partner Rebecca? What would she say defines you?**

CJ: What would Rebecca say? Rebecca would say that I am driven, obsessively driven.

**SL: What would Rebecca give as an example of your obsessiveness?**

CJ: That once I say I'm going to do something, then I always do it.

**SL: Having a heightened drive has certainly been a marker in my other interviews and being around footballers in my role you realise that not all players are cut from this cloth. Many are not obsessively driven by footy. Have you always been this way?**

CJ: Yes, I think so, even with athletics.

**SL: So what drives you then?**

CJ: I am not sure...

**SL: You're not avoiding the question are you? I haven't gone too hard have I?**

CJ: (Laughs) Reading your other interviews, fear of failure was a dominant driver for all of



**“Leadership can be summed up as seeing how something can be done better and acting on it.”**



them, but I am not so sure it is so much a fear of failure for me. I like to think that if you are playing football, every time you run out on the field you are telling the people who watch you the type of person you are, the type of people your teammates are, what your group is all about. Football is fairly meaningless; we don't solve anything, so you have to derive your own meaning out of it. My meaning is self-indulgent; when I run out there, people should be able to tell the type of person I am, and the type of mates I have by the way the team plays.

**SL: How do you deal with people who don't fit into your idea of team?**

CJ: It is frustrating, but it probably depends on who the teammates are. If it is an 18-year-old, the statement they often make is, 'I am young, this is what young players do', meaning their performance can be up and down, and this is not because they are bad people or not working hard, it is because they are young and inexperienced. I suppose the response it elicits from me depends on who the person is.

**SL: What if it is a more experienced player who isn't being a team player?**

CJ: I'll remind them to continue to play their role for the team. One of the big focuses at Carlton this year is on players being willing to play any position and any role that the coach has given them, even if it is not a role they are particularly familiar with.

**SL: I spoke to you at the G3 launch earlier in the year (G3 is the new corporate hospitality company Judd has developed with long-time friend Steven Greene, the ex-Hawthorn player, and Jeremy Bouris. It offers corporates the chance to watch events behind glass, with the likes of Judd and other AFL players hosting the function). You hadn't played yet, and you said you were quite embarrassed by all the attention you were receiving. Take us through your emotions on arriving back in Melbourne.**

CJ: I did find it embarrassing. I still find it a little embarrassing how much publicity footballers get for a start, because of our relative importance to the community, and that the amount of coverage we get is so all-consuming. I was also really nervous because at that stage, with six weeks to go before the season started, I could barely raise a jog and everyone was saying, 'He is going to do this; he is going to do that. It's all going to be great now', and I knew it wasn't the case.

**SL: How did you deal with that wave of expectation?**

CJ: I dealt with the expectation by focusing on the things I could control. I was confident that there was not a shred more that I could be doing to get my groins right with the knowledge I had. It is like what every old man says to his kids, 'All you can do is your best'. So, as long as I was comfortable with myself on that point, and I was, I knew that

no man on this earth spent more time on his groins than what I did. That was enough.

**SL: I know one of the things you did for your groins that was innovative was focusing on your posture? How are you sitting at the moment?**

CJ: Yeah, I'm not bad, but you mate, hang on I can't tell too well from here (moves to look at how I am sitting). You are not too bad, but you are sitting a bit on your coccyx bones. I used to sit on the top of my glutes, but I have done hours and hours of work with Mark McGrath, a biomechanist, to fix that. I see him every Thursday for three hours, and in pre-season I was seeing him two or three times a week. On top of that, I also do yoga and Pilates.

**SL: How often would you do yoga?**

CJ: I do yoga almost every day. If not yoga, then Pilates or seeing Mark.

**SL: Were you doing that a year ago, two years ago?**

CJ: No, I just didn't have the knowledge then. I actually thought yoga might have been bad for my groins, but you don't know what you don't know. The main thing I have gained is a huge amount of knowledge about how the body works. I used to feel helpless about injuries. I'd get injured and think 'Oh shit, the only person who can fix me is the physio, or some other practitioner'. The big thing I have gained over the past 12 months is actually a bit more control over my own body, and instead of waiting for something to go wrong, I have actually got some preventive measures in place to help it work better.

**SL: What or who triggered this insight?**

CJ: I guess my work with Mark triggered this, and the fact that I saw improvements after spending time going through various exercises.

**SL: Can you take me through your decision-making process for leaving West Coast to join Carlton, and what it was like to make that decision amid the public criticism you received at the time?**

CJ: The whole process was unpleasant. The most unpleasant thing about it was telling West Coast that I was going to leave because some of those blokes there are as close as any friends I have, and I loved playing under 'Woosha' (Eagles coach John Worsfold). And the club was fantastic. But the desire to return to Melbourne had been brewing in me for a substantial amount of time, six or 12 months. So from that perspective, I don't think they saw that coming, and that was difficult. In picking Carlton, a lot of things came into it: a young talented list, playing in blockbuster games, having a club with settled management. I guess one of the main things that was a clincher with me for Carlton was that I would have the chance to be part of something from the ground up, start the journey at the bottom and ride it through. I didn't

want to just come in at the end and get someone else's premiership because premierships are built years before they happen. With West Coast, we won seven of our last nine games in 2004, and that was really when the premiership started, and we won it two years later. Should Carlton be lucky enough to win a premiership in the next five or six years, then I will have been there when the premiership was built and won.

**SL: How did you feel walking into the club and being given the captaincy?**

CJ: It was an awkward one too. If the job was to captain the team just for this year I would never have done it, but because it is longer-term proposition I jumped at it. I am glad I took it, really glad. I have been happy with how it is working out. The reception I got was really good, especially from the senior players whom I work closely with, guys like Nick Stevens and Anthony Carrazzo.

**SL: Do you know much about Carlton?**

CJ: (My knowledge) is growing. I didn't realise how big a club it was till I came here. It is a great club.

**SL: I played with Brett Ratten in the Carlton under-19s. While working at Hawthorn in 2001, I attempted to shake his hand post-game (after Hawthorn beat Carlton for the first time at Princes Park since 1991), and he wouldn't shake my hand, proceeded to tell me where to go, while passing me. He continued the spray, saying, 'You would not have come over here if we had won', which was right. I just loved it and thought, 'That is great spirit'. As a player he was really competitive; he despised being beaten. What is your take on him?**

CJ: He is like a football genius, and he watches games from all different angles. I reckon he'd watch just about every game played every week. He loves footy; he is a real footy head. He is so consumed by footy and understands it so well.

**SL: What is your relationship with him like? There isn't much of an age gap.**

CJ: There wasn't with 'Woosha' either, and less even with 'Ratts'. Our relationship is good, and it is growing. All relationships take time. He is very open to feedback, and I never feel I could say anything that he would find offensive, or that he would hold it against me later on. He will sometimes ask my opinion on something, looking for criticism, so we are pretty comfortable with each other at such an early stage.

**SL: How do you lead? What does leadership mean to you?**

CJ: As a leader and a person, I am more worried about the process than the outcome. I've read before that leadership can be summed up as seeing how something can be done better and acting on it. While this is pretty simplistic, I think it is also pretty accurate. As a leader, you

constantly have to be analysing how things are progressing and putting measures in place to make any necessary improvements.

**SL: What do you say to No. 1 picks like Marc Murphy or Bryce Gibbs? Do you give them a lot of instruction?**

CJ: There are bits of their game they can improve on, and I will offer what I think they can do to improve to benefit them and the whole midfield group. It's the same with other players. I don't ram it down their throats; I wait and see if they are looking for it, and then I am more than happy to give it. If they are comfortable with the path they have taken, then that is all right as well.

**SL: Has your leadership style changed from West Coast to Carlton?**

CJ: Not so much, but I feel like I am a much older player at Carlton than I was at West Coast. I am only one year older now, but because the group is so much younger, I take on a more teacher-type role with the players.

**SL: The last year or so at West Coast was pretty turbulent. You are probably sick of talking about it, but looking back, are there things you could have done differently as the leader that could have influenced the team's culture?**

CJ: It is a tricky one. I think a lot of stuff we did not see coming until it was too late. The lesson was probably to try and act sooner, not wait to see how things pan out. I think that is pretty true of young players as well; the time you can have a big impact on players is before they turn 21. Players who are 24 and over have already had six years of bad habits at AFL level and six years before that at high school and junior footy, making them much harder to change. Chances are they are pretty much lost. I think that is one of my challenges.

**SL: How would you describe your relationships with Worsfold and (ex-West Coast captain) Ben Cousins?**

CJ: Good, I really enjoyed playing with 'Woosha'. I don't think you'd find a person who was more like someone you would want your son to be like. For a good role model, he is your man. He is very honest, hard-working, driven, fair, intelligent and tough – all those things you respect.

**SL: Was it then hard to tell him you were leaving?**

CJ: Yeah, he did not see it coming; it was really difficult to do that. He never tried to talk me out of it. He understood it wasn't a decision I would have taken lightly.

**SL: And Ben?**

CJ: Yes, I still speak to Ben every now and then; I get along well with him.

**SL: Do you see him regaining what he had?**

CJ: Yeah, should the AFL let him play and should he choose to play, I am sure he will do well.

**SL: Would you be happy for him to play at Carlton?**

CJ: Carlton is focused on recruiting players it thinks can play 100 games or more, and he doesn't fit into that category at 30 years of age. I was fortunate enough with Ben to learn lessons from him that have held me in good stead, like his attitude to diet. He was incredibly meticulous with what he drank and ate. He only ever drank Diet Coke, coffee and water; he didn't even drink Powerade at training because of the sugar content. That was really impressive, that kind of attention to your diet as a young player. That rubbed off on me, 'Kerry' (Daniel Kerr) and a lot of the other blokes. I remember when I came to Carlton some blokes were eating cheesy lasagne for lunch, not just as a treat!

**“The better you are playing the less conscious thought there is.”**

**CJ: Have you tried to change that?**

SL: Some of my habits have started to rub off. Justin Cordy, the new fitness guy, has really reinforced that, and so our skinfolds have dropped phenomenally. If you are going to work that hard during the week, it seems a waste to not eat well.

**SL: What do you love about the game?**

CJ: Competing against other people, and competing with teammates for a common goal.

**SL: What are your fondest memories so far?**

CJ: Winning the Grand Final in 2006.

**SL: Run me through your emotions when the siren went?**

CJ: To be honest, when the siren went I was just buggered, mentally and physically. I was really sore because I had popped my shoulder out. I was just exhausted. The fact we had lost the year before by less than a goal and spent the whole of the next year building up for the Grand Final, it was like a 12-month period of intense stress. I didn't realise how stressed I was until afterwards. So my immediate reaction was complete exhaustion. Then you have the week of celebrations, and then the following Saturday I flew back to Melbourne, and the players went to Las Vegas on the footy trip. I was just sitting at home at my parents' house, where I felt my happiest. It had all sunk in, and I was relaxed.

**SL: What did it mean to your folks?**

CJ: I don't know actually. I think they were happy because it made me so happy. They were happy to see me rewarded for the hard work I had put in.

**SL: Do you look back much at what you have achieved to date?**

CJ: No, almost never, that is why when I get asked 'What did this mean to you? What did that mean to you?', I don't really have an answer because I haven't really sat back and thought about it. I haven't even watched the Grand Final through. I watched bits of the first quarter and bits of the last quarter of the one we won, but I haven't even seen a minute of the one we lost (to the Sydney Swans in 2005). I felt genuinely nervous watching the one we won; I can still feel the nausea rising in my stomach.

**SL: Can you go through how you were feeling before and during those Grand Finals?**

CJ: Very nervous.

**SL: Do you generally get anxious pre-game?**

CJ: Yes, anxious and excited. I could not remember any of the Grand Final, not from a whack in the head, but just because of my head space. I don't remember either Grand Final that well. I remember sitting in my hotel room with 'Kerry'. I reckon it was 2005, and I'd get up and go to the loo, and by the time I had sat back down again I was just about ready to go again! It was ridiculous. I remember more about that, sitting in my hotel room, than either of the actual games.

**SL: During a game, does the play come easy to you?**

CJ: I think the better you are playing the less conscious thought there is and the more you are able to feel the game. To reach that stage you have to have no niggling injuries. When I am not thinking about anything I play my best football. Sometimes I have come off after games not really sure if I have played well, and yet I have had a big game. One game I came off thinking I had played terribly, and I won the Ross Glendinning Medal (for best-on-ground in a West Coast-Fremantle match). That doesn't happen often, but every now and then I will not have any perception or appreciation for how I have played.

**SL: Do you hear the crowd?**

CJ: No, not really. Sometimes you do; you are aware when they are really loud, but you are not really conscious of it at the time.

**SL: How important are the mental aspects of football to you?**

CJ: Very important. There are all sorts of different mental aspects. You could be focused on wanting your arousal level at a certain point before a game, using the 'Inverted-U'.

**SL: You are the first player I know who has quoted the 'Inverted-U' hypothesis (see page 32). Can you tell me how you apply it?**

CJ: (Laughs) It is very important to be in the right state where you are (a) aroused enough, but (b) not overly aroused. I always say during the year



that the most taxing part of football is the mental aspect. It may stem from a physical ailment, because if you are physically sore it is a harder strain on your mind, but often if I play badly, it is because my mind is not ready to go.

**SL: How do you get your mind ‘ready to go’?**

CJ: On days when my mind doesn’t feel right I will just try and simplify everything and focus on one or two aspects of my game I want to get right.

**SL: You’ve previously said that you exert some control over your emotions towards the game and your performance by not reading about your own performance in the press.**

CJ: That is part of it – not reading about football. If it comes on the news I might catch it, but otherwise I don’t watch football.

**SL: You don’t watch other games?**

CJ: I only ever watch games of footy after I have played, so if we play on a Sunday I won’t watch any football that weekend. That is all part of being fresh for when I run out and play. There are probably lots of other things I do in my life that control that, but they are probably so ingrained. I don’t consciously think, ‘This is why I am doing this’.

Another thing I do for my mind is the meditative side of yoga. Initially when I started doing yoga at home, and by yoga I mean holding a pose for a minute and then doing a different pose, I would do it while watching TV or talking to Bec. I found that after I did it in that environment I felt completely different from how I would feel if I had done it with no noise and just focused on my breathing. So now I get up before Bec, at 6.30am, and do it then. That gives me a better result.

**SL: Do you focus on any self-talk pre-game?**

CJ: No.

**SL: Goal-setting?**

CJ: Sometimes there will be things I am looking to target, but generally I have played my best footy when I have been unsure of the likelihood of success. That positive American self-talk never works for me. If I did that, I would almost believe that I don’t have to work that hard for it, if it’s all in my mind. Whereas if I go into something thinking, ‘I am not sure how this is going to work out’, I often play my best footy. Maybe if there is too much positive self-talk, I don’t have my anxiety levels up high enough to perform.

**SL: What do you hate about the game?**

CJ: I hate how much the majority of talk about footy isn’t about footy. It is about the politics of footy or the gossip in footy. All that appears to be increasing exponentially.

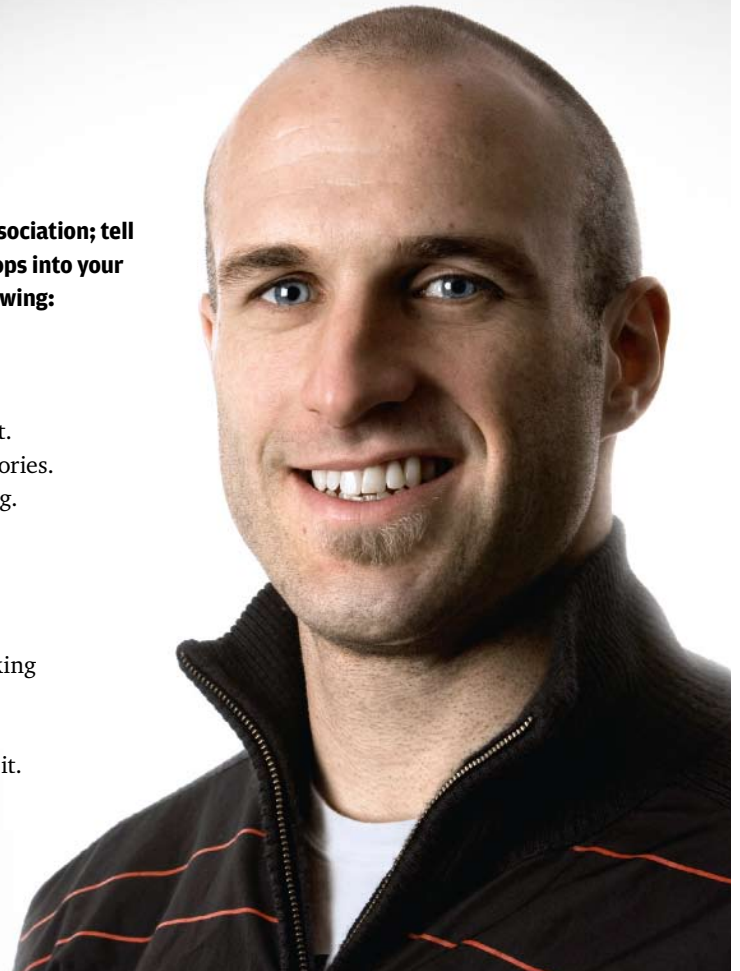
**SL: The media tried to string you up when you said footballers were not role models. What are your thoughts on this subject?**

CJ: Clearly, to some people we are role models, but there is no reason why we are any different



**SL: Let’s do some free association; tell me the first thing that pops into your head when I say the following:**

- Football:** Passion.
- Carlton:** Exciting.
- Groins:** Frustrating.
- Brett Ratten:** Intelligent.
- West Coast:** Good memories.
- Leadership:** Challenging.
- Melbourne:** Home.
- Winning:** Important.
- Losing:** Disappointing.
- Media:** Over-exposed.
- Life post-football:** Looking forward to it.
- Writing:** Difficult.
- Expectation:** Deal with it.
- A second premierships:** My career won’t be complete without it.



from anyone else. It has never made sense to me that a role model tag can be slapped on someone because they are good at sport, because to me a role model is someone who is better than the average. Footballers get accused of being arrogant at times because they are perceived to think they are better than everyone else, but that is exactly what you are saying, that they are better than everyone else. We just play sport. There are some great role models in footy and some bad role models in footy, and blind Freddy can see that.

**SL: How do you respond to mistakes, losses, setbacks?**

CJ: They make me strive to do better. Last year was the first time I had ever had a victim mentality. My groins got so bad I felt there was nothing I could do.

**SL: Did you feel sorry for yourself?**

CJ: Yes, last year I did. I just didn’t have the knowledge to understand what I could do, and it was all caving in. Other than that, every setback I have had has driven me to do better and improve. I think that is the time when real development happens, when you have a setback. I hope that in four years’ time, because of my groins, my body will be a hell of a lot better than what it would have been if not for the groins. The groins pointed out a problem with the way I moved. I have done a lot of work to fix that problem, and hopefully that has developed in me a higher level of movement than I would have otherwise gotten. Often adversity gives people that opportunity.

**SL: I was involved in interviewing you when you were 17 down at Glenferrie Oval (in 2001 when working for Hawthorn)...**

CJ: Yeah, how did I get on the psych test?

**SL: You tested very well. You were in with Luke Ball and Luke Hodge and I interviewed the three of you. How did you feel when you didn’t go first pick in the draft?**

CJ: I wasn’t peeved, (but) I would have loved to play at Hawthorn because ‘Greenie’ (Steven Greene) was there, and I’d played under-18s with him and he was a close mate.

**SL: ‘Greenie’ was in my office every day, telling me what you were like and giving me a character reference.**

CJ: (Laughs) I’m not sure if that was doing me good or harm. I originally wanted to stay in Melbourne, but in hindsight I would not have wanted it any other way.

**SL: Is there any payback when you play Hawthorn?**

CJ: No, not at all. I don’t even think my strike rate against Hawthorn is even that good. No, I was over that pretty quickly and was focused on what I wanted to achieve. I wasn’t interested in proving a lot of other people wrong; I was doing it because that was what I wanted to do.

**SL: You’ve talked about football and its contribution to society. What would you be doing**

**if you weren't playing football? What are your interests outside of football?**

CJ: I have the business with Steve and Jeremy, G3 Otherwise football is such a big part of my life. If not for football I don't know what I would have done. It is not like I would have been over in Africa building hospitals for sick kids, but I hope I would be contributing in some other way.

**SL: Do you sense that you positively influence your fans, such as the kids in hospital you have visited?**

CJ: Yes, and footballers touch a lot of people, so I am not saying they don't contribute anything, but they don't contribute as much as someone like Fiona Wood (Perth-based plastic surgeon and Australian of the Year in 2005) does, and you don't see her in the paper every day.

**SL: Do you have any hobbies?**

CJ: Life is pretty busy. I write an article for *The Age* newspaper once a fortnight.

**SL: (Collingwood assistant coach and newly appointed Gold Coast coach) Guy McKenna asked me to mention that you don't read newspapers, and yet you write for one. Does that make you a hypocrite?**

CJ: (Laughs) Maybe it does. I don't read my article once it goes in! But that's a fair point though.

**SL: Do you enjoy reading?**

CJ: I read a bit. I've read a few non-fiction books recently, such as *The Power of Myth* by Joseph Campbell, which was interesting. I am reading *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini now. I was going through a stage of reading books that were just hard going. It was a slog, so I am enjoying reading fiction at the minute.

**SL: Of all the players you have played with, who have you most admired and why?**

CJ: Lots. (Michael) Voss and (Nathan) Buckley are examples of those I have played against. Voss could turn matches like that (snaps his fingers), and he was a great leader. I was always amazed at how much he could talk out on the ground as a midfielder. He should have been blowing, but he talked the whole time. And Buckley for how driven he appeared.

**SL: I am playing touch-footy socially with Nathan at the moment, and last week I ran through a gap and collected a beautiful pass from him and an opposition player leant over and called out "touch". I was outraged because he hadn't touched me, so 'Bucks' let rip, calling him a liar. As if I didn't already know, it further convinced me he is one of the most driven and competitive people I have ever met.**

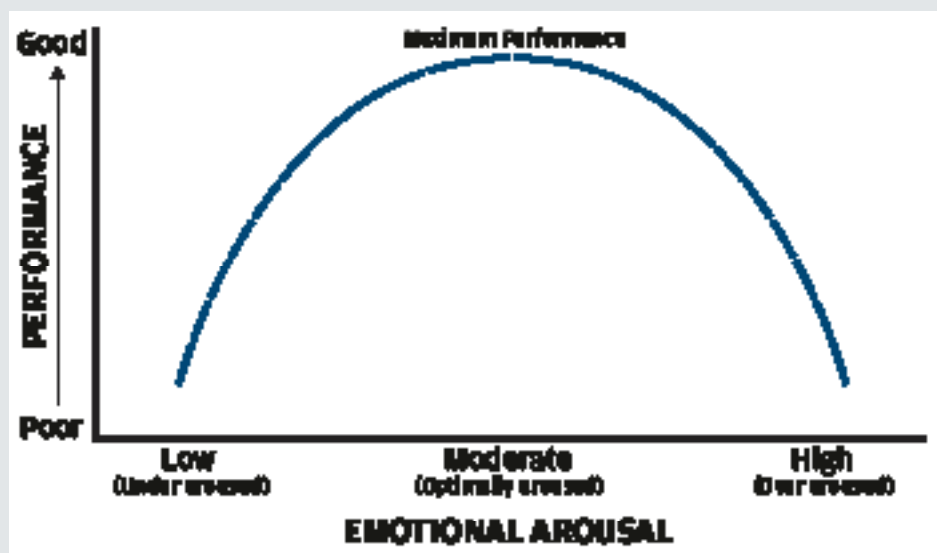
CJ: I think people who 'do what they say' are admirable, and I can imagine he would do that and then some. I played with a lot of really good players at West Coast, but the top three would be Cousins, Kerr and (Dean) Cox. Playing in

## What is the 'Inverted-U' hypothesis?

Originally proposed in 1908 by psychologists Robert Mearns Yerkes and J. D. Dodson, the 'Inverted-U' hypothesis (also known as the Yerkes-Dodson law) suggests that performance improves as arousal levels increase to an optimal point, beyond which further increases in arousal produce a detrimental effect in task performance. This made the relationship between arousal and performance curvilinear instead of linear. In

practice, this means that a little excitement and stress associated with competition or performing in public can have a positive effect, but a situation that is too stressful is detrimental. The hypothesis suggests that the "balanced" or optimal levels vary between people doing the same task and for the same person doing different tasks. Optimal arousal levels tend to be lower for more complicated tasks.

### The relationship between arousal and performance



that midfield group was very special, and they all brought something completely different to it; there was a great chemistry between us. Playing well at important stages of games is always something I have thought is an admirable quality.

**SL: Commentator Robert Walls mentioned that ability, referring to your last quarter against St Kilda (in round 15, when he had 11 possessions and six clearances). Do you recognise when it's time to stand up?**

CJ: Not really, but you can't help but get excited when the game is close. Sometimes if we are 10 goals up, I can lose interest. I am at my most intense when the game is close.

**SL: There was a lot of talk about Brendan Fevola's reaction to the defeat (mingling and laughing with St Kilda players), in comparison to your demeanour. Did you speak to him about it?**

CJ: I have spoken to 'Fev' about it, but to be honest I didn't have a real problem with it. I am conscious of not expecting other people to behave exactly the same way as I do.

**SL: Do you beat yourself up post-loss?**

CJ: Yeah, my sleep after games is horrendous. After that St Kilda game I slept from about 4am till 6am, one of the worst sleeps I have had, just two hours. It is the adrenaline of playing,

especially after a loss. You replay things you could have done differently or that could have gone differently. Night games are the worst, but the next night I usually sleep well.

**SL: Are you too hard on yourself?**

CJ: Yeah probably, but too hard for what? Too hard to have the most enjoyable life, but the harder you are, the better you will become. It is never to the detriment of my performance, but it might be to the detriment of my moods during the week.

**SL: Do you allow yourself to enjoy the ride?**

CJ: I wouldn't say I enjoy it at the time, but I do enjoy it once it is done. I enjoy the feeling of contentment, like when something successful is achieved. After a win I feel content for about 24 hours. Win a Grand Final, and you might have that feeling for a month. I would not say the whole ride is enjoyable.

**SL: What have you learnt about yourself being a professional sports person?**

CJ: More often than not, people get what they deserve, not all the time, but I would prefer to be someone who was stiff that they did not get what they deserve, rather than lucky they got a break. 🙄

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