MINDSET COACHING

The truth about adversity in sports

A mindset guide for young hockey players & parents



w. **Adam Bennett**, Mindset Coach

Every athlete goes through it — the bad game, the tough stretch, the moment everything feels stacked against them. And every parent sees it happen, often wishing they could step in and fix it.

But adversity isn't the enemy. It's the training ground where real mental strength is built. The key is learning to respond, not crumble — and that response is a skill anyone can develop. Below are three essential steps athletes (and parents) can use to overcome adversity quickly and confidently.

01 GROUND YOURSELF FIRST

Adversity hits hard because it triggers emotion first and logic second. Grounding is the reset button that prevents adversity from turning into a downward spiral.

FOR ATHLETES

- Take a breath before reacting.
- Get control of your state — breathe, slow your thoughts, stabilize.
- Remind yourself: "This moment doesn't define me."

FOR PARENTS

- Model calm.
- Avoid the emotional post-game breakdown.
- Give your athlete space to decompress before offering feedback.

02 REFRAME WHAT JUST HAPPENED

Once emotions settle, clarity returns. This is where athletes move from "Why me?" to "What now?" This step rebuilds confidence because it turns adversity into something you can respond to — not something that happens to you.

SIMPLE REFRAMING PROCESS

- Name the challenge — what exactly happened?
- Identify what's controllable — effort, habits, attitude, preparation.
- Shift focus to action — "Here's what I can do next..."

PARENTS CAN HELP BY ASKING

- "What did you learn today?"
- "What can you control moving forward?"
- "What's one thing you want to focus on next time?"

03 TAKE THE NEXT SMALL STEP

Overcoming adversity isn't about fixing everything overnight. It's about progress, not perfection. When adversity is broken down into manageable steps, athletes rebound faster and stronger.

FOR ATHLETES

- Choose one small, controllable action to improve.
- Build momentum with simple wins.
- Confidence returns through execution, not overthinking.

FOR PARENTS

- Praise the effort and the process, not just the result.
- Reinforce small wins.
- Support a step-by-step rebuild.

FINAL TAKEAWAY

Adversity is not a setback — it's a setup. It builds resilience, maturity, confidence, and emotional control. Athletes who learn this early in their career rise higher, stay consistent longer, and handle pressure better than the rest. And parents who understand this process play a powerful role in supporting the athlete's growth.

ABOUT ADAM BENNETT

Adam Bennett is a highly respected Mental Performance Coach. A former NHL player with 30 years of mindset experience, Adam has spent a lifetime around the pressure that separates good from great. Talent gets you in the door — discipline keeps you in the room.

Today he coaches athletes, executives, and high performers as a Certified Axiology Practitioner and Certified REBT Mindset Coach. This isn't wellness. It's the architecture of composure under fire.

To find out more and to book a discovery call visit **adambennett.ca**