

“Born again”

The re-birth of Fellowship of Christian Athletes



FCA hosted a dodgeball outreach event at the Carleton Rec Center, January 2005.

Carleton College has a long, rich history of its athletes leading their teammates in striving to grow in their relationships with God and each other. A chapter of Fellowship of Christian Athletes at Carleton had bloomed in the early 1990s and then disappeared by the end of that decade. Yet FCA had not faded from the memories of alumni or coaches.

David Derksen '05

When I arrived at Carleton as a freshman football player in August of 2001, there was a Bible study (Sola Scriptura), the worship band Mustard Seed and the Hvasses who had a presence on campus. But there were no Christian ministries that specifically targeted the unique needs of the athletic community.

The absence of a specific ministry to athletes, especially to my brother athletes, weighed heavily upon my heart. So, in the spring of 2002, I started developing the idea of leading a men's Bible study in the fall. I asked Micah Johnson '05, a basketball player, to help me lead the group that next fall. He agreed, and I developed curriculum over the summer of 2002. We called the group “Centurions” after the centurion mentioned in the Gospels (especially in Mark 15:39).

With the support of the football coach and others in the athletic department, Centurions was a moderate success during 2002-2003. By the end of the year, though, we thought the ministry needed to reach out to more athletes, and we considered restarting a chapter of FCA at Carleton. (The athletic director told us in the spring of 2002 about Carleton's FCA chapter in the '90s.)

With the help of other athletes,

a leadership team launched FCA in the fall of 2003. This team of leaders included a basketball player, two track athletes, a softball player and me. So began FCA, once again, at Carleton.

Unfortunately, we lost all the guys (more or less) who had attended Centurions the previous year. To say this was a discouraging loss is an understatement. But we moved on and tried to reach the next class of incoming students before they were captured by myriad extra-curricular commitments.

The fall of 2003 found us serving a new group of athletes—new students and now female athletes as well. The group rarely exceeded 15 people in attendance (including leaders). And sometimes it was only the leaders who showed up to meetings, particularly during weeks with heavy academic workloads.

At the beginning, we would have long preparation sessions following Mustard Seed on Mondays. During these times, we would design the meeting for the week as well as consider general events for the term.

The FCA group did “Big Earl,” spring 2004.



The FCA group, spring 2006.

“The absence of a **specific** ministry to athletes, especially to my brother athletes, weighed heavily upon my heart.”

It would literally take us hours to complete the study preparation for the week and vision cast for the future. This all changed when Will Craig '94 started joining us.

Soon Will was helping the leaders streamline their preparation sessions and discern the next step for the group. His personal experience as a Carleton undergrad and member of

the predecessor of this FCA chapter helped immensely since he understood the pressures and demands on athletes at Carleton.

We continued to plug along and develop as a group, selecting and drafting new leaders from various athletic teams. By the time Micah and

I graduated (in June 2005), FCA at Carleton had solid leadership in place and the wise counsel of “elder” Will Craig. We also had resurrected and/or instituted such FCA favorites as “Spear Tag” (inspired by King Saul's multiple failed attempts on David's life with a spear), “Honey, if you love me, won't you please, please, smile?,” “Bun Shuffle,” and last, but certainly not least, “Big Earl.” FCA was well poised to continue as a venue for athletes to grow in Christ and reach out to their teammates. ♦

David Derksen '05 currently lives in New Haven, CT. He works part-time as a teaching fellow at Yale University, Divinity School and



is seeking full-time work in the pastorate. David is married to Laura (Wallace) Derksen '07, a former CBSF leader, who works as a marriage and family counselor.