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Winning should not be coaches' only goal

By *Phil Jackson and Doc Rivers*

Nothing could please us more than competing against each other in the NBA finals. It is especially meaningful to restore the Lakers' and Celtics' historic rivalry as the two NBA teams with the most championships.



Doc Rivers

However, there is another level of meaning to these finals. We both serve as members of the National Advisory Board for Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA), a Stanford University-based non-profit dedicated to transforming youth sports.

We both support this cause because we recognize the invaluable life lessons that sports can teach youth and high school athletes, such as resilience, empathy, teamwork, determination, confidence and the ability to overcome adversity.

We believe in PCA's model of youth sports coaching, the Double-Goal Coach, whose first goal is winning and whose second, more important goal is teaching life lessons through sports. Although the Lakers and Celtics are in the business of winning games and entertaining fans, basketball and all youth sports should emphasize life lessons.

That does not preclude an effort to win at the youth level. Perhaps the most valuable life lesson to come from youth sports is an under-

standing of competition, which children can apply throughout their lives as they strive to achieve in school and in their future careers.

However, a win-at-all-costs mentality among youth sports coaches and parents can damage the bodies and minds of even the best athletes, pressing them into physical service they cannot endure and mental duress that detracts from their childhoods. A win-at-all-costs approach also abandons lesser athletes, who are not ready to star on a winning team, and therefore fester on the sidelines and prematurely quit sports before learning their life lessons.



Phil Jackson

As much as we believe in this antidote to win-at-all-costs at the youth level, we agree that neither of us would support this cause unless we knew that Positive Coaching techniques worked even at the highest levels.

Throughout our finals matchup you will see and hear examples of both of us using these techniques. We will compete fiercely against each other. But in the end, no matter which team wins, both of us will be proud of our work as Positive Coaches on behalf of our teams, the cities we represent and the important cause we support.

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