

Process over Product

Ready:

"Do you not know that the runners in a stadium all race, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. Now everyone who competes exercises self control in everything. However, they do it to receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one."
— 1 Corinthians 9:24–25

Set

Like most high school coaches, I had a goal to help an athlete win a state championship some day. As a former 800-meter runner myself, I wanted to help an athlete win that exact event. In my first season as a high school distance coach, I stood at the state meet as God taught me a valuable lesson. One of my runners was in the finals of the 800-meter race.

I expected to be there in five or ten years, not my first. But I also didn't expect to feel empty as I watched my runner compete. As I did, I wondered if this was what coaching was all about. I remembered how much time went into training this one athlete, and the time spent training my other athletes. I weighed that against how much time I committed to their personal and spiritual growth and quickly realized I'd fallen into the trap that many coaches do: I had put the product—the goal of winning—as a higher priority than the process of shaping lives.

That day, I learned two things: First, God is more concerned with how things are accomplished than with what is accomplished. Second, God doesn't care about numbers as much as he cares about hearts—and He proved it to all mankind when He sent His only Son to earth to take our sins to the cross!

As the gun went off that day, I decided that no matter the outcome, I would be concerned with the spiritual training of the athletes I coach, as much as or more than their physical training!

Go

1. Are you more concerned with winning than with the growth in your athletes or fellow teammates?
2. What are the goals you consider most valuable?
3. Does the process drive the goals, or do the goals drive the process?

Workout

Ezekiel 11:17–21; Matthew 23:23–28; Luke 16:14–18

Overtime

Thank You, Lord, that You have given me the privilege of caring for my athletes today. Help me to show them the imperishable crown that Jesus Christ gives us! Amen.



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