

By [IU PIIC Mentor Heather Moschetta and PIIC RMC Charley Territo](#)

I love March. Winter starts to melt away into spring, and every year I feel that metaphorical renewal of spirit that the Transcendental poets immortalized. Or maybe, being a college basketball fan, it is because of March Madness that I feel reenergized every March! I am writing this as I watch SportsCenter to catch up on what I missed in the major conference tournaments, analyzing teams' strengths and weaknesses and which teams are peaking at the right time, with the ultimate goal of creating the perfect bracket between Selection Sunday and the First Four opening-round games two days later.

Months ago, I selected this topic, "March Madness, Coaching Style," for the March mentor blog, not having any idea where I would go with it. I initially thought I might somehow symbolically equate March Madness with the sometimes crazy madness of coaching. Or maybe I would generate a fun and witty bracket of coaching experiences that eventually narrowed down to one champion. But after crossing multiple ideas off my list, I realized that I was struggling because the ultimate goal of the NCAA tournament is to play better than any other opponent for six intense and grueling games over three weeks and win it all; in coaching, the goal is not to win. The goal is not to outplay anyone else and avoid losing. There is no cutting down the nets in instructional coaching.

And yet, we can still "win" as instructional coaches. A coaching "win" can take any number of forms. As coaches, we win when we find a fantastic resource and share it with our colleagues. We win when we build a professional relationship with a resistant veteran teacher. We win when we guide a teacher to think differently about student assessment. We win when we provide meaningful professional development and then support teachers with implementing it in their classrooms. We win when teachers reflect on their practice. We win when we build a collaborative culture in our buildings. We win when we help teachers strengthen their instruction. We win when students improve.

No one of these "wins" is more important than any other. So while I cannot complete a bracket that results in the best coaching techniques or coaching experiences, I can say this: none of these instructional coaching wins would be possible without you, the coaches. We mentors, RMCs, and the PIIC leadership team have the fortune of working with some of the most tremendously dedicated, innovative, hard-working educators in the business. You are PIIC's championship dream team.

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