



**JOEY CURTIN**

— CLASS OF 2001 —

For Riordan Boys Basketball Head Coach Joey Curtin, Class of 2001, winning is just the tip of success.

The 2022-23 boys basketball team capped their season by winning the WCAL title with a 23-7 record and ending on a “nice playoff run” to the regional semifinals of the CIF State Championship tournament.

With all the highlights of the season, Curtin consistently teaches his players that it’s during the losses they learn the most.



“The best way to look at losses are as lessons, instead of as something that’s devastating,” he said. “How can I take this and make things better from it and use it in a positive way?”

In fact, one of the accomplishments that Curtin is most proud of for the varsity team is that they’ve refused to give up back-to-back losses at any point over the last two seasons. To the head coach, that statistic outlines that his players are learning the right lessons from losses while still keeping their confidence.



But viewing losses as lessons to learn wasn’t a natural mindset for Curtin, who said that he hates losing at anything – whether it be ping pong, monopoly, chess or basketball.

“I think it just ate me up, every loss,” he said. “But I think (when I was) coaching junior varsity for a long time, you realize it’s less about the wins and losses. It’s more about development.”

Character development is now a cornerstone of the program, as Curtin focuses on teaching his players the right lessons through the wins and losses of a season.

For Curtin, his journey to leading Riordan’s basketball program began when he donned the purple and gold as a Crusader student-athlete.

“As a player, I was always kind of like a coach on the floor. It always felt second nature to me,” he said.

Riordan won the freshman championship during Curtin’s first year. Curtin went on to make the JV team and work his way up to varsity by his senior year, where they made it all the way to the CIF State Championship game in 2001.

“It was just a great experience from beginning to end,” he said.

Not long after graduating, Curtin got a call from his high school coach asking if he wanted to help coach Riordan’s freshman team. And as soon as he graduated college, Curtin jumped at the chance. He went on to lead the junior varsity team and freshman team as a coach for the next 10 years, and has been leading the varsity team as head coach for the past six years.

“Having enjoyed a lot of success while I was at Riordan with the basketball program, you want that feeling to continue for others,” he said. “That’s what drew me to coaching overall, and also coaching at Riordan specifically.”

Coaching at Riordan is a family business for the Curtins, as he felt drawn to the clipboard because both his mom and dad coached his youth teams growing up.

And at Riordan, Curtin works with both his sister,

Jennifer – who serves as the Dean of Students and head coach of the girls volleyball team – and brother, Danny – who works as the Vice President of Enrollment and Strategy.

*“You’re not always going to be your best, but if you’re striving for that, and you’re conscious of it, you’re going to do the right thing most of the time.”*

“It’s great. We’re a pretty tight knit group, so it’s very natural and it’s great to see them every day,” he said.

Since taking over the varsity program, Riordan has won about 72% of

their games. Over the past five seasons, the Crusaders haven’t finished less than 2nd in the WCAL.

“The program being this good year in and year out is really hard to do. And these student athletes that play for me and the coaches that coach for me, they give a lot to do it,” he said.

Teaching young men how to bring in the right mindset and the right energy to practices, workouts and games has been one of the most important lessons that Curtin’s coaching staff has preached throughout each season.

“To be the best, you have to play the best,” he said. “You cannot fear anyone, you have to just go out there and compete every day.”

In fact, striving to be the best version of yourself is a value that Curtin said that he picked up at Riordan as a student and as an athlete.

“You’re representing your community, so do your best to be a good representation day-in and day-out,” he said. “You’re not always going to be your best, but if you’re striving for that, and you’re conscious of it, you’re going to do the right thing most of the time.”

