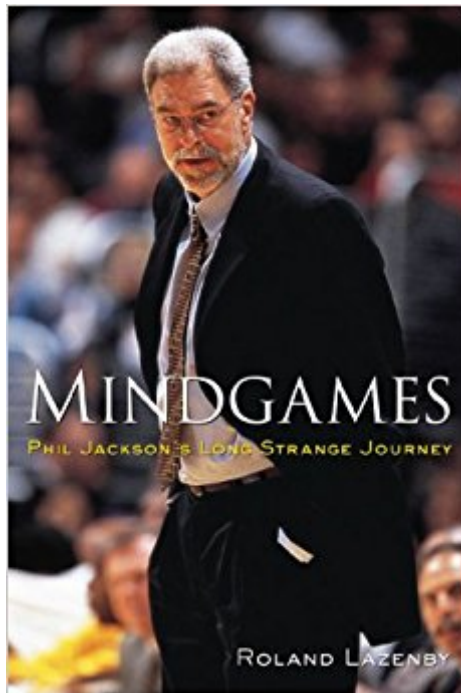




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# Mindgames: Phil Jackson's Long Strange Journey



## Synopsis

Phil Jackson led Michael Jordan and the Chicago Bulls to six NBA titles before joining the Los Angeles Lakers for the 1999-2000 season. *Mindgames: Phil Jackson's Long Strange Journey* provides an amazing inside look at one of the game's great practitioners and his intensely psychological approach to building championship teams. Veteran basketball writer and author Roland Lazenby compellingly portrays a man with a unique determination to control the competitive environment he inhabits, revealing a clear picture of the Jackson mystique. Features inside stories about Shaquille O'Neal, Kobe Bryant, Michael Jordan, Dennis Rodman, and others. This new paperback edition includes an updated afterword by the author.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Complex as he is colorful, Phil Jackson has led an improbable basketball life, marching to the tune of his own iconoclastic drummer and managing to win at every level along the way. He doesn't think like an average jock, nor does he approach his game like one: just ask Michael Jordan or Shaquille O'Neal, who've played better for him than for anyone else. Roland Lazenby couldn't have come up with a better title for his compelling exploration of what makes Jackson tick and how he evolved into one of the most successful and driven coaches in NBA history; for Jackson, the joy of his game is every bit as cerebral and psychological as it is physical. His aim, he says, is to help his players "strengthen the muscle of their minds." Of course, Jackson--part shaman, part shrink, part mentor, part guide--has found some fascinating ways to strengthen his own, including LSD, meditation, Zen, Native American culture, William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, and the Grateful Dead.

They are as much a part of Jackson's evolving core as pounding the offensive boards with the Knicks and warring with Bulls' management. If some of it seems contradictory, it is those very contradictions--more than the seven championship rings as a coach and two as a player--that make Jackson so interesting; they have helped him reshape and redefine the job. "Somehow," writes Lazenby, "Jackson has managed the very difficult feat of blending fun and discipline and spiritual exploration for his teams, sort of like combining a trip to the dentist with a carnival ride." No other coach has learned to walk that delicate balance so gracefully. But then, balance is Jackson's operating metaphor: keeping himself--and his teams--in balance while keeping opponents off theirs. In *Mindgames*, Lazenby puts together a smart, solidly reported, and balanced portrait of a Zen master with a dark, driven side. He respects Jackson enough to not whitewash him. After all, innovators have a way of stepping on toes, and in basketball, the shoes, like the personalities, tend to be oversized. --Jeff Silverman

"A must for any serious student of professional basketball." -- Gary Dretzka, senior writer, Chicago Tribune, Books Section, December 10th 2000  
"a thorough account of his life and the 11 years he spent coaching in Chicago that should interest any serious Bulls fan." -- Mike McGraw, Chicago Daily Herald

I really enjoy NBA basketball and I have watched DVDs of a number of the Bull's and Michael Jordan's great games of the 90s, but my knowledge of the game and players is fairly basic and I am not a "fanatic" about the sport. From that perspective, *Mindgames* is a very readable and enjoyable book. It also has a lot of interesting information about Jackson, and Chicago and LA players, without being "overly detailed." The author based his book on an incredible number of interviews and he uses numerous quotes from important sources, which adds a lot to the story as it unfolds chronologically. The book is very thorough in covering Jackson's Chicago years and his first year at LA. It gives what seems to be a very honest and fair picture of Jackson that is very positive overall. The only thing I didn't like were the numerous stories of the conflicts Chicago VP Jerry Krause had with Jackson as well as with Michael Jordan and Scottie Pippen. These are scattered throughout 100 pages of the 400 page book. They are part of the chronological history but I tired of them after awhile. Were it not for that, I'd probably give the book five stars.

Having always been intrigued by Phil Jackson as a coach and a person, I was thrilled to see that an account of his interesting career and life had been published. Being a coach myself, I had always

wanted to find how this living legend's mind works and maybe try to apply some of his ideas/concepts to my coaching. That was the reason that I had devoured "Sacred Hoops" as soon as it came out back in 95-96. I was also excited to see "the value" that the book offers: 400 pages..."Not bad" I thought, and I went ahead and ordered the book right away! The content of the book did not disappoint me one bit. It is nicely structured (chronologically) and it gives quite an insight and quite a few details of Jackson's life. Usually a slow reader, I breezed through this nicely written piece of work by Lazenby. I especially enjoyed the quotes from interviews and informal discussions that either Jackson himself or people he was associated with had given in the past. I also really liked the fact that the book includes Jackson's first season in LA. I think this adds tremendous value to the book: it makes its publishing a lot more timely and therefore more appealing. My only couple of concerns with this publication are the following: a) The book seems to repeat itself at times mentioning the same thing over and over maybe from a different perspective but the same information/idea none-the-less. I apologize for not having a good example of this handy, but I wasn't taking notes while I was reading... b) The book is a little too "superficial" for my taste. Jackson is such a complicated and unique person and I think this book makes little or no attempt to try and "decipher" him. I am not sure, however, that that was even the intent of the author to begin with. Maybe all Lazenby wanted to do was give an account of Jackson's life and not really try to judge/critique his coaching techniques or philosophies. Regardless, I felt that since the author seems to "know" Jackson so well, he should have tried to offer an opinion on some of the controversial decisions in his personal or professional life. Overall, I'd say that anyone interested in Jackson should get this book. Lazenby gives you an objective account of Jackson's life (the good AND the bad; unlike many autobiographies...) and one will have a great time reading through the stories and looking at the pictures. Should a basketball (or other) coach get the book though in order to maybe "gain some coaching knowledge"? I wouldn't think so...

Difficult to rate this book as it's very well written and interesting to read, but the title is misleading. There's so little about Phil Jackson's mindgames, that making it a title of a book is mischievous. However, I really enjoyed reading about Phil's background, his years as a player, coach in CBA, assistant and then head-coach in two great franchises. It's a long journey, but I recommend to read this book.

When i order this book i thought it would be more all about Phil Jackson. But this book lost its way somehow. Yes you get many things about Phil but this is so mutch about the Bulls and so many

things that Phil has little to do with and the book is so much talking about the same things over and over again. But the good: I love the NBA and to read about the Bulls in the 90s and the Lakers with Shaq and Kobe is great fun. I learn some new stuff about Phil (I have read two other books about him) and how he sees the game. This is the greatest coach in the history of the game. If you want to know about Phil then this is just a okay book but if you want to learn about the 90s Bulls this is a great book.

This is a good book. I like *Spiritual Hoops* a little better even though *Mind Games* has 11 years more current information. Still, with Phil Jackson winning a record 10th NBA championship this year by reforming a relationship with a player he identified 5 years ago as "uncoachable," it's time for an update from him or about him. Maybe some day he will permit someone with insight to sit down and interview him extensively to develop a more complete picture. There is no question that he is an interesting man, and he does not quite get his due recognition given his achievements.

This is a very interesting account of Phil Jackson's use of zen philosophy on the court. He's a riveting character and the book does a great job of fleshing him out. The behind the scenes details about the Bulls to are an added bonus as well.

good as I could of hoped for

Very good read on the relationships of Phil, Jerry & Michael and the Bulls Championships.

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