

XII. Individual and Team Goals

Goal Setting

Two Pre-requisites for Effective Goal Setting

Most coaches have faced the situation where an athlete clearly has the ability to achieve higher levels of performance yet is not able to. Goal setting is a simple, straight forward motivational technique that is effective for improving performance in areas from free-throw shooting to batting average.

Recommendation: Two prerequisite conditions for goal setting to be effective: 1. The goal must be understood. The athlete must clearly understand what is expected to be accomplished. 2. The goal must be accepted. The athlete must be willing to work toward the accomplishment of the objective.

Three essential goal setting ingredients: 1. The goal should be specific. Clearly identify the specific quantity or level of performance the athlete is striving to achieve. This may be a level of accuracy, e.g., 80% from the free-throw line; quantity of performance, e.g., 15 repetitions in ten minutes. Specific goals result in higher performance levels than general goals such as "Do your best" or "Try harder." If there are certain keys to correctly performing the skill, they should be emphasized when setting the goal.

2. The goal should be challenging. The goal should be perceived by the athlete as difficult, but realistic. Research shows challenging goals

lead to better performance than easy goals.

3. The athlete needs feedback. It is motivational. "Summary feedback", i.e., knowledge of whether or not the goal was achieved, will motivate the athlete toward better performance.

"Cueing feedback", i.e., information that provides cues to improving performance by identifying specific aspects of behavior leading to better execution, will result in even greater improvements. Feedback can come from the performance itself, a video tape, the coach, or other observer.

Goal Setting with Direction and Commitment

After your athletes have set specific, realistic, challenging, performance goals that will be measured, what's the next step? Now, how can you make certain they are committed to these goals. Without commitment, these goals obviously will not affect their performances. Remember, as goals become more difficult, athletes tend to make less commitment to them because there is greater risk of failing.

You can do a number of things to increase athletes' commitments to their goals. Most importantly make sure that they are their goals, not yours. Athletes should participate actively in setting their own goals. This increases their feeling of

responsibility for their own actions, which helps to develop perceptions of internal control. Athletes not only commit greater effort to goals they set, they work harder to find methods to achieve these goals. If one strategy blocks their progress, they will look for another strategy. Coach-imposed goals simply are not owned by athletes, and if athletes do not own their goals, goal setting backfires.

This is not to say, however, that you should not be involved in the goal-setting process. Obviously you need to provide guidance, the degree depending a great deal on each athlete. When first learning the skills of the sport players will prefer, and benefit from, greater guidance because they do not know the sport or their own abilities well enough to set appropriate goals. But as they learn the sport you should then let them have greater say in setting their goals. The more mature, experienced, and confident an athlete, the less you should direct his or her setting of goals.

Example: seniors or team captains usually need little help with goal setting. In fact, they should be pushing younger players to pursue team objectives to make sure they fall in line.

Imagining goals permits athletes to try out goals in their minds, and possibly even adjust them to a realistic level. Imagining goals will help them focus on the strategy or method for achieving a goal. Imagining the goal regularly, and visualizing its attainment, keeps the goal prominent in athletes' minds and develops anticipatory motivation for its eventual attainment.

Recommendation: Explain to your athletes the benefits of setting goals and pursuing them systematically. 1) Help them understand the nature of

the goals you jointly set with them (if they are not obvious) and the reasons a certain standard should be selected.

2) Do not use threats or intimidation in urging players to set goals at a certain level.

3) Be highly supportive of your athletes. The process of identifying specific goals and selecting a standard to be achieved should be done in such a way that it communicates you care about the athletes and respect his or her self-worth. Research shows that when coaches are supportive it gives athletes the confidence to set higher goals because they have less fear of failure or fear of punitive actions on the part of the coach.

4) Give rewards for progress and attainment of goals. The use of praise, recognition, and tangible rewards can all increase commitment when they are correctly administered.

5) Provide regular feedback about progress. This is essential to commitment and goal attainment.

When athletes see that you will help them with a plan of action that will develop the skills and knowledge they need to achieve their goals, they will have much greater commitment.

Goal Setting

The objective of this booklet is to help each player direct his life towards helping himself and the basketball team to reach their full potential. The challenge before our team will not be easy, successful accomplishments rarely are, but this challenge can possibly become most fulfilling in terms of rewards and a positive sense of accomplishments. Each player must make a commitment to become the best person he can become, the best student that he can become, and the best basketball player he can become if the basketball team is to going to in a position to become a championship team.

"First, I must become the best I am capable of becoming before my team can become first."

Name: _____

Date: _____

My Five Most Important Values - Beliefs that I live my life by ...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

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My Long Range Goals – What will I be doing with my life in the future?

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My Short Range Goals – What immediate goals do I need to fulfill to prepare for the future?

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Team Goals – What I would like to accomplish as I contribute to the team...

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What I Would Like to Accomplish – as I contribute to the team goals ...

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My Assets and Strengths

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Personal Qualities I Would Like to Change

1.	
2.	
3.	

Obstacles That May Slow My Progress

Obstacles	Solution
1.	
2.	
3.	