

# Goal Setting Skills

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You have to know where you are going so you can know when you get there. Goal setting is determining exactly what you want to achieve. Goals provide a direction for implementing a game plan for success. Goal setting has been proven to help improve performance.

## Benefits of Goal Setting:

- Less anxiety
- Improved performance
- Increased intrinsic motivation to achieve
- Increased pride, satisfaction and self-confidence
- Better concentration
- Improved the quality of practice
- More challenging training with less boredom
- Clear expectations

## Two Types of Goals:

1. Outcome or product- the actual result of the competition often based upon factors largely beyond your control.
2. Performance or process- the specific behavior of the athlete, often based upon factors which the athlete has great control over.

## Guidelines for Goal Setting:

### 1. Set Positive Personal Performance Goals:

- Ideally athletes should set goals that are 100% under their control. Unfortunately many are not; therefore, goals should be under as much athlete control as possible. Setting goals that are not under your control (outcome goals) often leads to problems like poor concentration and anxiety.
- Goals should be based upon one's personal ability level and not on someone else's.
- Goals have a higher likelihood of being achieved if they are set by the athlete and stated in a positive way. Coaches can offer valuable assistance; but, ultimately if the goal does not take on a personal meaning, it will be likely and that the athlete will be less motivated to achieve the goal.

- Athletes must constantly seek to exceed their own performance goals rather than surpass the performance of others. Great athletes evaluate their results in terms of effort and performance. They avoid evaluating themselves on the basis of winning or losing.

## **2. Set a Realistically Attainable Challenge:**

- Challenging goals produce better performances than moderate or easy goals. Goals that are too difficult can threaten an athlete's self-worth. This may lead them to think they are failures and they may quit.
- Challenging and realistic goals are more motivating because they are perceived as being achievable.
- Athletes must know who they are and not confuse themselves with who they want to be.
- Athletes must set goals at a level that they can perceive as achievable.
- The most recent performance must serve as a baseline for goal setting. As the athlete improves, they progress by setting more difficult goals. Significant effort is needed to reach each new level of performance.

## **3. Set Specific Goals That Can Be Flexible:**

- Specific goals are very effective because they direct behavior precisely and communicate clear expectations: for example, to "control your opponent with the 2 on 1 and score with the single leg takedown".
- General goals are too vague and difficult to define. They also are too easy to deny: for example, "control the match" or "do the best you can and give it all you have". These are general objectives that all athletes should be always constantly striving for. Since the athlete can always say "I did my best", this type of goal setting is not very constructive for defining specific behaviors for success.
- Specific goals provide criteria for progression to be measured. Specific goals should be flexible to accommodate for individual progression. One must be constantly striving to achieve and progress through short-term goals.

## **4. Emphasize Individual Goals Over Team Goals:**

- Team goals are not effective unless they are accompanied by individual goals that follow this guideline: If you take care of the little things (i.e. your own performance) the big things (i.e. a team championship) will take care of themselves.

## **5. Focus on Short Term Goals and Set Time Deadlines:**

- Long-term objectives can be pursued through a series of short-term goals. Too many factors can influence long-term goals (i.e. injuries, illness, life, etc.). Priorities for goal setting should be progressive; daily, weekly, and monthly

then yearly. Thus the athletes must focus on developing the skills needed to achieve the long-term goal.

- Short-term goals are stepping stones towards your long-term goals. They are the benchmark of gradual progression toward reaching your final destination.
- Set deadlines for your goals. Deadlines will help motivate you to stay on track and on schedule for peaking at the right time.

When you begin to set your goals according to the guideline you should ask yourself these two important questions; do I really want to do this? And am I willing to do what is necessary to achieve this goal? Your coach will prove to be a valuable resource in assisting you to answer these questions. S/he can also help to make sure that the guidelines have been followed and that they are incorporated into the daily practice regime. Your coach will know what you need to develop, improve and perfect. You should write these goals down on paper and post them by your bed or in a place you can see them everyday. When you see these goals ask yourself what you can do to achieve them and then set daily goals. Evaluate your progression to ensure you are on schedule to reach your next short-term goal. It is common to modify short-term goals according to how you are progressing. Reward yourself with positive reinforcement, this will help to build your confidence and keep you motivated.

Have a goal when you come to practice. What is it that you want to achieve today? Set priorities in your life, convince yourself that you can do it, be positive and you will make things happen. No longer will the circumstance control you. You will now control your circumstances and ultimately your destiny. "Those who fail to plan, plan to fail" (John Wooden).

### **An Example of Goal Setting**

My long-term goal is *To medal at the Provincial Championships*

Short-term goals focusing on preparation/ process.

#### **1. PHYSICAL GOALS - deadline December 1**

- *To improve my maximum number of chin-up by more than \_\_\_\_\_%*
- *To improve my 2 mile run time by more than \_\_\_\_\_%*
- *To be able to wrestle a 10-minute match at full speed against 3 tough partners at practice*
- *To increase my all round flexibility*
- *To increase my distance in the standing long jump by at least \_\_\_\_\_%*

#### **2. TECHNICAL GOALS - deadline December 1**

- *Perfect set-ups and finishes the single leg attack*
- *Perfect a gut wrench*

- *Improve set-ups and finishes to the outside single leg attack*
- *Improve cross ankles*

### **3. TACTICAL GOALS - deadline December 31**

- *Perfect the ability to protect a lead by hand fighting*
- *Improve the ability to force passivity's and cautions on opponents*
- *Improve my ability to always try to keep my back to the center of the mat*

### **4. PSYCHOLOGICAL GOALS - deadline December 31**

- *To focus only on what I am going to do and stay in my "comfort zone"*
- *To focus on one match at a time and to wrestle every match like it is a provincial final*
- *To perfect pre-competition and competition rituals*

### **5. OTHER TASKS**

- *To eat a nutritiously balanced diet and get at least 8 hours of sleep on a daily basis*
- *Attend a Christmas Break Wrestling Camp*
- *Wrestle at least 20 matches before the Provincial Championship*
- *Seek to wrestle tough competitors in practice and tournaments*
- *Perform at least 1000 repetitions of my favorite moves*
- *Take note of what foods facilitate an energetic state, these will be your competition foods*
- *Surround myself with positive, supportive individuals who can motivate me*
- *Manage my time so I can maintain good grades in school*