

Goals Lead to Athletic Success!

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Goal Setting

Goal setting is what allows you to specifically identify things in your life that you would like to change or improve upon. Rather than vaguely stating “I would like to become a great player,” you will find that by setting specific, controllable, measurable goals will actually give you a path to follow and ultimately become “a great player!”

It is important that you set goals you can control (we call these ‘process’ goals), and try to limit the amount of goals that are ultimately beyond your control (these are known as ‘outcome’ goals). For example, setting a goal to improve your bench press by 20lbs in one month is a controllable, effective, process-type goal. Quite simply, if you put in the work you will likely see the results – it’s all up to you.

On the other hand, setting a goal to become “All-State” is an outcome goal – and also not under your complete control (you cannot control how many people will vote for you to win this award). Of course you want to identify goals like this as being your ultimate achievement, but it is more important to develop the steps needed to put you in the best position to succeed - and then let the games play out.

Setting physical (i.e. strength, speed, etc.), technical (i.e. mastering your swing, learning passing skills, etc.), and mental goals (i.e., developing self-confidence, rebounding from adversity, etc.) will lead to athletic success! Setting specific, measurable, controllable goals will help you beat your competition – and remember, “luck” is when preparation meets opportunity (setting goals are a big part of preparation).

Why Goal Setting Works

Goals will mobilize and specifically direct your behaviors. When you know what to do, you only need to follow the plan from that point and almost always success will follow. Unfortunately, we sometimes set vague goals like “to get in better shape.” The problem with this goal is that you will never know when you are in “better shape” since you really have not defined what “better shape” is! Is “better shape” weight loss/gain? Lower body fat percentage? Improved strength? Vague goals decrease personal motivation, and ultimately lead to mediocre athletic success.

Specific, controllable goals make playing sports fun! It's a great feeling to check a goal off your to-do list and know that you have successfully accomplished a task! It's also rewarding to know that with each goal you reach, you are essentially improving your athletic skills and increasing the chances that you will become the greatest player you can be. Rather than *hope* for athletic success to occur, why not be proactive and make your dreams become a reality?!

How To Use Goal Setting

- Research consistently shows that athletes of roughly equal ability who set specific, controllable, measurable goals consistently outperform athletes who do not. Play smarter, not harder, and get started writing your goals today!
- Brainstorm all the goals you want to achieve, then go back and develop each one into its own mini-goal. As you make each goal specific, try to set timelines to measure your success.
- Set daily, short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals. You decide the time period for each (obviously daily goals are self-explanatory)
- Write down all your goals and follow your success in a personal journal.
- When thinking about outcome goals (i.e. winning a state championship), try to develop as many *process goals that will lead you to the outcome goal* (i.e. knowing your plays, being focused in games, etc.). *Process goals actually lead to achieving outcome goals!*

Dr. Chris Stankovich, known as “The Sports Doc” for his segment on Ohio News Network and featured column in Columbus Parent magazine, is a national expert in the field of sport psychology and offers an entire line of peak performance educational training products for student athletes, coaches, and parents. Please visit www.drstankovich.com to learn more.

