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Goal Setting:

Strategic Planning and Visualization: Putting Together a Game Plan.

By: Jeff Anderson
MS in Psychology
(Specialization in Sport Psychology)

Web: peakathleticconsulting.com

Previous articles have discussed the negative effects of anxiety and how an athlete's emotional response can have either positive or negative consequences on their overall performance. Emotions can empower our bodies physiologically giving the athlete seemingly super powers or reduce their performance to less than acceptable levels.

How an athlete prepares for competition goes a long way towards their future success or failure in sport. As athletes move up from high school to college and beyond they find that the level of physical ability begins to equal out and those who continue to excel do so mentally.

The mentally tough athlete begins preparing long before practices begin and games are played. The mentally tough plan their futures; then act on their plan. The act of goal setting and creating a plan of action is so important to future success yet most athletes fail in this regard. The question that must be asked is where are you when it comes to planning your future? Are your dreams real, or just something you hope for?

Goal setting for individuals participating in athletics qualifies as one of the least developed skills in the sports world. Most athletes have dreams of stardom and fame, but rarely do they narrow their thoughts and put on paper what it is they wish to accomplish. Goal setting has been proven time and again to lead to success when done correctly. In order to obtain positive results from your goal setting follow the suggestions below.

1. Write your goals down and look at them often.
2. Set goals which are realistic and attainable.
3. Focus on the factors which you can control.
4. Make Goals specific, observable, and measurable.
5. Identify all possible time constraints.
6. Don't limit yourself; be honest in your appraisal.
7. Use short range goals to achieve long term goals.
8. Set goals for practice and competition.
9. Set positive rather than negative goals
10. Determine a goal achievement strategy.

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Setting goals; when done correctly will propel you ahead of your competitors. When preparing to set goals focus on three main phases: long term, short term, and process goals. To reach peak performance levels ask yourself daily, how do I get there? And, what can I control? If you're honest, and persistent in the process your focus will remain in the present giving you the motivation necessary to accomplish your dreams.

Dream Big: where do you want to be by next year? These are your long term goals.

Be Realistic: where do you want to be by next month? These are your short term goals.

Get Started: what can you accomplish today? Be present today, be persistent, and take the first step towards your future.



Personal Goal Planning and Visualization Skills Worksheet

In the following section of goal setting you will be evaluating yourself in six different categories which are all necessary to your future goal achievement. Answer each question and rate yourself openly and honestly. "Take the first step and much will be revealed to you" is a great quote. Sadly though, it is difficult for most to step out of their comfort zone so they do not take even the first step. Many of the questions below might be considered intangible, meaning it can be difficult to give an exact meaning or rating to them, but these very intangibles can make or break you in the area of goal setting. Give each question a lot of thought and answer honestly to the best of your ability. If you want to see improvement there is no substitute for being brutally honest with yourself.

Technical Skills:

(Individual skills which must be performed correctly to assure your success: swing, catch, hit, etc.)

Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 in this area: _____

List your weakest skills which you want/need to improve?

What new technical skills do you want to learn?

What kind of coaching would help you?

In 3 months, which skills can you improve upon to improve your overall rating?

Mental Skills:

(Your mental approach is probably the least developed of all your skills)

Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 in this area: _____

What mental skill do you most want to improve upon? (Focus, self talk, awareness, etc.)

List your strongest character traits (3). (ex. Confidence, passion, selflessness, respect, etc.)

List your weakest character traits (3).

Which one do you want to improve upon within the next month?

In 3 months what would you like your self-rating to be? _____

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Relationships:

(This involves how you get along with others)

(Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 in this area: _____

List your top 5 support relationships in your life?

How can you bring more support relationships into your life?

How much social time do you spend with friends each week?

How could you be a better support to others?

Where would you like your rating in this area to be in 3 months? _____

Athletic Strategy:

(How much do you really know about your sport(s)?)

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 in this area: _____

What are some of the elements of your game where your strategy could improve?

What do you want to learn about strategy?

What would you like your rating to be in 3 months? _____

Fitness & Conditioning:

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 in this area: _____

How do you want to enhance your strength?

How do you want to enhance your flexibility?

How do you want to enhance your aerobic and anaerobic capacity?

How do you want to enhance your speed?

How do you want to enhance your agility?

How do you want to enhance your endurance?

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General Health:

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 in this area: _____

How much do you weigh? _____ How much would you prefer to weigh? _____

How many hours of sleep do you get per night? (On average) _____

How often do you exercise each week and for how long? _____

How is your diet? What changes do you feel you may need to make to enhance your ability?

Do you consume alcohol? How many times per week? _____

What is your soda consumption level? How many per week? _____

Where would you like to see your self-rating in this area over the next 3 months? _____

Based on these questions, list goals which are most important to you:

Write down your #1 goal which you want to accomplish over the next three months (Be Specific):
