

U. S. Figure Skating

Goal Setting

Planning for Your Success

How important is success and improvement to skaters? Many skaters achieve some success without using formal goal setting, but virtually every great athlete who consistently succeeds, uses some form of goal setting. Using goal setting is as necessary as having a coach.

Do skater's need to set goals?

- Good goal setting gives a skater an "edge" in three areas:
- Direction- Goals tell the skaters where they need to go and how to get there.
 - Feedback- Goals tell the skaters when they are making progress.
 - Support- Goals keep the skaters going when they might otherwise give up.

How can it help performance?

Developing Goals: Have the skaters set **S.M.A.R.T.** goals

S	=	Specific: State how and when the goal will be achieved
M	=	Meaningful: Make sure it is a goal that is of value to them
A	=	Affirmed: A belief a person can eventually achieve the goal
R	=	Realistic: a goal that can be realistically achieved
T	=	Task-oriented: The goal should tell them what they need to do

Suggestions on how to set beneficial goals

- Effective goals are process goals versus outcome goals. Process goals focus on "how to" accomplish something. Outcome goals focus solely on the final result.
- Have a goal for the season and a goal for each practice. Most skaters set only long-term goals- additionally think about daily and weekly goals as well.
- Have skaters write down a seasonal goal so they see it everyday - on water bottles, bedroom mirrors, in their skating bags...
- Focus on the little thing!

Goal Setting Develops Self-Confidence

Realistic yet challenging goals for each athlete are important to maintain the level of motivation during training, and at tests or competitions.

Accomplishing goals at practice through repetition in settings similar to the competition environment will instill confidence.

Sport confidence in athletes helps make participation fun and is critical to the athlete's motivation. Setting goals is a joint effort between athletes and coaches.

The main features of goal setting are:

1. Structure goals as short-term, intermediate, and long-term.
2. Goal perspective - a stepping stones to success.
3. The athlete must buy-in to the goals and the timetable.
4. Vary goals in difficulty from easily attainable to challenging.
5. How will goals be measured?
6. What benchmarks must be met in the athlete's training and competition plan.

Do not be afraid to challenge athletes. However, most individuals generally are more motivated to accomplish short-term goals than long-term goals.

You will achieve more compliance if you include athletes in setting their personal goals. For example, ask the athlete, "What jump did we work on at your last lesson? How well did it go during your practices? What do you want to work on today?"

Awareness of why the athlete is participating is also important when setting goals. There are participation factors, which may influence motivation and goal setting:

- Age appropriateness
- Ability level
- Confidence level
- Athlete performance
- External influences
 - Family
 - Peers
 - Economic
- Athlete preference