



GOAL SETTING

Setting goals allows athletes to focus their attention on mastering sport skills, techniques, and tactics. Short-term goals help athletes define ‘success’ and focus on the small steps that lead to long-term performance outcomes. Achieving goals helps athletes reinforce personal growth and achievements rather than focusing only on wins and losses.

BENEFITS OF GOAL SETTING:

- Improved motivation¹
- Increased confidence^{1,2,3}
- Improved injury recovery⁴
- Improved attention and focus⁵
- Improved performance⁶



Goal Type	Definition	Example	Guiding Question
Outcome	Long-term results which often focus on comparisons to others and are not in the athlete’s control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winning a game or the league • Getting first place 	What do I or my team hope to accomplish through competition?
Performance	Individual goals for success in overall performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting a Personal Record • Scoring a specific number of points 	What does performing well look like for me?
Process	Smaller, individual, short-term goals for accomplishing performance goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mastering a new skill during practice • Executing a new play 	How am I going to achieve my goals (i.e., performance and outcome goals)?

COACHES CAN:

- Set aside time for goal setting individually and as a team.
 - Include athlete voices when setting team goals (e.g., athletes vote on one team goal).⁷
 - Give athletes autonomy (“a say”) and choice over their personal goals.
- Put more emphasis on performance and process goals. This helps athletes sustain motivation and persist through obstacles.^{1,8}
- Remind athletes to start with a few goals (1 to 3) that are manageable – help them identify what goals are most important now.
- Check in regularly and provide feedback to help athletes successfully meet their goals (i.e., set goals in the pre-season, check in at mid-season, set new goals in the off-season, etc.).²
- Support athletes in adjusting their goals as needed (e.g., as obstacles arise, what can be changed about the goal to still get a similar result?).

Interested in learning more? Visit go.osu.edu/coachbeyond or email coach_beyond@osu.edu for additional trainings and resources!

EXAMPLE GOAL SETTING ACTIVITY

Facilitating the activity:

1. Review key aspects of goal setting and the different types of goals (e.g., performance, process).
2. Give athletes 5-10 minutes to reflect on their individual short- and long-term goals for the season.
3. Allow time for reflection. Some ideas include:
 - Break your athletes into dyads and have pairs share their goals.
 - Organize the entire team in a circle and have athletes share their individual goals.
4. Then, identify commonalities to help brainstorm 1-2 long-term goals and 3-4 short-term goals for the entire team.
5. Hang team and individual goals where athletes can easily and regularly see them.
6. Check in on progress toward goals at the middle and end of the season, as well as in the off-season.
7. Have pairs or the entire team provide support, help problem solve, and celebrate.

Example worksheet:

Season goals (performance):

1. Set a new personal record for successful blocks in a game

2. Make 5 successful hits that end the point in each game

3. Raise serve percentage to 95% in matches by the end of the season

Idea for team goal (performance):

Team serve percentage at 90%

Short-term goals (process):

1. Add blocking drills to individual workouts at least twice a week

2. Hit for an extra 15 minutes before practice on Wednesdays

3. Create a “reset routine” to use during games after mistakes

4. End each practice with 5 made serves

Idea for team goal (process):

Practice serving under different conditions and pressures at least twice a week

References

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