

GOAL SETTING

Your Road Map to Success





Planning your way to Success

“Excuse me, Sir,” Alice inquires. “Could you tell me which road to take?” Wisely, the caterpillar asks, “Where are you going?” Somewhat dismayed, Alice responds, “Oh, I don’t know where I am going, Sir.” “Well,” replied the caterpillar, “if you don’t know where you are going, it really doesn’t matter which road you take.”

(Alice in Wonderland – Lewis Carrol)

Let’s Take a Road Trip.

Goal setting CAN help in the pursuit for the final destination.

Before we go anywhere, a little planning needs to be done. Where do we want to go? Let’s take a trip from Calgary to Vancouver. How are we going to get there? Let’s drive! What supplies are we going to need? Sunglasses, some money, snacks for the trip, CD’s...

But, don’t forget the map. The easiest way to plan for a trip is with a road -map. When using a road map you are in essence setting goals for the trip. The road map can:

- locate specifically where it is you’re going (long term goal),
- determine how many planned stops to take along the way (short-term goal),
- tell you how many miles to the next destination (daily goal)
- tell you the alternate routes along the way, and
- help locate tourist stops en route (you should always enjoy the journey 😊).

Now, let’s apply this to swimming. Similar questions a swimmer should ask before they take off on an athletic journey.

Where will you want to be at the end of the season?

What are you going to do physically and mentally in order to get there?

What skills and tools do you need in order to reach your destination?

This goal setting session will help you, as a swimmer, plan your athletic journey with consistent use of goals.

How Exactly Does Goal Setting Help?

Good goal setting gives an athlete an edge in three areas:

1. Goals provide **direction**.
2. Goals provide **feedback**.
3. Goals **motivate**; provide a daily purpose.

Basic Tips for Effective Goal Setting

- ✓ *Identify both Short-term and Long-term goals.*
- ✓ *Identify task goals in addition to outcome goals.*
- ✓ *Take action.*
- ✓ *Evaluate your goals.*
- ✓ *Set both team and individual goals.*

Let's look at each of these in more detail . . .

How Far Ahead Should an Athlete Look?

Effective goal setting entails setting long-term and short-term goals; these goals will identify where the athlete is going and how they are going to get there.

When planning a vacation, you often think about dream destinations. Where would you go if you had unlimited funds and abilities... Egypt, the Caribbean, Europe?

As with traveling and many other aspects of life it is fun to dream. In sport, it is also fun and important to dream. **Dream goals** allow you to project years into the future without any limits. For example, for many athletes making the Olympic Team is a dream goal. Athletes need to progress from a dream goal to a long-term goal. **Long-term goals** are typically one season to numerous seasons down the road; as in the road trip analogy, this goal is the destination. One way to determine a good long-term goal would be to ask yourselves the question "where do I want to be at the end of the swimming season or the end of high school or college?" Examples of the answer to this question can be in terms of having an improved streamline by the end of the season, a goal time, making a specific time standard, or earning a spot on a junior or senior national team by the time you finish high school.

In order to make the long-term goal seem less daunting, **short-term goals** are set. **Short-term goals** are set for shorter lengths of time than long-term goals, usually between two weeks and a month. Short-term goals serve as stepping-stones for the long-term goals. Setting short-term goals allow one to monitor success towards the long-term goals. A good question for swimmers to ask themselves is "Where do I want to be at the end of this month?"

Finally, short-term goals can also often feel far off in the distance, therefore, something more within reach is needed to maintain focus and motivation. For these reasons it is also important to set **daily goals**. **Daily goals** are to be set every day in practice and in competition. Setting effective daily goals will help motivate and bring higher intensity and focus to your training. Daily goals can be set for both physical training and psychological skill development.

A good question for swimmers to ask themselves is "why am I getting in the water today?"



Identify Outcome Goals and Task Goals

Effective goal setting necessitates that athletes set both outcome and task goals.

Most swimmers are good at setting outcome goals; an **outcome goal** is any type of goal directed at the end result. Swimming outcome goals are set when an individual focuses on attaining a specific place at a meet, achieving a time standard or a personal best, or beating a teammate in practice. Outcome goals are hard to control because they depend on both the ability and skill of the swimmer and his opponents. However, the swimmer has more control over **task goals** because they depend on their skill and ability only. **Task goals** are what the swimmer has to DO (physically and mentally) in order to accomplish their outcome goals. Examples of task goals include being aggressive in and out of each turn, holding a specific stroke count and maintaining splits through an event. Last year, Jason placed second at Provincials in both the 100 and 200m fly. Provincials will start in 2 days and all Jason is talking about is winning both the events. He says, “Nothing but first will be good enough.” Because such a goal is out of his control, it would be more effective for him to focus on what he needs to do to win the events. He needs to focus on a powerful start, control through 75, then working his kick. If he can do this, the outcome will take care of itself.

Taking Action

Effective goal setting must involve not just a road map but a strategy to keep the goals “real” on a consistent basis.

Without much, if any, prodding from coaches, swimmers are already setting goals (especially outcome goals). When asked, athletes talk about goals such as wanting to swim a certain time, making cuts, improving a specific aspect or their stroke, and staying streamlined off the walls. However, as you well know, coaches need to help swimmers progress from setting long-term and short-term goals to actually acting on these goals.

For example, when Paul, a 13-year-old swimmer, gets in the water every afternoon for practice, one wonders if any of his goals are relevant? Does he focus on his stroke during warm-up? Is he conscious of his body position as he pushes off the wall? Or, is he “just swimming”, merely in the water doing the workout that the coach instructed him to do? Once your goal setting “map” has been established, the next critical piece is for the coach to keep the athlete accountable to these goals. As you near the end of the reading portion I am assigning you a task for your daily training goals as a means of accountability and to ensure you have read this document in its entirety and have done the exercises that are to follow. Upon my return and starting Nov.9th you will be required to have your daily training goals displayed on your water bottles so I can see what you’re focus is each practice. In your log book you will track your “goal attained” progress and rate your improvement on each goal (scale 1-10). This will be checked periodically by me during the season.

- Write goals on water bottles
- Verbalize goals to teammates, friends, family



Evaluate your Goals

Effective goal setting requires athletes to regularly evaluate progress towards their goals, note successes along the way, and modify goals if necessary.

Let's go back to the road map analogy, where the goal is to drive from Calgary to Vancouver. Suppose you take off bright and early in the morning with your trusty roadmap in hand. On day one, your goal is to make it to Kelowna by sundown. However, outside of Revelstoke there was an accident and you end up sitting on the highway for 2 hours longer than expected. At what point, if ever, will you stop to assess your progress and re-evaluate your goals?

Back in the pool, Robert, the star distance freestyler of the group, developed a shoulder problem and only kicked for the month of September. At what point should he reassess his goal of improving his stroke rate? Robert will only be disappointed and frustrated if he only evaluates his training based on his original goal of improving his stroke rate. Goals are meant to provide direction, give feedback on progress and motivate. To ensure they serve this purpose, goals must also be flexible. It is necessary to evaluate goals at several points during the swim season. Specific dates for you to monitor your success and to make changes if needed will be set at various intervals throughout the season. Be sure you do the work to evaluate, assess and change (if necessary) your goals.

Good work everyone if you got through reading all of that. You are one step closer to improving yourself as an athlete and as a swimmer. You are also one step ahead of some of your competition.

Remember – Leave no stone unturned in your quest to acquire all the physical skills and mental tools needed to do your best and, if wanting, to be the best. Be responsible for your swimming.



** The next portion will be the exercises and questions only you can do and answer. Think carefully, be very honest with yourself and work quickly to complete it.

Goal Setting Exercise 1:

How Far should I Look Ahead?

Long-term goals tell you where you want to go and short-term goals tell you how you are going to get there. Both are important for effective goal setting. This exercise will help you breakdown your long-term goals.

1. What is one of your long-term goals for this season?

2. What are the abilities or key skills you need to achieve this goal?

a.

b.

c.

3. What can you do between now and the end of the season to develop those abilities and skills?

a.

b.

c.

4. What will you do this week to develop those abilities and skills?

a.

b.

c.

5. What can you do next practice to develop those abilities and skills?

a.

b.

c.



Goal Setting Exercise 2:

Moving Beyond Outcome Goals to Task Goal Setting

Outcome goals tell you where you want to be which can help motivate. But, on a daily basis, they do not tell you what you need to DO.

1. Start With an Outcome

Choose an upcoming meet, and pick a challenging but not impossible outcome goal (win, place, get a certain score or time, etc.). Write that goal down in detail here:

2. Moving From Outcome to Task Goals

How can you maximize your chances to achieve this goal? Write down five things (i.e. pacing, stroke count, concentration, good breakfast, plenty of sleep) **you can do at the meet** in order to increase your odds of achieving the outcome goal.

1. I will: _____

2. I will: _____

3. I will: _____

4. I will: _____

5. I will: _____

[You have just gone from goal setting to task goal setting.]

3. Practicing the Task Goals in Training

What can you do in practice between now and your competition to increase your chances of achieving your five competition tasks?

Write down three things to focus on in practice that will gear you towards your competition task goals.

For example, if your competition task goal is to hold a specific stroke rate, you might focus on specific stroke rating sets in practice.

1. In training, I will _____

2. In training, I will _____

3. In training, I will _____



Goal Setting Exercise 3: Setting Goals for Swim Meets

The following is an exercise leading you to developing, enhancing and perfecting your race strategies for *all* your events.

Date of Meet:

Name of Meet:

Event:

GOAL :

Skills needed to achieve this goal:

Race strategy to meet this goal:

What I am going to work on in practice to help me achieve this goal:

Event:

GOAL TIME:

Skills needed to achieve this goal:

Race strategy to meet this goal:

What I am going to work on in practice to help me achieve this goal:

Event:

GOAL TIME:

Skills needed to achieve this goal:

Race strategy to meet this goal:

What I am going to work on in practice to help me achieve this goal:

Date of Meet:

Name of Meet:

Event:

GOAL TIME:

Skills needed to achieve this goal:

Race strategy to meet this goal:

What I am going to work on in practice to help me achieve this goal:

Event:

GOAL TIME:

Skills needed to achieve this goal:

Race strategy to meet this goal:

What I am going to work on in practice to help me achieve this goal:

Event:

GOAL TIME:

Skills needed to achieve this goal:

Race strategy to meet this goal:

What I am going to work on in practice to help me achieve this goal:

Training Logbook

The following is what you should have in your log books for training.

Date _____

THIS WEEK'S GOALS:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Strategies for attaining goals:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Obstacles that might prevent me from achieving goals:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Self-evaluation:



Daily Training Logbook

The following is what you should have in your log books for training.

Date _____ AM or PM

Type of Workout: Pool Dryland/Weights

Physical Training goals:

Mental Training goals:

Workout:

Comments:

Date _____ AM or PM

Type of Workout: Pool Dryland/Weights

Physical Training goals:

Mental Training goals:

Workout:

Comments:

After Practice Evaluation:

Physical Training Goals – Accomplishments:

Physical Training Goals --- Things to keep working on:

Mental Training Goals -- Accomplishments:

Mental Training Goals – Things to keep working on:

Goal Setting Exercise 4: Daily Goal Setting Cards/Sheet for your water-bottle *make lots of copies!!*

My training goals for today:

1.

2.

3.

4.



Competition Logbook

The following is what I expect to see in your log books for competitions:

Date _____

Swim Meet:

Event:

Heat:

Lane:

Time:

What did you do to get ready?

How did you feel?

Coaches' Comments:

Event:

Heat:

Lane:

Time:

What did you do to get ready?

How did you feel ?

Coaches' Comments:

Event:

Heat:

Lane:

Time:

What did you do to get ready?

How did you feel?

Coaches' Comments:

**** Congratulations, you've just completed a comprehensive goal setting module that will be the foundation of your swimming this season. Ensure you take a moment to review, assess and adjust your goals now that you've taken the time to establish your Road Map to Success.*

