

Goal Setting

Planning for Your Success

Do swimmers need to set goals? How can it help performance?

How important is success and improvement to swimmers? Many swimmers 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. Like a good coach, good goal setting gives an athlete an “edge” in three areas:

- Direction – Goals tell the swimmers where they need to go and how to get there.
- Feedback – Goals tell the swimmers when they are making progress.
- Support – Goals keep the swimmers going when they might otherwise give up.

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

S = Specific: State how and when they will achieve the goal

M = Meaningful: Make sure it is a goal that is of value to them

A = Achievable: With effort, it is a goal that can be achieved

R = Relevant: Why is accomplishing this goal important to you?

T = Task-oriented/Timely: 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 swimmers set only long-term goals; think about daily and weekly goals as well.
- Have swimmers write down a seasonal goal so they see it everyday – on water bottles, bedroom mirrors, in their swim bags, etc.
- Focus on the little things!

Long-term Goals – 10 years – What would they like to accomplish with their swimming?

Short-term Goals – 1-5 years – Where do they see themselves in five years?

Immediate Goals – six months to a year – What do they want to accomplish this season?

Make sure your goals are SMART!

Today's Date: _____ Target Date: _____ Start Date: _____

S = Specific: What is the first "big" goal you're going to set? What exactly will you accomplish? Write it out in as much detail as possible.

M = Meaningful: Can you see yourself accomplishing your goal? Are you totally passionate about it?

A = Achievable: You must believe in your heart that you will reach your goal. Is reaching this goal realistic with effort, practice and commitment? Do you know how to do it? What are the steps or technique necessary to accomplish it?

R = Relevant: Why is accomplishing this goal important to you? In what ways will it change or improve your swimming?

T = Task-oriented/Timely: What is the first, small step in achieving your goal? When are you going to take that step? How will you measure your progress? What are your "milestones?"

Self-Confidence

Maximizing the belief in your own abilities

What is self-confidence?

Essentially, self-confidence is the belief in one's abilities to succeed. Furthermore, a psychological characteristic elite athletes have in common is a high level of self-confidence as well as the ability to maintain that high level over time. Self-confidence is expressed in a number of ways. Confident athletes often behave, think, feel and talk differently than athletes who suffer from low self-confidence. But underneath these behaviors, thoughts, feelings or words is the underlying belief that they can be successful.

Characteristics of Confident Athletes

- Confident athletes perform the way they want to perform.
- Confident athletes spend more time thinking about what's important.
- Confident athletes try harder in practice and competition.
- Confident athletes try even harder when they don't reach their goals.
- Confident athletes use better mental strategies.
- Confident athletes control competition "momentum."

Tips for Improving Self-Confidence

- **Confidence should be based on reality.** When athletes find themselves doubting their ability, have them think about their best performance in practice and competition—the real world proof that demonstrates that they do have the ability.
- **Act confidently.** Thoughts, feelings and behaviors are all related—if athletes act confidently, the more likely they are to feel confident.
- **Think confidently.** Confidence means thinking that they can and will achieve their goals. "If I think I can win, I'm awfully hard to beat" is an example of the type of thinking in which confident athletes engage. Discard negative thoughts and replace them with the positives.
- **Identify a positive every day.** Encourage the athlete to get in the habit of identifying one good or positive thing they do each day. Keep a log of successes.
- **Set measurable, challenging yet achievable goals.** By setting goals, achieving them, setting new goals, achieving them, and so on, the athletes prove their ability to themselves.

Self-Confidence Exercise

Raise your self-confidence awareness

The first step in developing self-confidence is to identify your abilities and other positive attributes. Complete the following statements with a variety of different skills and attributes, using examples from both in and out of swimming.

1. Something I do well in swimming_____.
2. Something I do even better in swimming is_____.
3. My greatest strength as an athlete is_____.
4. I am proud that I_____.
5. My greatest strength is_____.
6. I have the power to_____.
7. I was able to decide to_____.
8. I'm not afraid to_____.
9. Something that I can do now that I couldn't last year_____.
10. I have accomplished_____.
11. If I want to, I can_____.
12. My greatest achievement is_____.

This activity highlights the many talents you possess. Concentrate more on developing this list rather than spending valuable time worrying about you can't do.