

# GOAL SETTING

## How To Not Wander Aimlessly In Track and Field

You wouldn't head out on a vacation without knowing exactly where you were going and how you were going to get there. The same is true in athletics. The common themes among all successful track teams and athletes are, almost without exception:

- a. **These people were goal-oriented.**
- b. **These people not only knew *where* they wanted to go, but they also knew the price of success.**
- c. **They were willing to pay that price.**

### Differences in Goals by Experience/Ability

1. *Beginners*—A person involved in track for the first time will have goals which are based mainly on improvement from one meet to the next. This is as it should be.
2. *Novice*—An athlete who is young and is in his/her second or third year of track should have performance-based goals (trying to put up better times/distances than last year) but should also be eyeing positional goals (ex. Making varsity for the True Team meet).
3. *Veteran*—an athlete who has 2-3 years of varsity experience and/or is a junior or senior is *still* thinking in terms of constant improvement and hitting certain standards, but emphasis should be shifting to competition-based goals. In other words, at this point you should be less competing against yourself/the watch and more against others. You know the top competitors in your Conference/Section, and you work to get an edge on those who are your equals.

## Types of Goals

1. *Short Range*—immediate goals—goals for the next few weeks, goals for the upcoming meet, etc. Can be performance-based, competition-based, or both. For example, a good short-term goal for a returning track athlete at the beginning of the season is to hit your best performance from next year before the 3<sup>rd</sup> outdoor meet.
2. *Long Range*—“My goal someday is to...” —career goals—Goals you want to achieve at some point in your career.
3. *Immediate Goals*—stepping stones—these are goals you should have to help you get from where you are now to where you want to be some day. For example, if you are a freshman running a 5:40 mile, and you want to go under 5:00 before you graduate, you have to think in terms of how much improvement will be necessary each year to reach that long range goal. You must think about what YOU must do to get there. *You don't paint the whole fence all at once; you have to do it one board at a time.* You don't magically become a track superstar overnight; you have to get there, one step at a time.

## Keys to Setting Your Goals

1. BIG TALK AND BIG PLANS WILL NOT CREATE A BIG RESULT.
2. Goals should be:
  - a. Attainable—they should be *possible* to achieve if you work hard....
  - b. Challenging—...but *ONLY* if you work hard. If being successful was easy, everyone would be doing it.
  - c. Revisable—be ready and willing to adjust your goals if needed.
  - d. Reasonable—TALK WON'T DO IT. Sometimes people seem to think that if they set big goals and talk big, they'll impress the coaches and their teammates. They won't.
  - e. Progressive goals—your goals should not only stress achievement, but also *continued* achievement. For example: which is the better goal, (a) to finish 5<sup>th</sup> at True Team, or (b) to finish top 5 at True Team so I can perform well and continue to help the team? The first is a dead-end goal, the second emphasizes continued achievement.