Goal Setting Options for the Coach and Athlete

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By their nature, cross country and track and field make the goal setting process relatively easy. Times, heights, distances and places easily allow the athlete to plan for success. Yet, when asked to put their goals in writing, athletes often have a difficult time doing so in a meaningful way. Quite often, the athletes will indicate that his/her goals are to “get in shape” or “have fun” (goals that are not easily measured or specific).

As a result, the athletes need some help with the goal setting process. In fact, they often do poorly in their initial attempts to identify realistic and specific goals. To help them with the process, we give them a list of sample goals and resources that can be useful in setting specific goals. These resources include:

- Pre-season and post-season newsletters (with meet results)
- Pre-season booklets (with school record lists, Top Ten Lists, State Qualifying Marks, State/National Record Lists)
- Personal Best Lists (previous season)
- Summary Booklets
- Goal Cards/Forms (easy to use: mileage cards, weekly/monthly/seasonal goal sheets)

During the cross country season, I require each athlete to establish a “pace and place” goal for each meet. In addition, as a group, we set team goals for the season.

Our track and field athletes use two forms to record their goals. Prior to meets, we often use an “Event Preference and Goal Sheet”. Early in the season, athletes are asked to establish (and put in writing) monthly goals for the remainder of the year.

I prefer to introduce the initial goal setting process in a classroom setting (this is probably best for the freshmen and athletes who are new to cross country and track and field). Pre-meet event preference and goal sheets are often completed at the beginning or end of a practice.

Athletes are required to (neatly) put their goals in writing. They are given a “deadline” for the return of the seasonal goal sheet (and an “incentive” is offered for the timely return of forms). Each goal sheet is reviewed; comments or suggestions are offered; a copy is kept by the coach for future use. As goals are met, athletes are asked to set new goals as they progress toward the end of the season.
Planning Ahead, Step by Step

Factors in Successful Goal Setting and Achievement

- Decide what you want to do, accomplish or achieve
- Your goal(s) must be realistic and attainable
- Your goal(s) must be specific and measurable (time, height, distance, place)
  Establish a timeline/deadline for reaching each goal
- Put your goal(s) in writing
- Believe in your ability to achieve the goal(s) you have set

*Use your pre-season and post-season summary booklets to help with your goal setting or speak to your coach about setting and achieving realistic goals. Review the sample goals listed below. They may help you in establishing your own choices*

Sample Academic Goals

- Earn all A’s and B’s
- Honor Roll Status
- All-Conference Academic Honors
  * National Honor Society
  * Top 10 % in your class
  * National Merit Finalist
  * Academic Scholarship

Sample Individual Goals

- Establish a P.R. in a particular event; place or pace goals
- Earn a school award (letter, numerals, etc.)
- School record in an event or relay
- All-Conference, all-area, all-state honors
- Qualify for the State Meet
- To Place in the State Meet
- To win a conference, sectional or state championship
- To earn a spot on the All-Time Top Ten List
- To set a school record (indoor or outdoor)
- To set a State or National record
- To earn a scholarship

Sample Team Goals

- Top 3 finish of every invitational
- Conference Championship
- Sectional Championship
- State Championship (or place in the top ____)

Track & Field Event Preference & Goal Sheet

Name __________________________________________ Grade Level ____________________

Meet __________________________________________ Level: FR SO FS JV VAR

Circle your choices and list a goal (time, height or distance) for each event you select. Note: Track and Field rules allow you to compete in a maximum of four events.

Field Events

Pole Vault ____________ High Jump ____________
Long Jump ____________ Triple Jump ____________
Shot Put ____________ Discus ____________

Running Events

3200 (4 x 800) Meter Relay _______ (leg) _______ (team)
400 (4 x 100) Meter Relay _______ (leg) _______ (team)
3200 Meter Run _______
110 Meter High Hurdles _______ (semi-finals) _______ (finals)
100 Meter Dash _______ (semi-finals) _______ (finals)
800 Meter Dash _______
800 (4 x 200) Meter Relay _______ (leg) _______ (team)
400 Meter Dash _______
300 Meter Intermediate Hurdles _______
1600 Meter Run _______
200 Meter Dash _______ (semi-finals) _______ (finals)
1600 (4 x 400) Meter Relay _______ (leg) _______ (finals)

Other Goals (team, individual places, etc.) ________________________________

The total number of events selected may not exceed four.
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<th>EVENTS:</th>
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Individual/Team place goals: ___________________________________________________________

Academic Goals: ____________________________________________________________________

Comments: ______________________________________________________________________