

Smart Goals

By Doug Reese, USA Wrestling Gold Coach



"...it must be borne in mind that the tragedy of life doesn't lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy lies in having no goal to reach."

-Benjamin E. Mays

A number of years ago I took a challenge from my college wrestlers to compete in the Master's World Championships in freestyle wrestling. I had no preconceived notion on the results - I just wanted to compete again. I trained hard for a number of months lead-

ing up to the event, and the more I trained, the more the competitive juices flowed within me. I wanted to do well and I wanted to medal. That was my goal. When I arrived in Toronto, I sized up my competition in the workout room and at weigh-ins, and I was more determined than ever.

I realized that I had probably trained

harder than any of my competition. As a collegiate wrestling coach I had the advantage of wrestling every day with my team mem-

Sioux City, IA - Jay Figgins (Loras) uses an inside trip after his duck under on Mike Howell (Ft. Hays State) during their 148 lbs. match at the Collegiate All-Star Challenge. Howell went on to win 10-0. Photo by Mike Smith/MatShots Photos.



bers and I had easy access to the weight room and to aerobic equipment. Once I saw the draw was favorable, I knew I had a pretty good chance of bringing home a medal and any color was fine with me!

On Friday afternoon when I defeated my opponent from India in the semifinals, I had clinched my goal of winning a medal. That night I slept soundly, content in reaching my goal. I knew the silver was mine, nobody could take that from me, but I also knew if I could win the next day in the finals I could become World Champion.

The next day, when I arrived at the venue there was not the normal greeting of “butterflies” in my stomach, or any sense of nervousness or stress as I stepped on the mat to meet the Canadian for the gold medal. Satisfied that I had reached my goal, I got whipped by my opponent and even broke my hand in the process.

Goals and goal setting is all important to the athlete. But sometimes, as I learned, through goal setting we place artificial restrictions, or limitations on what we think we can accomplish.

Athletic Principle

“Goals determine what you are going to be.”
– Julius “Dr. J” Erving

Athletes from all sports are always looking to improve. Athletes are also searching for the mental edge that will allow them to maximize their performance. The differ-

COACH OF THE YEAR

**ASSISTANT COACH
OF THE YEAR**

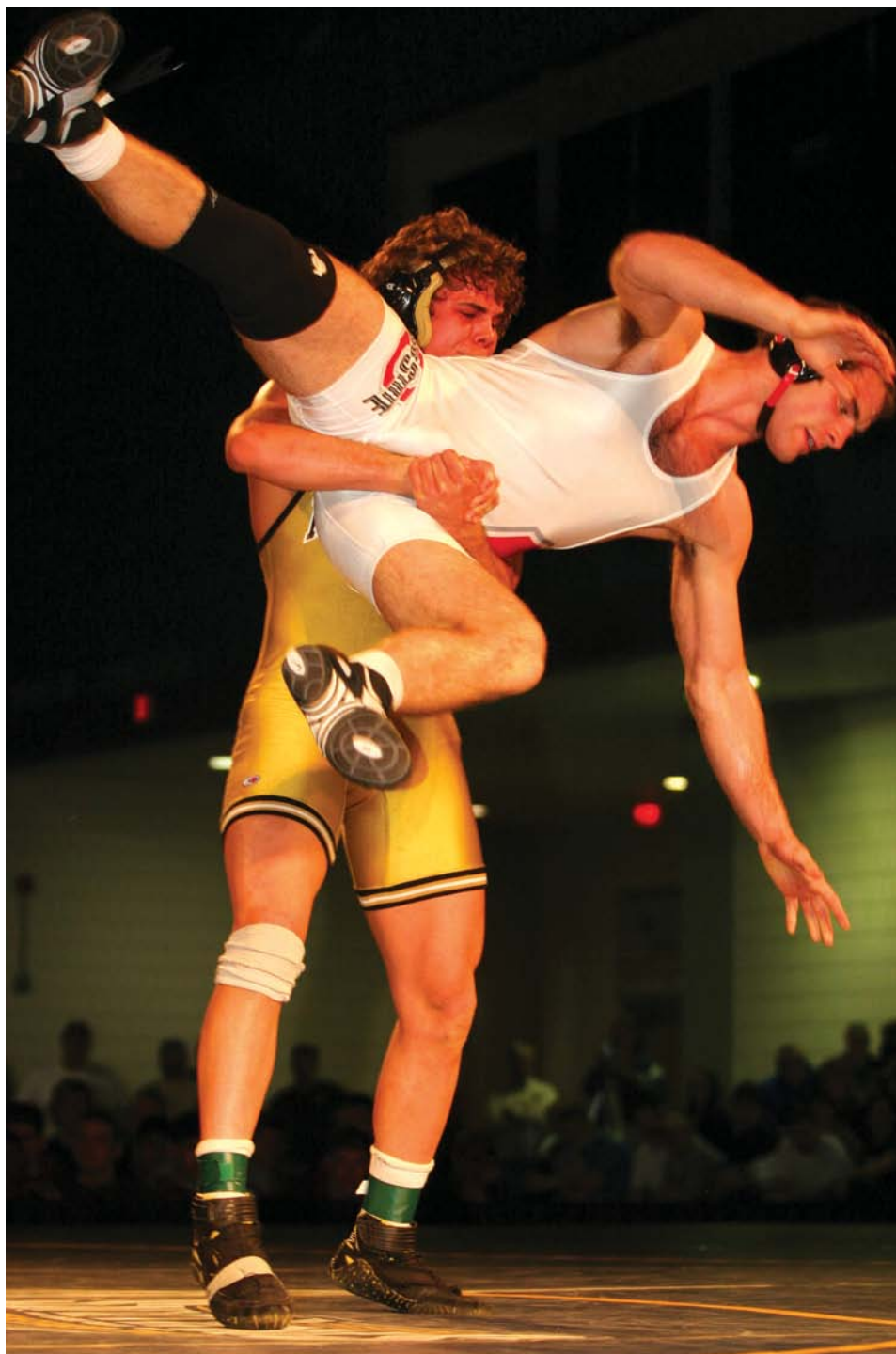
**COACH’S WIFE
OF THE YEAR**

**SPORTSWRITER
OF THE YEAR**

MANAGER OF THE YEAR

**Send to:
Cal Johnson
4704 E. Upriver Dr.
Apt. T105
Spokane, WA 99217**

**ENTRIES DUE
BEFORE APRIL 1ST**



ence today in physical ability between competitors is often minimal at best. True athletic success comes to the athlete who competes closest to their potential.

Goals play a vital part in the mental edge and maximum performance of a wrestler.

Take away a wrestler’s goals and you will probably notice a huge decline in motivation.

Goal setting is a very powerful tool that can yield returns in all areas of your life. At its simplest level, the process of setting goals allows you to choose where you want to go in your athletic career. By knowing what you want to achieve, you have a

Max Askren (Missouri) gets ready to replace J.D. Bergman (Ohio State) during this 197 lb. finals match at the Southern Scuffle hosted by UNC Greensboro. Askren pinned Bergman. Photo by Paul Swisher.

guide to show you what to concentrate on and improve upon. Goal setting gives you long term vision as well as short term motivation.

What are some of the goals wrestlers strive for?

- Being in the varsity lineup
- Leading the team in Takedowns
- Leading the team in Falls

- Leading the team in Wins
- Placing/winning in tournaments
- Being recognized as an All-Conference team member
- Making the state Cadet or Junior National Team
- Becoming a freestyle or Greco-Roman All-American
- Winning the Conference, District or Region championship
- Qualifying for the state tournament
- Being State champion
- Earning a college scholarship
- Making the US National Team
- Becoming an Olympian
- Winning a world or Olympic medal

As you can see the goals can get quite long! By setting sharp, clearly defined goals, you can measure and take pride in the achievement of those goals. You can see forward progress in what might previously have seemed a long pointless grind.

Life Principle

"If what you are doing is not moving you towards your goals, then it's moving you away from your goals. Nothing is neutral. Everything counts." — Brian Tracy

By setting goals and measuring their achievement, you are able to see what you have done and what you are capable of doing. The process of achieving goals and seeing their achievement gives you confidence and the self-belief that you will be able to achieve higher and more difficult goals. Providing you have the self-discipline to carry through, goal setting is a relatively easy process.

Setting Goals Effectively

The way in which you set goals strongly affects their effectiveness. Before you begin to set goals, you should have laid the ground work of goal setting by:

- Understanding your commitment to reach the goal.
- Understanding the level you want to reach.
- Knowing the skills that will have to be acquired and the level of performance that will be needed.
- Knowing where this will fit into your overall life goals.

SMART Guidelines for Goal Setting

Most of us have heard of SMART goals:

Specific
Measurable
Action plan organized
Realistic
Timed
 Is your goal setting SMART?

Be Precise

Set a precise goal, putting in dates, times and amounts by which the achievement can be measured, so that you know the exact goal is achieved. You then can derive satisfaction from having successfully achieved your stated goal.

Write Down Your Goals

Write down your goals, this helps to avoid confusion and to give yourself a directed focus.

Post Your Goals and Read Them Daily

Posting your goals and reading them aloud often helps you keep focused on them. By reading your goals, you make

Sioux City, IA - Mark Dickman (Lindenwood) works to free his arm from Mikel Delk (Ft. Hays State) during the 149 lb. match at the Collegiate All-Star Challenge. Dickman, ranked #1 NAIA went on to defeat Delk, ranked #2 NCAA Div. II, 9-6. Dickman was also voted the outstanding wrestler. Photo by Mike Smith. MatShots Photos.





Bellingham, WA - Ethan Cooper (Squalicum High) working on a single leg against Don Mangini (Arlington) in a 125 lb. match at the Graham Morin Memorial Wrestling Tournament. Mangini won this tight match in OT. Photo by Bill France.

them affirmation statements; they now become real and part of you. Post your goals next to your bed, on the bathroom mirror, on the refrigerator, and in your locker. Keep looking at them, reading them, and start believing them.

"I read my goals every day. I believe them, pray them, sleep them, and dream them."

- Mike Singletary

Keep Your Intermediate Goals Small

Keep the goals you are immediately working towards small and achievable. If a goal is too large, then it can seem that you are not making any progress towards it. Keeping goals small and incremental gives you more opportunity for reward. Today's goal should be derived from a larger one.

Set Performance Goals, Not Outcome Goals

You should take care to set goals over which you have as much control as possible there is nothing as dispiriting as failure to achieve a personal goal for reasons beyond your control, such as poor officiating, injury, excellence in performance from other competitors, or just plain bad luck. Goals based on outcomes are extremely vulnerable to things beyond your control.

Goals Must Be Specific

An individual needs to state their goal in a specific manner, "I want to score a take-down in the first period of every match," is a specific goal that allows you to have a definite idea of what you want to achieve. Another specific goal would be to say, "I will run two miles a day, at least four days a week." If you achieve all the conditions of a measurable goal, then you can be confident and comfortable in its achievement.

"... have a clear-cut objective... recognize every resistance that will prevent you from reaching your objective... have a plan of action that will overcome the resistance." - Tom Landry

Setting Realistic Goals

Setting goals at the correct level is a skill that takes practice. Set a goal that might be possible to achieve. "I will work out for two hours every day," might sound like a good goal, but unfortunately many athletes with school, jobs, and other commitments may not be able to achieve this goal. They might become discouraged by the failure and just might quit working out all together.

"I will work out three days a week for a minimum of one hour each day," sounds more realistic. By setting achievable goals, you should allow yourself a chance to actually meet the goal.

Goals Must Be Concrete

Make your goals something that can be measured. If you can measure a goal, then you will be able to determine whether you reached the goal or not. If your goal hasn't been met, you can at least see how close you came.

Set a Time Table for Reaching your Goal

To progress to your highest, ultimate goal you are going to have to take the steps necessary to get there. Set a time table for the achievement of each step along the way. This will also aid in evaluation of your training as well as helping you make some adjustments in your goal setting.

Goal Setting Checklist

If you believe, you can achieve anything. But first, you must define your desires and your dreams, then get into action to pursue them!

It is your career, it is your dreams; you must create them. Take the time to study, plan, and think about what you truly want out of your life. Now get into action!

- Determine your goal or your ambition, and then picture it in your mind so intensely that it becomes part of your subconscious.
- Get all of the information you can about your goal.
- Analyze all these facts and organize them into an order of accomplishment.
- Set a definite time for the accomplishment of your goals.
- Take immediate action to put these plans into effect. Do it today!
- Be persistent in your plans. Do not let obstacles stand in your way.



2006 Harold Nichols Open - Preliminary 157 lbs. Paulson (ISU) pinned Michael (Buena Vista). Photo by John Johnson.

- Concentrate on a single step at a time to achieve your goal. You must walk before you can run.
- Check yourself at regular intervals to see whether you are on the way, and adjust your plans as required by any circumstances over which you have no control.
- Put the whole plan on paper. Read your goals everyday. Make planning a habit.

"The goal I believe is important is the goal of making the most of your abilities. That goal is within your reach." — John Wooden

Finally it is important to realize that when you set goals you must have the proper perspective. Perspective is the way

we view things, events and life. No person or athlete embarks upon a goal haphazardly. There is always a certain perspective towards determining a goal.

- What are the necessary trade-offs?
- Will it be worth it?
- Is the benefit and the value worth the effort?
- How does it fit in the light of competing demands and interests?

Goal setting is a good pursuit and is very helpful in giving you direction. Goal setting and the pursuit of athletic achievement is not a bad thing, it only becomes a negative pursuit when you wrap up your whole life trying to win a prize, a medal, a ring, a trophy or a title.

Remember, wrestling (or any other pursuit) is part of life, and not life itself.

Editor's Note: Doug Reese coached college wrestling for 16 seasons and is a veteran coach of five world championships and

the Pan Am Games. Reese is currently serving as the Marketing Director of the United States Olympic Education Center in Marquette, Michigan. Reese is a frequently contributor to *Wrestling USA Magazine*. 🐾

PUBLICATION CONTEST

Send to:
Shannon Wolfe
8 Trout Lane
Livingston, MT 59047

**ENTRIES DUE
BEFORE APRIL 1ST**